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"The Harp That Once Did Starve Us All": Famine Representations in "Lestrygonians"

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ABSTRACT

The Great Famine in mid-nineteenth-century Ireland has resulted in complete devastation, its impact lasting until the next century. James Joyce has inherited this cultural memory and incorporated Famine representations into his text. The episode of "Lestrygonians" abounds in descriptions of foodstuffs and images of starvation. The contrast between the plenitude of foods and numbers of famished skeletons unmistakably recalls the Famine era when Ireland produced plentiful foodstuffs while her own people were starving due to their lack of the entitlement rights to them. Moreover, the evocation of the Famine icons in this episode—walking skeletons, ravenous eaters, and so on—suggests the lingering of Famine memory, if not the continuation of Famine horrors. By representing hunger images in an episode saturated with food and eating, Joyce not only evokes the mid-nineteenth-century Famine, but suggests that famished ghosts in 1904 still haunted the city and accompanied the Dubliners in their daily life—inclusive of a cultural outsider, Leopold Bloom.*

Keywords: James Joyce, "Lestrygonians," Great Famine, Ireland, famished ghosts

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「豎琴當年曾讓我們都挨餓」：〈萊斯楚恭尼亞人〉中之饑荒再現

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摘 要

愛爾蘭十九世紀中葉的大饑荒造成滿目瘡痍，其衝擊延續至下一世紀。喬伊斯承繼了此一文化記憶，在文本中重現饑荒。〈萊斯楚恭尼亞人〉一章充滿了食物描述與飢餓意象。大量食物與骨瘦饑民的對比無疑喚起饑荒時期愛爾蘭生產大量食材，而人民卻因無權享有而挨餓之情境。此外，本章出現的饑荒意象——遊走孤魂、狼吞虎嚥的饑民等——影射饑荒記憶的持續或饑荒恐怖的延續。在充斥食物的一章當中呈現饑餓意象，喬伊斯不僅喚起十九世紀中葉大饑荒的回憶，也暗示餓死鬼在 1904 年仍然出沒都柏林，並且伴隨市民日常生活——包含文化局外人布盧姆。

關鍵詞：喬伊斯、〈萊斯楚恭尼亞人〉、大饑荒、愛爾蘭、餓死鬼

“The Harp That Once Did Starve Us All”: Famine Representations in “Lestrygonians”

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Prelude: The Great Famine and the Great Silence

Since its introduction into Ireland in the late sixteenth century, the potato had played a significant part in Irish life. Its easy cultivation and high nutritional value contributed to population increase and sustained the lives of numerous Irish before the mid-nineteenth century, providing the people “with an adequate and healthy diet” (Kinealy, *Impact* 18). In 1845, a new form of potato blight spread to Ireland and destroyed 35 percent of the crop—this served as the prelude to the Great Irish Famine. Over 90 percent of the crop was ruined in 1846, leading to greater scales of food shortages. In was in 1847 that the Famine reached the height of its devastation, known as Black ’47, characterizing which were “high levels of mortality and disease,” as well as “soaring crime rates, evictions and emigration” (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 92). Not until 1851 did good harvests return generally to Ireland. Although the blight ravaged other regions of Europe as well, the implications were far more serious and the crisis far worse in Ireland due to the indispensable role of the potato: “as an important part of the diet for 66 percent of the population and the sole article of diet for one third of the population” (Harris 2). The duration of the potato failures and the reliance of the Irish on a single staple diet, in other words, made the Famine the most deadly calamity in modern Irish history.

Although the Famine was consequent upon the potato blight, the British government was not immune from the blame. The government saw it as a chance to modernize Ireland, for it removed the surplus population and terminated people’s attachment to a lower order of diet which was thought to “leave the people to indolence and all kinds of vice,” according to a British official (qtd. in Kinealy, *Impact* 34). To move closer to a program of free trade, on the other hand, the government took the *laissez faire* policy, unwilling to interfere in market forces. Ireland had long played the bread basket for Britain. The Famine-period Ireland also produced plenty of other crops, but owing to the workings of the market, they were exported to nourish the British, not remaining at home to feed the famished Irish. When the

government finally acknowledged the gravity of the disaster and set up soup kitchens to give out free food, two years had passed since the first potato failure, and Ireland had become a land haunted by the dead.

Six successive years of famine resulted in complete devastation. The population had fallen by 25 percent, from eight million to six million. Among the lost two million, a half died of starvation and related diseases; the other half emigrated to England, Canada, the United States, and Australia. Emigration did not end when the Famine was over, though. The exodus "was irreversibly established as part of the lifecycle of late nineteenth-century Ireland" (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 151). Ongoing emigration, combined with postponed marriage and celibacy, led to low marriage rates and birth rates, hence the permanent decline of demographic figures. By 1901, Ireland had a population of only four million, about a half of the pre-Famine level, and the decline "did not finally reverse until the 1960s" (151). Impacts of the Famine on sociocultural aspects were even more damaging. The Gaelic language, for one thing, was critically weakened: "the number of Irish-speakers had halved" by 1851, and the decline continued till the next century (151). Furthermore, the bonds that had held pre-Famine rural society together, the communal life and spirit, and the ancient customs surrounding death were fast dissolving "as the island degenerated into a vast charnal [*sic*] house" (Miller 183). "Famine Ireland," Kerby A. Miller concludes, "was in a state of social and moral collapse" (183). Recovery from dissolution was slow, while "social conservatism and torpor" grew (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 152). Social and psychological dislocation led to the formation of a culture of exile: "banishment and dispossession became recurring themes in songs, stories and oral tradition" (152). Despite the atmosphere of paralysis and the culture of exile, antagonism toward the British government grew stronger. The Famine, as Christine Kinealy asserts, "occurred within the jurisdiction and at the heart of the richest and most industrially advanced Empire in the world. In spite of the Act of Union, Ireland was not treated as an equal partner within the United Kingdom" (149). This indignation heralded political turbulence in the years to come. When a survivor recalled the Famine in the early decades of the twentieth century, her description, still poignant, revealed the pain inherent in and the losses consequent upon the calamity: "The year of the Famine, of the bad life and of the hunger, arrived and broke the spirit and strength of the community. . . . Recreation and leisure ceased. Poetry, music and dancing died. These things were lost and completely forgotten. . . . *The Famine killed everything*" (qtd. in Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 155; emphasis

added). The Famine, indeed, killed everything: a large population, the Gaelic language, Irish culture, communal spirit, and the Union. It is in this respect that Kinealy considers the Famine "a watershed in the development of modern Ireland" (*Impact* 2).

