# 8

# Invalid Port

## The Politics of Consumption in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

MATTHEW HAYWARD

While economic historians have found intimations of an Irish consumerism as far back as the eighteenth century,[1] it is in James Joyce's lifetime that all the characteristics of a modern consumer culture coalesced. In this period, an organized transport system gave Dubliners access to centralized retail outlets stocking a great range of branded, mass-produced commodities. At the same time, Dublin's advertising industry—nascent from the 1840s and by 1904 relatively advanced—encouraged new levels of consumption, particularly among the working and lower-middle classes, who, despite enduring poverty, saw an increase in spending power.

Joyce's *Ulysses* reflects this social shift in all its intricacy. It is perhaps the first major novel to treat commodities not as the incidental stuff of everyday life but as icons and images that essentially constitute modern consciousness; critical discussion has tended to focus on this aspect of Joyce's representation of commodity culture.[2] At a material level, however, Joyce provides a detailed account of a colonial consumer economy where Irish commodities struggled for purchase in a market dominated by English manufacture and trade. A careful examination of the consumable products in *Ulysses* leads out from the text toward a clearer appreciation of the complexity of the political forces determining consumerism in colonial Ireland. In turn, this context helps us to understand the significance of Joyce's selection, adaptation, and distortion of the historical material within his fictional economy.

## "A Divided Drove of Branded Cattle": Politicizing Food

As Marx's analysis of the commodity implied, and Theodor Adorno, Raymond Williams, and Michel de Certeau in their different ways confirmed, consumerism is inherently political, with even the most trivial acts of consumption bound up in complex power relations. While in England or America these relations could perhaps remain inconspicuous from day to day, in the consumer culture that Joyce experienced growing up in Dublin—with the Great Famine still in living memory—the politics of consumption were continually under contest.[3] Food was central to this political situation. From at least the eighteenth century, British policy effectively precluded Irish industrialization, forcing Ireland—with the partial exception of Ulster and, in a very limited fashion, Dublin—into the position of an agrarian producer. The protectionist Corn Laws produced what Cormac Ó Gráda describes as "hothouse conditions for corn cultivation in Ireland" and was one major factor behind the Irish dependence upon agrarian trade.[4] The eighteenth-century exclusion of Irish linen and glass from the British market were also impediments to Irish industrialization, and the abolition of tariffs following the Act of Union an even greater one, since the fledgling Irish industries had no protection against cheaper, mass-made British manufacture.[5] Effectively, Ireland was maintained as a nearby supplier of grain and livestock for untaxed British import (and subsequent export to overseas markets), providing raw materials but generally unable to develop these into finished, high-profit "massproduct[s]" such as Bovril or Epps's Cocoa.[6]

These conditions are described in *Ulysses* by the novel's overtly nationalist characters, particularly the citizen and Skin-the-Goat. The citizen's claim that "the Sassenach tried to starve the nation at home while the land was full of crops that the British hyenas bought and sold in Rio de Janeiro" (12.1369–71) casts the undoubtedly brutal British handling of the Great Famine as a systematically genocidal act. While historians continue to debate the accuracy of this commonly held belief, the citizen captures the broad reality of the economic situation in which he is placed: the British did buy up the bulk of Irish produce in greatly advantageous conditions, both for domestic consumption and international trade, and they did profit from this advantage, to the great cost of Irish industry and life. Likewise, if Skin-the-Goat has an "axe to grind," and if his "lengthy dissertation" on "the natural resources of Ireland" is in points of detail overstated, his understanding of "the riches drained out of it by England

levying taxes on the poor people . . . and gobbling up the best meat on the market" (16.985–89, 991–93) is generally sound.

While the political force of their statements may be complicated by Joyce's ironic treatment of their speakers, both offer reasonably informed accounts of the British suppression of Irish trade, accounts that accord with Joyce's own comments in his nonfiction.[7] They also accord with Joyce's representation across *Ulysses*. When the funeral carriage in Hades passes a "divided drove of branded cattle," Mr Power remarks, "Emigrants" (6.385, 389). Bloom, hardly a partisan figure, silently explains the comment: "For Liverpool probably. Roastbeef for old England. They buy up all the juicy ones" (6.393–94). Certainly Joyce shows that the colonial economic bind was not without its Irish beneficiaries. Bloom recalls that his former employer, Cuffe the cattle dealer, sold such "springers" as these at "about twentyseven quid each" (6.392–93), and when in "Wandering Rocks" we see "draymen . . . loading floats" with cattle feed, the transporter is specified as Irish: "O'Connor, Wexford" (10.434–45). The rearing, transportation, and retail of Irish cattle could not take place without some Irish participation. Nevertheless, seen in the greater structure of Britain's food industry, the Irish profits would have been small compensation for economic disenfranchisement.

From the late nineteenth century, new methods of preserving meat allowed English manufacturers to develop the trade in branded canned foods, which caught on especially with the working and lower-middle classes in Ireland as across the rest of Britain.[8] Cheap ingredients, utilizing otherwise unusable meat industry by-products, made for high profits: "Lord knows what concoction," thinks Bloom as he looks at the potted meat tins in Davy Byrne's, "cauls mouldy tripes windpipes faked and minced up. Puzzle find the meat" (8.749–51). This is the kind of industrial mass production that British economic policy forestalled in agrarian Ireland, and while the likes of Cuffe and O'Connor may have profited by supplying cattle for such products, there was little opportunity for Irish producers and manufacturers to develop on a large enough scale to produce competitive Irish alternatives. By the turn of the century, then, food played a significant part in the British control of Ireland, maintaining the colony as a consumer market for British goods that continued to replace local produce.

In a sense, Alick West was right that Joyce's "selection of the social relations to be described is that of the consumer."[9] Yet while the English Marxist critic took this selection to betray Joyce's complicity in an

exploitative capitalist system, heightened postcolonial sensitivity to the political valences of Joyce's work allows us to see it as an indictment, or at least exposure, of British coercion of the Irish market. Certainly this argument can be taken too far. Enda Duffy has suggested that not only was Ireland in 1904 a consumerist society, but that it had been so even before England:

> It is a truism of Irish history that the British tried out systems of mass education with the national schools, intensive mapping through the Ordnance Survey, and mass policing with the Royal Irish Constabulary, in Ireland before they did so in England; I want to claim, more fundamentally, that they also tried out mass consumerism and its subject affects and effects in late-colonial Ireland before they did at home.[10]

This is hardly a plausible model: anachronism aside, the idea that "they" could just "try out" mass consumerism conflates the various and often conflicting institutions and interests that made up the British Empire. Yet it is true that the British economy benefited deliberately and greatly from the growth of consumerism in Ireland and that the government and British businesses had agency and interest in the legal and infrastructural developments that closed off industrialization in the south of Ireland and limited the development of a domestic production to meet Ireland's expanding consumerism.

But the commodities themselves most clearly implicate British interests. Mark Osteen has argued that British products were "designed to 'afford a noiseless, inoffensive vent' (15.3276) to Irish political activism by deflecting their explosive political frustrations into private consumerism."[11] The causality here again seems skewed: among fundamentally economic motivations, it is hard to imagine an instance where a British manufacturer might have "designed" commodities expressly to defuse "Irish political activism." Nevertheless, Osteen is right to point out that commodities do not function innocently, least of all in Ireland, where they worked as both the means and the measure of colonial exploitation.

## "Puzzle Find the Meat": Identifying Joyce's Products

At the start of the "Circe" episode, Bloom buys "pocketsful" of food: bread, meat, and chocolate (15.143, 158–59). The origins of the bread and chocolate are not specified here, but the meat—"*a lukewarm pig's crubeen*" and

"*a cold sheep's trotter, sprinkled with wholepepper*" (15.158–59), bought from "*Olhausen's, the porkbutcher's*" (15.155)—are clearly local. We learn more about these commodities in the "budget" compiled in "Ithaca" (17.1455–78), where the pig's foot and the sheep's trotter are priced at 4d and 3d respectively, and the Irish "Soda Bread" at 4d. The chocolate is specified as "1 Cake Fry's Plain Chocolate," priced variously at a penny or a shilling, depending on the edition of *Ulysses*.[12]