Despite the inerasable consequences of the Famine in modern Irish history, it had curiously remained a blank in historical studies for more than a century. Not until the mid-1980s did historians begin to research into it. This long-term silence was probably one of the most puzzling—and painful—impacts of the Famine: memory of it was so distressing and traumatic that the Irish preferred to evade or even erase it. Cormac Ó Gráda has it that "survivors were reluctant to admit their dependence on the soup kitchen or *min déirce* (beggar's meal), or to confess that a member of their own household had died of starvation" (212). The scars left by the tragedy, indeed, have been deep, and the recovery from it protracted and agonizing; the long silence thus acted as "a further manifestation of the cataclysmic nature of the event" (Kinealy, *Impact* 218). Only when Ireland was prosperous and confident—nearly 150 years after the tragedy—were her people ready to confront the horrors of the lethal Famine. As Kinealy suggests, "It is only now, as Ireland emerges with a distinctive and positive identity within Europe, that Irish people throughout the world have been able to come to terms with the impact of these years and define what it means for their culture and history" (*Death-Dealing* 2).

But silence pervaded not only the field of historical studies; it permeated literary spheres as well. Literary works dealing with the Famine were few, especially works by major writers. Terry Eagleton asks indignantly, "Where is the Famine in the literature of the Revival? Where is it in Joyce?" (13). Eagleton's often-quoted accusation may sound harsh and unwarranted, but he makes his point clear: major writers seldom write about the Famine *directly*. Also observing "a literary silence concerning the Famine," Christopher Morash contends that the silence acted as "a deliberate evasion: on the part of the British government and British people, who could have done more; on the part of the rural middle classes in Ireland, many of whom profited from the redistribution of land; or on the part of the Irish people as a whole, ashamed at what had happened" ("Afterword" 302-03). Margaret Kelleher, too, sees the reticence as a consequence of the Famine's traumatic impact: "Such a silence may denote depths of pain, of shame and of guilt on the part of those who survived, and a necessary repression of the past in order to move forward" (4). The repressed, however, always return and haunt the living; Famine representations did emerge in a number of works, albeit

marginalized or disguised. The publication of *Hungry Words* (2006), a collection of articles studying canonical works, not only responds to Eagleton's accusation, but demonstrates the pervasiveness of the Famine in literature. In his introduction to *Hungry Words*, George Cusack declares that "the Great Famine has left its deepest mark" on the memory of the Irish; the writers confront it "as something that both cannot be remembered and must be remembered" (4).[1] The Famine, in other words, turns into haunting ghosts lingering in the pages of literary works. What were lingering were the "horrific images" appearing "in numerous newspaper reports, travellers' journals, and government documents of the period" (Morash, "Literature" 113). These images of suffering had embedded in the Irish's mind, generation after generation. By the turn of the century, images such as "stalking skeleton" and "spectre" were so widely known that they "constitute[d] a form of collectively maintained 'memory,'" available for appropriation (112-14). They were indeed appropriated by writers such as James Joyce.

Famine Representations in Joyce

The Great Famine, indisputably, is in Joyce, whose pronouncement in "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages" echoes the view of many Irish on the tragedy: "the neglect of the English government in the years of the potato famine allowed the best of the population to die from hunger" (*CW* 167). When he composed *Ulysses* in Trieste, he had Michael Davitt's *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland* with him, a book attributing the behavior of the Irish to the Famine's terrific power (Lowe-Evans 7-8). Undeniably, it would be an overstatement to claim that the Famine is Joyce's major concern, but Joyce is familiar with the Famine and has incorporated it into his texts. Two demographic characteristics—postponed marriage and permanent celibacy—recur in his works (Lowe-Evans 8). The stories of *Dubliners* represent a city populated by bachelors unwilling to enter wedlock ("Two Gallants"; "A Painful Case"), old maids remaining celibate or longing for marriage ("The Sisters"; "The Dead"; "Clay"), and mothers slyly trapping a husband for or eagerly promoting the value of their daughters ("The Boarding House"; "A Mother"). At the very beginning of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the lyrics baby Stephen

[1] Other literary researches on the Famine include Morash's *Writing the Irish Famine* (1995) and Kelleher's *The Feminization of Famine: Expressions of the Inexpressible?* (1997). Morash examines nineteenth-century Famine literature, and Kelleher explores female images in Famine writings.

hears from his father, “*O, the wild rose blossoms / On the little green place*” (*P* 7), derive from the song “Lilly Dale,” a romanticized song popular in post-Famine years lamenting a girl dying of starvation or malnutrition (Pearce 131). Evocation of the Famine is even more obvious in *Ulysses*. Throughout his wanderings on the streets of Dublin, Leopold Bloom carries in his pocket the potato from his mother, which is not only a talisman, but also a reminder of the Irish Famine. While the talisman protects Bloom, the loss of it in “Circe” exposes him to hallucinations and humiliations, as the potato sustained but also failed the Irish. In several episodes, the Famine is referred to or reminisced about. Deasy mentions it in his conversation with Stephen in “Nestor” (*U* 2.269). Stephen, meditating on Sandymount Strand in “Proteus,” recalls a famine scene—albeit the one in 1331—in which hungry Dubliners fed on stranded whales (*U* 3.303-07). In “Lestrygonians,” Bloom calls to mind the soup kitchen which proselytized Catholic paupers during the Famine years (*U* 8.1071-73). A chauvinistic nationalist he may be, yet the Citizen’s assertion in “Cyclops” that numerous Irish left their home “in the black ’47”—either on account of eviction or emigration—is nevertheless correct (*U* 12.1365-66). Images associated with famine scenes are evoked: the dog that sniffs at and stalks around the carcass of another dog (*U* 3.348-50), the rats that could devour corpses to the bone (*U* 6.980-81), the “Famished ghosts” (*U* 8.730), and the personification of Ireland as Old Gummy Granny with “the deathflower of the potato blight on her breast” (*U* 15.4578-80). The Famine, indeed, *is* in Joyce, however elusive or even marginalized it may be—and this elusiveness and marginalization seems to echo and reflect the evasive attitude of the Irish toward it. In spite of this evasion, the Famine, like a ghost, manifests itself in Joyce’s texts, haunting, restless, and unstill.

Incontrovertibly, Joyce is no stranger to the Famine—a calamity whose impacts have persisted to the twentieth century and whose images have embedded in the Irish’s memory. Mary Lowe-Evans makes it clear: “the specific references to the Famine in his works demonstrate Joyce’s thorough familiarity with its circumstances” (8). Despite the attention paid to the Famine since the 1980s, and despite Joyce’s incorporation of Famine representations into his texts, researches into this field are in short supply: for more than two decades, Lowe-Evans’s *Crimes Against Fecundity: Joyce and Population Control* (1989) has remained the *only* book investigating effects of the Famine on population issues as reflected in Joyce’s works. A few

articles have come out, but most of them deal with the Famine in passing.[2] The only exception is Julieann Ulin's recent article, "'Famished Ghosts': Famine Memory in James Joyce's *Ulysses*,'" in which Ulin argues that Joyce incorporates popular historical accounts of the Famine into *Ulysses* to delineate a boundary between cultural insider (Simon Dedalus, the Citizen, and Stephen) and outsider (Bloom) (20-63). These accounts include printed sources and popular oral tradition. "Eviction, exposure, poverty, the cessation of ritual burial, and the fear of dogs devouring bodies" recorded in these accounts, Ulin stresses, "form an iconography of the Famine that is present throughout *Ulysses*" (24). While Ulin surveys several episodes of the novel—especially "Hades," "Cyclops," and "Circe"—and pays particular attention to the fears of having no proper burials and being devoured by animals, I will focus on an episode Ulin touches less upon and examine various aspects of Famine iconography as represented in it: the episode of "Lestrygonians." Descriptions of food and eating *and* depictions of hunger and destitution reminiscent of the Great Famine abound in the episode. This juxtaposition of and contrast between food and hunger is worth exploring. By representing hunger images in an episode saturated with food, I will argue, Joyce not only evokes the mid-nineteenth-century Famine, but suggests that famished ghosts in 1904 still haunted the city and accompanied the Dubliners in their daily life—inclusive of a cultural outsider, Leopold Bloom, whose reactions to the event might bespeak to a certain degree Joyce's own attitude toward the nightmarish history of the lethal Famine, and whose avoidance of Boylan at the end of the episode could be more than a manifestation of his cowardice or pacifism.

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[2] In "The Joyce of Eating: Feast, Famine and the Humble Potato in *Ulysses*," Bonnie Roos sees the Famine as the unspeakable in literature (159-96). Despite her assertion that the Famine acts as the "'Allimportant' key" (160) to *Ulysses*, Roos focuses on the exploitation of the Irish by Britain rather than the Famine itself. June Dwyer's "Feast and Famine: James Joyce and the Politics of Food" discusses three feasts in Joyce's earlier works and analyzes the Dubliners' reactions to the Famine (41-44). Probably limited to its length, Dwyer's argument is somewhat simplistic and her conclusion optimistic. Miriam O'Kane Mara's "James Joyce and the Politics of Food" centers on Stephen's fear of food ingestion, though she recognizes the significance of the Famine in shaping Irish food discourse and dietary behavior (94-110). In "Scarce More a Corpse: Famine Memory and Representations of the Gothic in *Ulysses*," James F. Wurtz considers the traumatic past of colonialism to be the haunting ghost in *Ulysses* (102-17). The title notwithstanding, Wurtz devotes his attention to Gothic representations and says little about Famine memory.

The Plenitude of Foods and Walking Skeletons

“Lestrygonians” begins with the depiction of food: “Pineapple rock, lemon platt, butter scotch. A sugersticky girl shovelling scoopfuls of creams for a christian brother. . . . Lozenge and comfit manufacturer to His Majesty the King. . . . Sitting on his throne sucking red jujubes white” (*U* 8.1-4). Passing Graham Lemon’s confectionery which emits “warm sweet fumes” (*U* 8.5-6), Bloom pictures the King having candies. In fact, not only does the King eat in Bloom’s imagination, but scores of people have lunch in this episode: Bloom himself orders a glass of Burgundy and a cheese sandwich at Davy Byrne’s (*U* 8.740-64); hungry eaters devour food at Burton’s (*U* 8.650-96); one of the sandwichmen “[draws] a chunk of bread from under his foreboard, cram[s] it into his mouth and munch[es] as he walk[s]” (*U* 8.127-28); “[a] squad of constables” are “[a]fter their feed with a good load of fat soup under their belts” (*U* 8.406-08). Even seagulls have a feast of Banbury cakes (*U* 8.74-78). In addition to the midday meal consumed on 16 June 1904, Bloom recalls several feasting events: “[t]he Glencree dinner” (*U* 8.160), the “choir picnic at the Sugarloaf” (*U* 8.166), the supper Molly had after Goodwin’s concert (*U* 8.194-96), and “the viceregal party” in which Bloom scavenged “what the quality left” (*U* 8.352-54). Furthermore, Bloom conceives that priests and nuns eat lavishly: priests, with “[t]heir butteries and larders,” live “on the fat of the land” (*U* 8.34-35), and nuns “[fry] everything in the best butter all the same” (*U* 8.151). Amid these depictions of food and eating, however, are images of hunger and destitution recalling the mid-nineteenth-century Great Famine.

Not long after he walks past the confectionery, Bloom catches a glimpse of “Dedalus’ daughter there still outside Dillon’s auctionrooms,” “[l]obbing about waiting for” her father to “[sell] off some old furniture” (*U* 8.28-30). The pawnbroker also crosses his mind in this episode (*U* 8.153). Selling or pawning belongings has been a common practice for the poor and needy to get hold of cash. During the first couple of years of the Famine, this practice was taken as an initial step to exchange for foodstuffs—when the impoverished still possessed something to trade. Clothing was the typical pledge (Ó Gráda 150). Kelleher sees “the pawning or sale of clothing in order to obtain food” as a recurrent Famine scene (25). These pledgers, Ó Gráda argues, “were from the strata most likely to be hurt by the famine” (150). They were indeed badly hurt, when nothing more was left for them to pledge and thereby to

obtain food. That the Dedaluses sell and pawn their belongings—Stephen's books included—bespeaks their precarious condition; it also evokes a common practice carried out in Famine-period Ireland.

Bloom also notices the girl's ragged dress and her looks of malnourishment: "Good Lord, that poor child's dress is in flitters. Underfed she looks too. Potatoes and marge, marge and potatoes. . . . Undermines the constitution" (*U* 8.41-43). James F. Wurtz argues that Bloom's "observation that the girl is starving, joined with the chant of 'Potatoes and marge, marge and potatoes,' calls to mind the Famine in its linking of hunger with the potato" (108). Her starvation, combined with her tattered dress and the mention of potatoes, unmistakably recalls an all-too-common Famine image embedded in the Irish's mind. But here Bloom seems to underestimate the value of potatoes and misinterpret the girl's malnutrition: it is not the consumption of potatoes, but the lack of foods, that leads to the girl's undernourishment—as Famine victims suffered from malnutrition on account of the deprivation, not the intake, of potatoes. Unquestionably, malnutrition increases the vulnerability to the infection of disease. Kinealy informs us that "Malnutrition and disease, rather than starvation, became the main enemy of the Irish poor after 1846" (*Death-Dealing* 93). The chant "Undermines the constitution" is also worth mentioning: the constitution being undermined by hunger is not merely the health of the Irish, but also "the Act of Union in which the Irish supposedly are equal members of the United Kingdom, protected by the same laws and codes of ethics" (Wurtz 108).