We see here staple foods that are still locally sourced and a confectionary product that is English. There was a trade in Irish confectionary at this time, reflected in *Ulysses* through references to the Dublin-based companies "Williams and Woods" (18.942) and Lemon's, "Lozenge and comfit manufacturer to His Majesty the King" (8.3–4). But the more prominent examples are English-branded products such as Fry's or "Epps's soluble cocoa" (17.355–56), shared by Bloom and Stephen in "Ithaca." These commodities were promoted by British advertisers for their supposed medicinal properties and were grouped with such items as "Neave's food" (12.1652), a starchy product marketed for its benefits to infants, children, invalids, and the aged and apparently purchased by Bloom while Molly was pregnant with Rudy (12.1651). Bloom is therefore justified in thinking that the "vogue" of "Dr Tibble's Vi-Cocoa" may have been due to the advertised "medical analysis involved" (16.805–06). But as W. Hamish Fraser has pointed out, the true key to the success of these British commodities was their convenience, being far quicker to prepare than traditional alternatives and therefore attractive to urban consumers.[13]

The pervasiveness of these ready-made products is amply captured in *Ulysses*, connected by Joyce to a range of characters and contexts: "Edwards' desiccated soup," recalled by Bloom in "Lestrygonians" (8.885–86); "Lazenby's salad dressing," key to one of Gerty MacDowell's happy memories (13.314); "Bransome's coffee" (7.654), properly "Branson's Coffee Extract," mispronounced by Myles Crawford in "Aeolus"[14]; Bovril (14.1547), which appears mysteriously toward the end of "Oxen of the Sun"; and of course Plumtree's Potted Meat, which haunts Bloom throughout the day from his early reading of an advertisement in "Lotus Eaters" (5.144–47) to his late encounter with the flaky remains of the product in his bed, evidence of Molly's assignation with Boylan (17.2124–25).

All these commodities are English, even Plumtree's: although described as an Irish product in "Ithaca" (17.600), it was in fact only distributed in Ireland by an agent for the thoroughly English company. As I have argued elsewhere, Joyce's obscuring of Plumtree's productive origin seems to

be deliberate and serves a specific political purpose within the mechanics of the "Ithaca" episode.[15] But it should also be noted that the question of commodities' origins was already overtly politicized in turn-of-the-century Ireland. The "Buy Irish" movement, driven especially by D. P. Moran in *The Leader*, and Arthur Griffith in *United Irishman*, strongly promoted the consumption of Irish products over their English competitors. In 1904, the nationalist newspaper *An Claidheamh Soluis* included the "Gaelic League Business Directory" in every issue, listing Cantrell and Cochrane—observed by Bloom in "Lotus Eaters" (5.193) and wrongly identified by Gifford as an English product[16]—alongside other Irish companies under an editorial exhortation: "it is absolutely essential that every reader . . . should . . . patronize the firms appearing on this list."[17]

Also in the "Gaelic League Business Directory" is W & R Jacob's. Established in Waterford in 1881, this is one of the exceptional companies that went on to dominate the Irish and British biscuit trade.[18] Joyce emphasizes the company's Irishness in his parodic description of the "silver casket, tastefully executed in the style of ancient Celtic ornament, a work which reflects every credit on the makers, Messrs Jacob *agus* Jacob" (12.1823–25). As some critics have suggested, it may be fitting that the patriotic citizen hurls an empty Jacob's tin at Bloom at the end of "Cyclops."[19] Nevertheless, under the stricter terms of the "Buy Irish" campaign, the Protestant "Messrs Jacob" were not beyond reproach. The *United Irishman* for April 16, 1904, ran an editorial questioning the company's commitment to Irish industry:

> Messrs. Jacob are Irish manufacturers and do a great trade in biscuits in this country, and in Dublin itself; but while they are piously convinced that it is the duty of Irishmen to support Irish manufacture—so far as Jacob's biscuits are concerned—they are not at all convinced that it is their duty to support in turn their brother Irish manufacturers and Irish traders.[20]

The editorial reproduces an order for printed paper that Jacob's had sent to a Manchester firm and concludes with a denunciation of the Irish firm's hypocrisy: "So Messrs W. and R. Jacob sent to England to get their printing done, while we have no doubt Messrs W. and R. Jacob would consider it highly unpatriotic if the Dublin printers sent to England for their biscuits."[21] Himself an early supporter of the "Buy Irish" movement, we know that Joyce was a careful reader of the *United Irishman*[22]; for his citizen

to attack Bloom with an apparently compromised Irish commodity adds another layer of irony to his portrayal of Irish nationalist consumption.