The Dedalus daughter is not the sole ragged and emaciated figure on the streets of Dublin. When he converses with Mrs. Breen, Bloom steals a glance at "[a] barefoot arab [standing] over the grating, breathing in the fumes" from Harrison's confectionery to "[d]eaden the gnaw of hunger" (*U* 8.235-37), and "[a] bony form [striding] along the curbstone from the river staring with a rapt gaze into the sunlight" (*U* 8.295-96). The barefoot wanderer and the skeletal form epitomize classic Famine icons. The *Cork Examiner* recorded the horrors of the Famine thus:

> Disease and death in every quarter—the once hardy population worn away to *emaciated skeletons*. . . . [H]undreds frantically *rushing from their home and country*, not with the idea of making fortunes in other lands, but to *fly from a scene of suffering and death*. . . . [W]ives *travelling* ten miles to beg the charity of a

> coffin for a dead husband. (qtd. in Ó Cathaoir 88-89; emphasis added)

Starvation made the victims skeletal. To search for food, to beg for a coffin, or to flee from misery, unnumbered walking skeletons left their homes. But more victims were reduced to homelessness by eviction, when they failed to pay the rent. Starved and homeless, the victims turned into living specters roaming from place to place. Homelessness, Kinealy asserts, was as much of a problem as hunger, “a major source of distress and death in the latter years of famine” (*Impact* 44). To put it another way, food shortages increased the vulnerability to illness, and emaciated vagrants spread disease, which led to a high mortality. As a classic Famine icon, the roaming specter was more than “a literal representation of reality at the time of the Famine” (Morash, “Making” 49); it has become a metaphor. Morash holds the view that the image of “the stalking skeleton maintained [its] currency because of [its] metaphorical nature,” suggesting the spread of both the potato blight and infectious disease (49). If the walking skeleton acts as a metaphor suggestive of the spread of blight and disease, we may argue that the starved vagrant and skeletal figure in “Lestrygonians” indicate the continuation of the Famine horrors into the early twentieth century: stalking skeletons roamed the country in the late 1840s as they did the city of Dublin in 1904.

Exported Food vs. Emigrating People

When the Irish were suffering from hunger, food was exported to Britain. No sooner does Bloom glimpse at the starving Dedalus girl than he notices a barge sailing to England: “As he set foot on O’Connell bridge a puffball of smoke plumed up from the parapet. Brewery barge with export stout. England” (*U* 8.44-45). Cecil Woodham-Smith rightly claims that “In the long and troubled history of England and Ireland no issue has provoked so much anger or so embittered relations between the two countries as the indisputable fact that huge quantities of food were exported from Ireland to England throughout the period when the people of Ireland were dying of starvation” (75). Ireland, as mentioned previously, had long played the granary to England. Kinealy offers useful statistics to illustrate Britain’s growing dependence on Irish corn: “in the 1790s Ireland had supplied Britain with 16.5 per cent of corn imports; by 1810 this had risen to 57 per cent; and by 1830 80 per cent of British corn imports came from Ireland” (*Impact* 92).

When the potato blight ravaged Ireland and resulted in large-scale hunger, food exports continued to be at high levels, and "substantial amounts of exports were originating in the west of the country" (25), the area most seriously hit by the Famine. Large amounts of grain, nevertheless, were by no means the sole produce to leave Ireland; "immense quantities of other foodstuffs, cattle and alcohol" also left the country throughout these years (25). Processed meat—bacon, for instance—was consumed by numerous poorly-paid workers in British towns, and dairy products such as butter entered many British households (92). Alcohol, too, was "a major item of export, mostly in the form of ale, stout, porter and whiskey"; being derived mainly from grain, these products "represented an averted supply of food" (115). In his investigation of the distillery in Joyce's texts, Frank Shovlin argues that Anglo-Irish-owned distilleries and their product, whiskey, function as a means for Joyce to criticize and undermine the Anglo-Irish ascendancy associated with British domination and exploitation of Ireland (134-58). Seen in the context of the Famine, this exploitation is even more obvious and the outcome more devastating: in a time when innumerable Irish were suffering from food shortages, substantial quantities of foodstuffs were transformed into alcohol and exported for British consumption—as the Dedalus girl endures hunger whilst the brewery barge with stout is sailing to England.

Ironically, the fact that Ireland was producing large amounts of food led the government to the conclusion that she needed no relief. Ó Cathaoir asserts: "One of the reasons why the British government [did] not feel bound to send food to Skibbereen [was] because there [were] ample provisions in the locality. On Saturday the market was supplied with meat, bread and fish. This contradiction [was] occurring all over Ireland" (91-92). Located in Cork, a county producing much of the whiskey leaving Ireland (Kinealy, *Impact* 115), the town Skibbereen made its name as the representative of misery during the Famine years. There might be ample provisions in the locality; however, only the well-to-do had access to them, which were entirely unavailable to the majority of "the wretches dying in the streets and by the roadsides" (Ó Cathaoir 92). Ó Cathaoir thus states: "The starving in such places as Skibbereen perish[ed] not because there [was] no food, but because they [had] no money with which to buy it" (92). Ó Cathaoir's statement echoes the economist Amartya Sen's well-known concept, the rights of entitlement. According to Sen, it is distribution, rather than supply alone, which leads to starvation; people starve on account of their lack of the entitlement to enough food, not on account of the lack of food (7-8). Indeed, one's rights of

entitlement determine his/her access to foods; not everyone suffers equally from hunger during famines or bad times, as there were both hearty eaters and starvelings in Dublin on 16 June 1904. The comparatively better-off Bloom, for example, has good feeds that day, while the Dedalus girl and the barefoot wanderer are underfed. Ireland did produce sufficient foodstuffs during the Famine years; notwithstanding this, the majority of the Irish lacked the entitlement to these foods, and this lack of entitlement, along with the government's ignorance of the Irish circumstances, led to the tragic outcome of excess mortality.

It is noteworthy that soon after he sees the barge laden with export stout, Bloom's "gaze pass[es] over the glazed apples serried on [the applewoman's] stand"; "Australians they must be this time of year," he muses (*U* 8.70-71). Bloom's reference to Australia is worthy of remark. During the Famine era, when large amounts of food were leaving Ireland, numerous people departed from their country at the same time. In point of fact, there was an orphan emigration scheme sponsored by the Australian government, which assisted over four thousand female orphans to immigrate to Australia (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 146). But assisted emigration played only a minor part; the majority of emigrants financed their own passage (146). There were, too, more common destinations than Australia, for example, the United States and Canada. However, for most of the landless poor possessing no savings or assets, the cost of a passage to North America remained too high. Therefore, only those with some means could afford to emigrate. Ó Gráda posits that the emigrants were "more likely to be from artisanal or small-farm than from purely proletarian backgrounds" (107). Such a phenomenon led a bank manager to make this comment: "the best go, the worst remain" (qtd. in Ó Gráda 109). The exodus, as mentioned earlier, did not end when the Famine was over, nor did the emigrants' misery stop when they arrived at their new home. The long journey across the Atlantic was unpleasant and dangerous; the "unseaworthy condition" of some of the vessels and the high mortality on board earned them the notorious name of "coffin-ships" (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 147). Although the vast majority of the emigrants reached their destinations, the ordeals of the journey—and of the Famine—had seriously damaged their health, contributing to their shortened lifespan and high mortality in their adopted country. Furthermore, anti-Irish prejudice and fear of infectious disease made the emigrants universally unwelcome (147). The Irish in 1904 might be able to consume apples from Australia, but half a century before some of the Famine victims had risked their lives immigrating

there in order to flee from miseries. Bloom's reference to Australia may sound like a casual remark; nevertheless, it calls to mind the exodus resulting from the Famine. It is noteworthy that Bloom describes his midday hunger thus: "This is the very worst hour of the day. Vitality. Dull, gloomy: hate this hour. Feel as if I had been eaten and spewed" (*U* 8.494-95). Read in the context of the Famine, the description is evocative: the Great Hunger was "the very worst" era in Irish history; all the "vitality" of the Irish was "dulled" and their days "gloomy"; the Irish "hated" this history. The image of being eaten and spewed is even more suggestive: Irish resources were "eaten" and her surplus population "spewed" out by the British government. Kinealy's words support this: "Although there was a concern that farmers might leave Ireland taking their capital with them, the government was generally *pleased* that so many poor Catholic peasants left Ireland" (*Death-Dealing* 148; emphasis added).

Substitute Foods and Famished Ghosts

While those with some capital left Ireland, those without stayed and tried their best to survive. Lowe-Evans asserts that "the emaciated victims were left to eat whatever was available, including rats and docile dogs" (11). Rats and dogs were not the only substitutes for potatoes. Many other curious foods were eagerly sought: birds, foxes, blood and tails of cattle, plants, shore-food, and so on (McHugh 399-402). Bloom refers to some unusual foodstuffs in "Lestrygonians." Feeding the seagulls over the Liffey, he muses: "Swans from Anna Liffey swim down here sometimes to preen themselves. No accounting for tastes. Wonder what kind is swanmeat. Robinson Crusoe had to live on them" (*U* 8.80-82). Although he never explicitly mentions the consumption of swan meat, Crusoe does eat fowl unfamiliar to him (Gifford and Seidman 159). Like Crusoe, the Famine victims preyed on birds: "Crows were eaten, sea-birds were brought down with loaded sticks skilfully thrown" (McHugh 401-02). Foxes, if available, were also eaten, despite Bloom's association of them with the "Uneatable" (*U* 8.342). Roger J. McHugh reports that some starvelings fought "over the bodies of foxes" in their "frantic search for food of any kind" (402). The image of famished ghosts licking blood also enters Bloom's mind: "Blood always needed. Insidious. Lick it up smokinghot, thick sugary. Famished ghosts" (*U* 8.729-30). This image may allude to *The Odyssey*, in which ghosts drink blood to achieve the power of speech (Gifford and Seidman 179). And yet in Famine Ireland, the famished victims drank the blood of cattle in order to sustain their lives. According to

McHugh, many farmers extracted blood from their cattle regularly, which “was generally estimated to be a good strong nourishing food” (400). But this was practiced not solely by owners of the cattle. Some of the desperate starvelings stole upon neighbors’ or strangers’ cattle, bled their necks, or cut off their tails for nourishment, though in so doing they ran the risk of being caught for their crimes (Kinealy, *Impact* 132). It is worth mentioning that what follows the image of blood-drinking ghosts is Bloom’s announcement of his hunger, “Ah, I’m hungry” (*U* 8.731)—an announcement speaking for Bloom’s own appetitive desire *and* echoing the Famine victims’ most immediate need for food.

The famished ghosts, indeed, ate any “food” they could obtain; this omnivorous consumption could threaten their lives, though. Bloom speculates about the danger of consuming strange foods: “All the odd things people pick up for food. Out of shells, periwinkles with a pin . . . out of the sea with bait on a hook. . . . If you didn’t know risky putting anything into your mouth. Poisonous berries” (*U* 8.856-59). Reflecting upon “odd” foodstuffs, Bloom has in mind the exotic foods less commonly eaten by the Irish. Intriguingly, however, his words remind us of the Famine era when unnumbered starvelings were forced to risk their lives eating whatever they could find. McHugh tells us that crowds would travel from inland to look for shore-food such as seaweeds and shellfish, which had been eaten before the Famine by the poor (401). Although sea-dwellers possessed the knowledge to consume these foodstuffs safe and sound, the migrants did not, and as a result often contracted disease or lost their lives (401). Moreover, people dug up roots and searched for berries and other plants, inclusive of nettles (399). Some of the berries, Bloom is correct, could be poisonous, and nettles were hardly fit for human consumption. It was inevitable that the indiscriminate intake of nettles and berries caused disease and death (400). As a matter of fact, “the image of the corpse with a mouth made green from having eaten nettles” is another classic Famine icon, recurring in numerous Famine representations (Morash, “Making” 49). Not only were nettles and certain types of shellfish and berries unsafe to eat, undercooked corn proved to be similarly harmful to health. The government, for a short time, had imported from North America a quantity of Indian corn, using it as a substitute for potatoes to regulate food prices and to “allow the Irish to move up a cultural ladder” (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 62). This unfamiliar foodstuff, albeit labeled by the British as a comparatively higher order of food, turned out to be more a problem than a solution: a complex process had to be followed to make the corn edible, and ignorance of

this procedure resulted in dysentery and other stomach problems, which increased mortality (*Impact* 35). As a consequence, the government had to issue pamphlets "to warn about this" (McHugh 407). The omnivorous consumption of whatever they could find and the ignorance of certain foodstuffs, in short, contributed immensely to the death toll of the Famine. As Kinealy informs us, "In April 1847 the Lord Lieutenant estimated that half of the deaths were due to bad food or food that had been inadequately cooked" (*Impact* 41). Bloom's remark on the risk of unfamiliar foodstuffs recalls the famished ghosts' ravenous intake of "foods" of any kind and its dangerous outcome in Famine Ireland.