But, of course, if we are looking for major exceptions to British trade supremacy, the one unmistakable case is alcohol. With so much of *Ulysses* set in the pub, we see much domestic support of the Irish alcohol industry. But the more striking thing about these Irish commodities is their phenomenal success abroad. Irish distillers such as John Jameson & Son and John Powers utterly dominated the British whiskey market, and the reputation of Irish whiskey was such that toward the end of the nineteenth century, Scottish companies began shipping their own whiskies to Ireland so that they could be labeled and re-exported as Irish products.[23] The Guinness brewery was the largest in the world at this time, with its own power station and internal railway system.[24] It is the only finished commodity that we see leaving Ireland in *Ulysses*—"Brewery barge with export stout. England" (8.45)—and in 1904 the British market accounted for around one-third of Guinness's sales.[25] As Bello's accurate report that "Guinness's preference shares are at sixteen three quarters" suggests (15.2933–34), the company stood as a serious competitor in the British market.

According to his friend Constantine Curran, Joyce kept a Jack Yeats painting in his Paris apartment depicting a Guinness barge on the Liffey, and the author's writing overflows with references to the drink.[26] In "Cyclops" we are given a parodic description of the commodity's production: "The foamy ebon ale which the noble twin brothers Bungiveagh and Bungardilaun brew ever in their divine alevats . . . and cease not night or day from their toil, those cunning brothers, lords of the vat" (12.281–86). As with the Jacob's tin, this description is presented in the heroic terms of Irish mythology, but if Guinness's success continues to inspire Irish national pride, the company was not always the strongest supporter of independence. The first Arthur Guinness' opposition to the United Irishmen is said to have earned his product the nickname "Black Protestant Porter," and two generations later both Arthur Edward and Edward Cecil Guinness were opposed to Home Rule. When Joyce refers to these two brothers as "lords of the vat," he is alluding to their place in the British hierarchy, for they really were lords: the sons of Sir Benjamin Guinness, they were granted British peerages as 1st Baron Ardilaun and 1st Earl of Iveagh, respectively.[27] Joyce's description of "the noble twin brothers Bungiveagh and Bungardilaun" draws attention not only to the titles bestowed upon

them by the British conservative establishment but also to contemporary Irish political discourses criticizing the complicity of the alcohol industry in colonial rule, specifically Moran's famous attacks in *The Leader* upon "Mr Bung," a personification of the Protestant-dominated trade, with its strong political influence.[28]

Regardless of the politics of its key proprietors, and despite their reputed preference for hiring fellow Protestants to senior positions, the Irish alcohol industry provided much-needed employment to some Dubliners. Joyce's father was briefly employed as secretary of the Dublin and Chapelizod Distilling Company; in *Stephen Hero*, a clerkship at the Guinness brewery is the best suggestion one of Stephen's teachers can make to the gifted young student.[29] On the other hand, alcoholism was a serious problem in Dublin, and as temperance organizations like the Anti-Treating League argued, dependence upon alcohol may have further impeded the regeneration of Irish trade.[30] Charitable schemes such as the Guinness Trust may have offered some relief to the needy—or as Moran put it, "Mr Bung may like to put a little ointment on his troubled conscience by subscribing a sovereign to a charity"[31]—but this is a dubious consolation, as Bloom bitterly recognizes in "Sirens": "Ruin them. Wreck their lives. Then build them cubicles to end their days in. Hushaby. Lullaby. Die, dog. Little dog, die" (11.1018–19).

## "Mead of Our Fathers": English Drinks on the Irish Market

As strong as Dublin's alcohol industry may have been, it certainly did not have a monopoly on Irish alcoholism, and Joyce draws at least as many English drinks as Irish into his narrative. Bloom indicts Guinness for its part in the "ruin" of Irish lives, but in the case of Ben Dollard, "now in the Iveagh home," Bloom reflects that "number one Bass did that for him" (11.1014–15). Bass was an English product, as stated explicitly in "Oxen of the Sun" when Bloom is caught staring at the bottle's famous red triangular logo: "During the past four minutes or thereabouts he had been staring hard at a certain amount of number one Bass bottled by Messrs Bass and Co at Burton-on-Trent" (14.1181–83). An aggressive exporter in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bass protected its logo in 1876 as the first British registered trademark, "certainly calculated to attract anyone's remark on account of its scarlet appearance" (14.1184–85).[32] With Bass apparently behind Ben Dollard's "comedown" (11.1012), it is tempting to read Bloom's hypnotized stare symbolically, as staging

another Irish consumerist dependence upon an English product. But then Bloom is the least likely to succumb to an alcoholic commodity, choosing a "ginger cordial" over the "five number ones" that Stephen buys for the group (14.1467–68).