The episode of "Lestrygonians," in actual fact, abounds in ravenous eaters. Bloom's observation of the "Men, men, men" (*U* 8.653) at Burton's goes like this:

> Perched on high stools by the bar, hats shoved back, at the tables calling for more bread no charge, swilling, wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes bulging, wiping wetted moustaches. A pallid suetfaced young man polished his tumbler knife fork and spoon with his napkin. . . . A man with an infant's saucestained napkin tucked round him shovelled gurgling soup down his gullet. A man spitting back on his plate: halfmasticated gristle: gums: no teeth to chewchewchew it. Chump chop from the grill. Bolting to get it over. Sad booser's eyes. Bitten off more than he can chew. (*U* 8.654-62)

This passage, as many Joyceans have noted, evokes the cannibalistic Lestrygonians Odysseus encounters; in the Irish context, the Lestrygonians most likely refer to the starvelings suffering from the Famine. According to the evidence of a Quaker, "The ravenous voracity with which many of [the victims] devoured [the bread he distributed] on the spot spoke strongly of starvation" (qtd. in Ó Cathaoir 87). An inspecting officer wrote to the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury, reporting his witness of crowds "scattered over the turnip fields like a flock of famishing crows, devouring the raw turnips, mothers half naked, shivering in the snow and sleet, uttering exclamations of despair while their children were screaming with hunger" (qtd. in Ó Cathaoir 90). The restaurant patrons "calling for more bread," "swilling, wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food," "shovel[ing] gurgling soup down [their gullets]," "[b]olting to get it over," and "[biting] off more than [they] can chew"

unmistakably suggest a scene of hunger and their desperate need for food, a scene not unlike the ones in which Famine victims devoured bread or raw turnips on the spot. The eaters' "bulging" eyes, "pallid" faces, toothless gums, and "[s]ad" blank eyes indicate the consequences of their starvation—their ill health and despair—while their "calling for more bread" echoes the mothers' "exclamations of despair" and children's screams of hunger. These restaurant clients, however, are not simply representations of the mid-nineteenth-century calamity; rather, they "point to the continuation of that tragic past into the present" (Wurtz 109). As Wurtz declares: "these eaters are eating as though unused to the availability of food, wolfing down their meals before it can be taken away from them. Indeed, these 'Lestrygonians' are suffering from the effects of starvation, without teeth to chew, ashen-faced, with 'Sad booser's eyes.' The spectacle of consumption is here linked to the specter of starvation, the need to eat outweighing all other considerations" (109).

The need to eat does outweigh all other considerations. Bloom comments on one of the eaters: "That fellow ramming a knifeful of cabbage down *as if his life depended on it*" (*U* 8.682-83; emphasis added). Eating, indisputably, is a matter of life and death, especially for those enduring starvation. Bloom admits that "Hungry man is an angry man" (*U* 8.662-63). In fact, angry starvelings did fight for food during the Famine era. Kinealy points out that sustained food shortages "resulted in a period of extraordinary disorder and protest, whilst riot and theft were integral parts of the crisis" (*Impact* 117). Most of the agitation, including protest and food riots, occurred during the first two years. Widespread riots broke out following the first potato failure, and attacks on food supplies increased in the wake of the blight's second visit (124-25). "In the midlands," Ó Cathaoir reports, "cart-loads of flour and oatmeal [were] attacked by crowds of men, women and children" (85), while in Bantry, food rioters were dispersed by the military police, some of them plucking and devouring turnips when retreating (145). In Dublin, the self-styled "Hungry Mob" paraded and took bread from bakeries, resulting in the arrest of twenty-two mobsters and the authorities' decision "to provide police protection for bakers and provision shops" (Kinealy, *Impact* 128-29). With the prolongation of the potato blight, protest and riots ceased. Kinealy explains the reason: "deteriorating conditions rendered the poor increasingly impotent," and "prolonged hunger, disease and fatigue had taken their toll on a population who increasingly preferred emigration or resignation to protest" (118).

Public agitation might cease, yet crimes did not. McHugh claims that food-stealing memory was strong during the Famine years (402). A proprietor affirmed that want of money had induced the destitute to plunder their neighbors' potato fields (Ó Cathaoir 71). Some of the famished, as mentioned earlier, bled the necks of other people's cattle or cut off their tails to obtain nourishment. In Cork county jail alone, one thousand prisoners were charged with larceny and sheep-stealing, according to the *Nation*'s report in March 1847 (Ó Cathaoir 107). Ó Gráda tells us that throughout Famine Ireland petty crimes against property increased dramatically, along with jail sentences for offences such as stealing a hen or turnips (40). To survive, the famished resorted to crimes of theft. For some of the perpetrators, surprisingly, a sentence of jail or transportation was desirable by reason of the provision of food or free passage away from Ireland. As Ó Gráda recounts, "In Limerick in April 1849, it took a court only three days to deal with twelve hundred cases, because nearly all the defendants pleaded guilty in hopes of being held in prison" (41). There were more violent crimes, though. In Rosscarbery, a man beheaded two children whilst stealing food (Ó Cathaoir 107). The more violent crimes served as a reminder that extreme situations could drive people to desperate measures (Kinealy, *Impact* 26). As Kinealy declares, the sharp increase in the number of committals peaked in 1848, the year after Black '47, "when it was almost 100 per cent higher than its pre-Famine levels" (135); the high crime rates indicated that "the fabric of society was breaking down" (26).

The breakdown of the fabric of society was obvious. Seeing the ravenous eaters at Burton's, Bloom reflects: "Every fellow for his own, tooth and nail. Gulp. Gulp. Gulp. Gobstuff" (*U* 8.701); "Eat or be eaten. Kill! Kill!" (*U* 8.703). Bloom is correct: in Famine Ireland, when starvation haunted the majority of the people, every fellow was for his own; many starvelings had hardened themselves in order to win the battle of survival. Cheating for food rations was common. McHugh offers some anecdotes: an old woman got three separate rations by disguising herself; an old man christened his cat to create an extra ration for himself; people buried their dead at night to prevent the loss of their relief food (408). There were more distressing anecdotes regarding the concealment of the dead: in Mayo, a father hid his dead child in a dunghill for two weeks for the ration allowed the child (Kinealy, *Impact* 28-29); in north Cork, bodies were concealed for thirteen or fourteen days for the sake of an entitlement to relief meal (Ó Gráda 40). Customs surrounding death have been of enormous significance for the Irish. The concealment of

bodies and abandonment of observances bespoke the social and moral collapse of Famine Ireland (Miller 183). Not only did the starvelings desecrate the dead, but they fought against the living. McHugh reports what could happen in food-distribution centers: “Often hunger could be too strong for them and the strong would shove aside the weak, or turn upon someone from another district who had taken a place in their queue, or rush frantically at the boiler and get badly scalded by plunging their noggins into it or by having soup thrown in their faces” (408). The bonds that held pre-Famine society together had dissolved. People fought for food as their lives depended on it; they would turn into the victimized if they did not act the victimizer. Roles of villains were played no longer by British government and Protestant landlords alone; “many Catholics proved equally heartless toward their neighbors and dependents” (Miller 183), and there were many “repulsive and inhumane behavior by the not-so-poor against the poor, and by the poor against the poor” (Ó Gráda 45). “Eat or be eaten. Kill! Kill!” (*U* 8.703), Bloom’s remark cannot be more accurate in describing the breakdown of social fabric.

What was even more heartrending was the breakdown of familial bonds. In an era when group integrity was shattered and compassion lost, when everybody was for his or her own, family ties eventually loosened. A relief official observed that the Famine had “hardened the people’s hearts against their children and relatives,” and concluded that “a reckless, careless and selfish feeling [would] arise where great want exist[ed]” (qtd. in Ó Gráda 45). A doctor also wrote of the general collapse in family structures: “I have seen mothers snatch food from the hands of their starving children; known a son to engage in a fatal struggle with his father for a potato; and have seen parents look on the putrid bodies of their offspring without evincing a symptom of sorrow” (qtd. in Kelleher 24). It was common that families fought over meager resources, and the very old and very young usually lost out (Ó Gráda 210). Desertion was frequent: one or both parents deserting families (Lowe-Evans 19), husbands abandoning wives, and grown children turning their parents out (Miller 183). Even child murder was reported (Ó Gráda 210). A crime usually committed by the mother, infanticide, as Kelleher asserts, remains “one of the most ‘unthinkable’ of human experiences” (24), suggesting the dehumanizing effects of starvation which have changed the role and image of the mother. Traditionally, the “Great Mother” plays the “giver of life,” the “source of nurture and protection”; in Famine Ireland and many Famine texts, however, the maternal figure also plays the “Terrible

Mother," the giver of death, "possessing the power to deprive, devour or destroy" (7). Children, on the other hand, were not necessarily the innocent, helpless weaklings all the time. McHugh depicts the story that a mother died and her baby ate her breast (419). Patricia Lysaght regards this as "the most vivid illustration of the strength of the instinct to survive" (43). The baby's survival instinct notwithstanding, the image of the child devouring the dead mother's breast was nevertheless an upsetting one, another indicator of the Famine's devastation.

That the baby devoured its mother's breast, to a certain degree, suggests the act of cannibalism, a practice Bloom remarks upon when associating Dignam's corpse with Plumtree's potted meat: "Dignam's potted meat. Cannibals would with lemon and rice. . . . Expect the chief consumes the parts of honour" (*U* 8.744-46). Although Bloom refers to the ritualistic eating of human flesh by some tribes of aborigines,[3] cannibalistic acts did occur in Famine Ireland. Lowe-Evans maintains that the Famine brought on "shocking cases of cannibalism" (19). Ó Cathaoir offers another story that the child ate the flesh of the mother, who was *alive*: when an impoverished woman came home, one of her children, maddened by starvation, bit off part of her arm (107). Such a case, of course, was rare; most of the flesh being consumed was from dead bodies rather than humans alive. Kinealy also reports a case of alleged cannibalism: "One man convicted for stealing food in County Galway confessed that 'before he was driven to the theft, he and his family had actually consumed part of a human body lying dead in the cabin with them'" (*Impact* 138). Hunger had driven the starvelings to eat something unthinkable. What was even more shocking was perhaps the mother's consumption of her dead child's flesh. If infanticide was "one of the most 'unthinkable' of human experiences" as Kelleher claims (24), that the mother ate her own child was equally, if not more, horrifying—and doubly horrifying if the two deeds were combined. Ulin associates the devouring Vampire Mother that haunts Stephen with the maternal figures in Famine accounts who ate their children, and deems the act "an indication of the primordial breakdown precipitated by the Famine" (39). Ulin also argues that Bloom's thoughts of the eaters at Burton's, "Hungry man is an angry man" (*U* 8.662-63) and "Eat or be eaten. Kill! Kill!" (*U* 8.703), and his description of the foodstuffs at the butcher's as "Rawhead and bloody bones" (*U* 8.726), are saturated with cannibalistic imagery and recall cannibalism in the Famine era (49-50). The eaters'

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[3] For a study of Joyce and cannibalism, see Rice.

ravenous consumption at Burton's, indeed, calls to mind the man-eating behavior in Famine Ireland and in aboriginal tribes; hence they embody the cannibalistic Lestrygonians. Nevertheless, there is a major difference between aboriginal cannibals and Famine cannibals (and Joyce's cannibals): the former eat human flesh for religious purposes, whereas the latter consumed human flesh for the sole purpose of survival.

Not only famished people ate human flesh, but dogs did. After his lunch at Davy Byrne's, Bloom observes a dog enjoying a feast: "At Duke lane a ravenous terrier choke[s] up a sick knuckly cud on the cobblestones and lap[s] it with new zest" (*U* 8.1031-32). Voracious dogs, in fact, recur in Joyce's text, whether the dog sniffing at the carcass in "Proteus" (*U* 3.348-50), or the mongrel chasing after Bloom's carriage in "Cyclops" (*U* 12.1906-08). Ulin emphasizes that the fear of ravenous dogs, along with poverty, eviction, exposure, and the cessation of ritual burial, "form[s] an iconography of the Famine that is present throughout *Ulysses*" (24). Lowe-Evans tells us that while emaciated victims ate docile dogs, ravenous dogs "ate the flesh of unburied dead bodies" (11). Indeed, many of the Famine accounts involve descriptions of corpses being devoured by dogs. An old woman narrated what she had witnessed: "There were houses in this district in which all died of fever and none were buried. . . . There were many hungry dogs going about. . . . [T]hey were going into these houses and eating the bodies. . . . [T]here was nothing to be seen but people's bones lying about the house" (qtd. in McHugh 417-18). Ó Cathaoir tells another story: a man carted three coffins containing his wife and two children to the graveyard, but was too weakened by starvation himself to bury the dead on arrival, and the next day the priest found voracious dogs eating the bodies (99). Occasionally, the victims being attacked by dogs were not even dead, but were too weak to defend themselves (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 94). Similar stories are too many to recount. What is significant is the implication behind these stories. Kinealy asserts that one of the chief horrors of the Famine was the way people died rather than the high mortality itself and points out that numerous reports of bodies being eaten by animals were recorded in Famine narratives (94). Kinealy seems to suggest that being devoured by animals, for the Famine victims, was the most fearful death. For the Irish—and humanity in general—burial has been a time-honored, and the last, rite of passage which everyone deserves. Death without a proper burial was painful and disrespectful enough, not to mention remains being eaten by animals. The ravenous terrier choking up a sick knuckly cud