The commodity is certainly drawn into the novel's symbolic economy in this scene through the Bass family's connection with the horse Sceptre, Lenehan's "dead cert" (7.388), which has lost. "Such is life in an outhouse" (12.1226), Lenehan remarks, and despite his comic hopes, the Irish financial loss is repeated with his consumption of the English product: "If I had poor luck with Bass's mare perhaps this draught of his may serve me more propensely" (14.1161–62). Stephen, meanwhile, ironically describes Bass as the "mead of our fathers" (14.1467), recalling the treatment of Lenehan's other preferred drink, Allsopp's "dark strong foamy ale" (12.1210). Misspelt as "Allsop" in "Cyclops" (12.1320), Allsopp's was another English product, brewed, like Bass, in Burton-on-Trent, again adding irony to Joyce's parodic description of the product's consumption in "Cyclops": "Uttering his tribal slogan *Lamh Dearg Abu*, he drank to the undoing of his foes, a race of mighty valorous heroes, rulers of the waves, who sit on thrones of alabaster silent as the deathless gods" (12.1211–14). On the surface, the Irish slogan "Red Hand to Victory" is a patriotic tribute to the O'Neills of Tyrone.[33] However, as Robert Martin Adams pointed out long ago, the red hand was also the Allsopp's logo.[34] So, as with Stephen's description of Bass as the "mead of our fathers," a gesture toward Irish national pride and regeneration is ironically undercut by the consumption of the English commodity, an "imperial yeomanry," as Lenehan again puns (12.1318).[35]

The same trade laws that allowed British commodities such as Bass and Allsopp's easy access to the Irish market also helped companies like Guinness and Jameson trade in the other direction. But it should once again be emphasized that the alcohol industry was an exceptional case of Irish industrial success, and even this, only with certain products. When Bloom returns home in "Ithaca," he finds a "halfempty bottle of William Gilbey and Co's white invalid port" (17.305–06). Gifford reproduces the listing from *Thom's*, placing the company locally: "W. A. Gilbey, Ltd., wine growers and spirit merchants, distillers and importers, 46 and 71 Sackville (now O'Connell) Street Upper in Dublin."[36] As with Plumtree's, the implication from the Dublin address is that Gilbey's was a local company, and therefore, with their branded port, a local producer. Once again, however, this turns out not to be the case: Gilbey's was a large English firm, with a very

strong trade presence in Dublin. And as with Plumtree's, Joyce critics have not cleared up this confusion. Roy Gottfried has argued that "the abbreviation 'co'" in the description of the bottle "reminds us visually that we are seeing the label; more than a naturalistic detail about alcohol, we are given a recreation of the material object."[37] In fact, it is a less-than-naturalistic detail, and a distorted recreation of the material object. The real-life label did not give the forename "William" but only the brand name "Gilbey's." (Indeed, the "W." did not stand for "William" at all, but "Walter.") The commodity's presence in the Blooms' home also seems to be anachronistic. Although Gilbey's Invalid Port had been available since the nineteenth century, it appears to have been practically unknown until 1911–12, when a massive advertising campaign made it their most popular product.[38]

However, Gilbey's enjoyed Irish consumption of its other products long before this relaunch. In February 1898, around the time of Joyce's sixteenth birthday, the company was involved in a lengthy licensing controversy, and accounts of the ensuing court case were prominent in the Irish press. Newspaper reports called direct attention to the political nature of Irish consumerism, demonstrating that the company's strong Irish trade presence was not always uncontested and that its foreignness was not always unremarked. Because Sir Walter Gilbey did not reside locally but in England—an obvious marker of colonial economic exploitation—the company was told that their licenses to sell beer and spirits in Dublin would be revoked.[39] To get around this restriction, the company went into a nominal partnership with their manager for Ireland, W. J. Allwright, also English, and had the licenses transferred into his name.[40] This move was blocked in court, but Gilbey's successfully appealed against the decision, and the original magistrate was rebuked for his handling of the case. The recorder of the appeal took the opportunity to make some suggestive comments, and the transcription is worth quoting at length:

> He thought that if the Messrs Gilbey or any other great firm with capital came over here from any part of the world for the purpose of entering into trade all over the country to the disadvantage of the traders of the country, it would be very warrantable that the people in Ireland who would be affected by it should not only stand up to defend themselves, but take advantage of every point of law with that object. . . . This case, however, was wholly different from that. The firm of Messrs Gilbey had been trading in Ireland for 31 years, and at the end of 31 years, simply because some words were thrown

> out in a certain case in the Queen's Bench it became desirable that they should make use of the benefit of a local name, they not desiring to add one single house to any one in existence. The firm carried on their trade successfully—and as far as he knew doing nothing whatever in the way of unfair competition to anyone interested in the trade in which they were engaged.[41]

This is an interesting statement. On the one hand, the recorder seems to complain about the unfairness of the English presence in the Irish market, hinting at several of the advantages described in this essay, including the company's use of greater capital to establish a strong trade presence and the associated restriction of Irish commercial development. On the other hand, Gilbey's themselves—protected in any case by British law—were exonerated as respectable tradesmen, and while the recorder's hedge ("as far as he knew") may be loaded, the company's long-standing presence in the country is put forward as a justification rather than an indictment of their continuing success. Thus, the sixteen Dublin branches of W. & A. Gilbey, Ltd., "wine growers and spirit merchants, distillers and importers," continued to flourish, their products free to enter the homes of consumers like the Blooms, in place of Irish competitors.

This context allows for a clearer understanding of the political value of Joyce's inclusion of Gilbey's Invalid Port in the Irish home. As is often the case, his primary impetus appears to be linguistic, playing on the various meanings of "invalid." Boylan has sent the commodity into the Blooms' home along with the Plumtree's Potted Meat, and the Gilbey's product name hints toward the legal invalidity of Molly and Boylan's affair; the pun is perhaps even made by Boylan himself, when he tells the Thornton's shop assistant that the bottle of Gilbey's invalid port "is for an invalid" (10.322). Finding these commodities on his return to the house as evidence of the pair's adultery, Bloom does not rule out a "suit for damages by legal influence" (17.2203–04), presumably referring to the tort of criminal conversation, which allowed a husband to claim compensation for lost property rights from an adulterous wife. Yet beneath these sexual overtones lies a neat political key. Not only does the product stand as synecdoche for the British trade domination that restricted Irish commercial activity—with "invalid port" sounding something like Stephen's description of Kingstown pier as "a disappointed bridge" (2.39)—but for a time in the Irish court, their licenses had been literally invalid.

## Irish Agency: Demystifying Colonial Trade

Steven Connor has suggested that "one of the obsessions of the 'Ithaca' chapter is with tracing household objects to their manufacturers and retail suppliers, which sets Bloom's house in an interestingly mixed network of Irish and Jewish commerce."[42] Evidently the conclusion is inaccurate: as we have seen, while the retail suppliers may generally be Irish, the manufacturers are predominantly English; indeed, the only branded consumables in the chapter that are definitely Irish are the "five ounces of Anne Lynch's choice tea at 2/- per lb in a crinkled leadpaper bag" (17.307–08) and the "jar of Irish Model Dairy's cream" (17.311). Conversely, Osteen's analysis of Joyce's commodities proceeds with the claim that "British products" were "virtually the only ones on the Irish market."[43] This too is inaccurate: even a glance through contemporary newspapers will show that despite massive trade disadvantages, there were numerous Irish products available in 1904 Dublin, many of which are included in Joyce's novel, from Jacob's biscuits to "Cantrell and Cochrane's Ginger Ale (Aromatic)" (5.389–90).

The numerous errors in the critical commentary are encouraged by Joyce's mischievous tendency to work errors into the text, presenting English commodities such as Gilbey's and Plumtree's Potted Meat as Irish. Since these examples appear in the "Ithaca" episode, they should in the first place be seen as part of that chapter's subtle undermining of its ostensible claim to exhaustive and objective factual accuracy.[44] But even were these errors not volitional, they open portals of discovery through which we may better understand the political complexity of consumption in early-twentieth-century Ireland.

In some respects, it is an oversimplification to reduce the Irish food market to a straightforward contest between Irish and British goods. By 1904 Ireland was embroiled in a globalized system in which acts of consumption were overdetermined by impossibly complex networks of labor and production, as Joyce's comic description of the "full English" breakfast makes clear: "Danish bacon, Irish eggs, American sugar, French milk, Canadian marmalade, Scotch porridge, New Zealand butter, Dutch toast."[45] On the other hand, Ireland's colonial situation meant that its access to the global market was mediated and to a large degree controlled by British economic practice and policy, and it is in this respect that the challenges made by Joyce in his critical writings, and by the "Buy Irish" movement in the nationalist press, ring true; and it is in this context that

we should understand Joyce's representation of Irish and English commodities in *Ulysses*.

Among other things, this complication of the productive origins of English commodities reflects the naturalization of British products available in the Irish market, effected both through targeted advertising and through the practice of establishing Irish branches and agencies for English commodities. Of course, these agencies required some Irish participation. Within *Ulysses* we might look to Gerty MacDowell's father, who has an office for the English company "Catesby's cork lino, artistic, standard designs, fit for a palace" (13.323). (Gifford's identification of this company as a Scottish firm is inaccurate: Catesby's was a well-known London company.) For food and drink, there is the tea salesman Tom Kernan, "agent for Pulbrook Robertson and Co, 2 Mincing Lane, London, E. C., 5 Dame Street, Dublin" (17.1980–82), who Bloom means to "tap" for some free samples (8.372). Further in the background, there is William Gallagher, saluted by Father Conmee in "Wandering Rocks" and identified in *Thom's* as a coal and corn merchant. While the "odours that came from" Gallagher's shop—"baconflitches and ample cools of butter" (10.87–88)—may be as Irish as the proprietor's name, his commercial activity is evidently bound up with colonial trade; as a corn merchant, Gallagher perhaps sold Irish produce to the English, but as a coal merchant he would almost certainly have been selling English produce to the Irish.[46]

It would be insensitive to criticize these Irish agents and merchants for their involvement with English commodities. *Ulysses* gives the definite impression that regular employment was scarce in 1904 Dublin—"I don't give a shite anyway so long as I get a job, even as a crossing sweeper," says Corley (16.202–03)—and the impression no doubt reflects the experience of many contemporary Dubliners. Referring to the city's unemployment, Joseph V. O'Brien describes 1904 as a year of "unrelieved gloom."[47] But if English companies employed Irish agents like Tom Kernan, these positions were nonetheless part of the greater problem, reinforcing Ireland's consumerist dependency upon England. The individuals who managed to obtain these jobs presumably benefited financially; Tom Kernan, at least, can pride himself on the "[s]tylish coat" that he bought secondhand for a "half-sovereign" (10.743–44). But the profits went back to the English companies, and while Kernan is "pleased with the order he had booked for Pulbrook Robertson" (10.718–19), the colonial servitude indicated by the preposition "for" is emphasized several times in "Wandering Rocks," first when he dismisses the needs of Irish producers—"Those farmers are

always grumbling" (10.723–24)—and again when he dashes excitedly to greet the Earl of Dudley: "His Excellency! Too bad! Just missed that by a hair. Damn it! What a pity!" (10.798–99). The nationality of Kernan's employer is not an incidental detail; it is eminently political, pointing out one of the key instruments of British trade domination. However many agency jobs were offered in Dublin, they could be no substitution for what could have been created through greater domestic industrial activity.

Where does this tracing of the routes of consumption lead us? At the turn of the century, Irish nationalist newspapers continually sought to expose the naturalization of English products in Ireland by denouncing British companies promoting their products through Irish names and agencies. More than a century on, the example of "Buy Irish" leaders such as Moran and Griffith encourage us as critics to look more closely at the commodities of *Ulysses*, however straightforward they appear. In doing so, we demystify the ideologies behind their production, circulation, and consumption in colonial Ireland and recognize more clearly the compromises and complicities that Joyce's novel both reflects and represents.

## Notes

1. See, for example, Powell, *The Politics of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*.
2. See, for example, Leonard, *Advertising and Commodity Culture in Joyce*.
3. On the politics of nutrition in post-Famine Ireland, see O'Connell, "'Food Values.'"
4. Ó Gráda, *Ireland*, 120.
5. For a summary of these complex issues, see Grigg, *Population Growth and Agrarian Change*, 128–29. For a more detailed analysis of the economic effects of the Union, see Ó Gráda, *Ireland*, 44–46.
6. Joyce, *Ulysses*, episode 17, line 369. Subsequent citations will be made parenthetically in the text by episode and line number.
7. For example, in the essay "Home Rule Comes of Age," Joyce writes that a "tyrannical" British Conservatism "does not want a rival island to arise near Great Britain, or Irish factories to create competition for those in England, or tobacco and wine again to be exported from Ireland"; in *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, 195. For a discussion of these and other correspondences between Joyce's critical and fictional writings, see Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism*.
8. Fraser, *The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850–1914*, 40, 42.
9. West, *Crisis and Criticism*, 120–21.
10. Duffy, "Molly's Throat," 244.
11. Osteen, *The Economy of "Ulysses,"* 117.
12. For an overview of this notorious editorial crux, see Brannon, *Who Reads "Ulysses"?* 89–90.
13. Fraser, *The Coming of the Mass Market*, 42.

14. Beck, "The Coffee Riddle."
15. See my "Plumtree's Potted Meat."
16. Don Gifford with Robert J. Seidman, *"Ulysses" Annotated*, 88.
17. *An Claidheamh Soluis*, June 25, 1904, 11.
18. See Ó Maitiú, *W & R Jacob*.
19. For example, Benstock, "Ulysses," 202.
20. *United Irishman*, April 16, 1904, 5.
21. *United Irishman*, April 16, 1904, 5.
22. Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*, vol. 2, 167.
23. Buxton and Hughes, *The Science and Commerce of Whisky*, 11–12.
24. Oliver, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Beer*, 66.
25. Bielenberg, *Ireland and the Industrial Revolution*, 86.
26. Curran, *James Joyce Remembered*, 39.
27. There are many company-sponsored celebrations of the Guinness dynasty; for a more sober account, see Lynch and Vaizey, *Guinness's Brewery in the Irish Economy, 1759–1876*.
28. Potts, *Joyce and the Two Irelands*, 36–37.
29. Ellmann, *James Joyce*; Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, 198.
30. On Joyce's engagement with this organization, see Mullin, "'Antitreating Is about the Size of It.'"
31. Quoted in Bolger, *The Irish Co-operative Movement*, 300.
32. Oliver, *The Oxford Companion to Beer*, 101.
33. Thornton, *Allusions in "Ulysses,"* 279.
34. Adams, *Surface and Symbol*, 143.
35. Critics usually assume that the citizen drinks the Allsopp's, presumably because of the ostensible political thrust of the "*Lamh Dearg Abu*" comment and the mock-heroic description of the drinker's "rude great brawny strengthy hands" (12.1210); see, for example, Benstock, "*Ulysses*," 202. However, it is Lenehan who orders Allsopp's (12.1318–20), and he is surely more likely to make the irreverent pun. The personal pronoun's position at the start of the sentence also seems to indicate Lenehan as the speaker (12.1208).
36. Gifford, *"Ulysses" Annotated*, 571.
37. Gottfried, *Joyce's Iritis and the Irritated Text*, 18–19.
38. Maxwell, *Half-a-century of Successful Trade*, 7–8; Waugh, *Merchants of Wine*, 72–73.
39. "The Gilbey Licence," *Freeman's Journal*, July 13, 1898, 2.
40. Gold, *Four-in-hand*, 42.
41. "The Gilbey Licence."
42. Connor, "'From the House of Bondage to the Wilderness of Inhabitation,'" 212.
43. Osteen, *The Economy of "Ulysses,"* 117.
44. On the political significance of Joyce's approach to "Ithaca," see chapter 10 of Gibson's *Joyce's Revenge*.
45. Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*, vol. 1, 239.
46. Skin-the-Goat praises the nation's "coal in large quantities" (16.989), but in 1904 Irish coal constituted only 0.1 percent of the total output of the United Kingdom. The increased cost of transporting coal within Ireland, and the apparently unpleasant smell

of the coal from the large Kilkenny coalfield around Castlecomer, made it an unlikely competitor in the domestic Dublin market. See Ó Gráda, *Ireland*, 315–18.

47. O'Brien, *Dear Dirty Dublin*, 210.

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