Bloom glimpses on the cobblestones seems to evoke one of the profoundest fears the Irish had during the Famine years.[4]

Assisting the government in maintaining order and performing tasks in this period of turmoil and distress were the military and the police; the latter make their appearance in "Lestrygonians." Bloom notices several policemen in the street: "A squad of constables debouched from College street, marching in Indian file. Goosestep. Foodheated faces, sweating helmets, patting their truncheons. After their feed with a good load of fat soup under their belts" (*U* 8.406-08). Their satiety contrasts sharply with the hunger the Dedalus girl and other emaciated wanderers suffer from. Seeing them, Bloom reflects on their job and remembers an unpleasant experience:

> Can't blame them after all with the job they have especially the young hornies. That horsepoliceman the day Joe Chamberlain was given his degree in Trinity he got a run for his money. My word he did! His horse's hoofs clattering after us down Abbey street. . . . He did come a wallop, by George. Must have cracked his skull on the cobblestones. . . . Police whistle in my ears still. All skedaddled. (*U* 8.421-32)

So far as the thoughtful Bloom is concerned, the horsepoliceman was doing his job, a difficult job actually. For the majority of the Irish, however, the police have long been a symbol of imperial domination, unwelcome and detestable—especially so during the Famine era. When foods were to be exported, the police guarded them from the attacks of hungry mobs; when emaciated victims were starving, they helped landlords collect the rent; when the impoverished were evicted or rioting, they stood by the government and carried out orders. All the tasks they performed "added to their unpopularity" (Kinealy, *Impact* 146) and rendered them "despised" during and after the Famine (148). Their appearance at the midday of 16 June 1904, a time when many Dubliners such as the Dedalus girl and other emaciated wanderers are starving, together with the descriptions of their having a good feed and their performing the task of dispersing protesters, reinforces their association with imperial domination and exploitation and recalls the detested role they had played during the Famine period.

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[4] For more discussions on Joyce's representations of the fears of having no proper burials and being eaten by ravenous animals, see Ulin 33-39.

The Soup Kitchen

Not until Black '47, as mentioned earlier, did the government recognize the devastation caused by the Famine and establish soup kitchens to provide free food, a scheme which did save lives in spite of its controversy. Free soup was traditionally offered by charities as a cheap and effective means of feeding the poor (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 99). In Famine Ireland, before the setup of government soup kitchens, the Quakers had pioneered the use of the scheme and become directly involved in relief; a number of charitable landlords and individuals also supplied soup to the destitute (99). The scale of these soup kitchens, however, was too small to meet the needs of the Famine victims (Strang and Toomre 72), though they did provide direct relief for the needy before the government did.

Some of Bloom's thoughts in "Lestrygonians" have their analogues in the soup kitchen. Seeing the "barefoot arab," Bloom thinks about charity food: "Penny dinner. Knife and fork chained to the table" (*U* 8.235-38). After he leaves the ravenous eaters at Burton's, he muses on the idea of a communal kitchen: "Suppose that communal kitchen years to come perhaps. All trotting down with porringers and tommycans to be filled. . . . [L]ord mayor in his gingerbread coach. . . . Want a souppot as big as the Phoenix park" (*U* 8.704-15). Bloom's idea of the communal kitchen, Lowe-Evans argues, is similar to Alexis Soyer's scheme of the Dublin soup kitchen (18), in which the flatware was literally chained. As Kinealy tells us, following the potato failure in England in 1845, several charitable soup kitchens had been set up, among which the most famous was established in London by Soyer (*Death-Dealing* 99-100). In February 1847, Soyer proposed to the government the plan of a model kitchen in Dublin, claiming he could provide cheap but nourishing soup (Strang and Toomre 66, 70). Compared with other charitable kitchens then in operation, Soyer's model kitchen was larger and more efficient, with the objective of minimizing waste and disorder (70, 73). The adoption of steam-cooking not only conserved fuel but also ensured the correct preparation of ingredients, and thus was economical and avoided waste through unfamiliarity with foodstuffs such as Indian corn (73). The threats of food poisoning, stomach problems, and food-related diseases were reduced as a consequence. Soyer's model kitchen was opened on 5 April 1847. The Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Mayor, and a hundred other celebrities were invited to attend the opening ceremony and sampled the soup, which they

declared to be "delicious" (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 100). The building had "a door at each end";

> in the centre was a 300-gallon soup boiler, and a hundred bowls, to which spoons were attached by chains, were let into long tables. The people assembled outside the building, and were first admitted to a narrow passage, a hundred at a time; a bell rang, they were let in, drank their soup, received a portion of bread, and left by the other door. The bowls were rinsed, the bell rang again, and another hundred were admitted. (Woodham-Smith 179)

The whole process took no more than six minutes (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 101), and Soyer's aims of efficiency and order were achieved—though whether the soup was delicious or even nutritious remained an issue under debate.[5] Conflicting assessments of the model kitchen notwithstanding, Bloom, with his practical and scientific temperament, would certainly appreciate Soyer's kitchen that sought for efficiency and minimization of waste and disorder. Bloom's idea of the communal kitchen, which comes into his mind after he observes the ravenous eaters at Burton's, and his inclusion of the Lord Mayor among the eaters, curiously recall Soyer's soup kitchen, which served to feed the starved Famine victims and whose opening ceremony the Lord Mayor did attend.

After the opening of Soyer's model kitchen, other soup kitchens were established throughout Ireland in the summer of 1847. At the peak of this scheme, over three million people—or at least 37 percent of the population—received free rations of food every day (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 104). Yet not all the needy benefited from the government soup kitchens in the summer of Black '47. Bureaucratic procedures delayed the opening of some of them, and many of the poorest areas lacked the infrastructure or apparatus to set up the kitchens. Large cauldrons, for example, were in short supply (102). Bloom may have exaggerated the case in making the remark, "Want a souppot as big as the Phoenix park" (*U* 8.715), but he does point out the indispensability of the large cauldron for starting the soup kitchen. In the areas without access to official relief, then, the victims relied on private philanthropy, such as the Quakers, local clergy, and other charitable individuals, to meet their nutritional deficit (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 102).

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[5] For the nutritional value of Soyer's soup and his recipes, see Strang and Toomre 74-80.

Despite the fact that soup kitchens provided the Famine victims with what they desperately needed, the scheme was not without controversy. For one thing, a sense of humiliation was attached to subsistence on relief. McHugh emphasizes that many victims felt humiliated "at existing on relief-food, where they had previously been comparatively independent as long as the potato continued to grow" (410). Kinealy also argues that the poor regarded the receipt of gratuitous relief in soup kitchens as a "loss of status," an act which reduced them to the categorization of "paupers" (*Impact* 42). By the same token, Ó Cathaoir contends that people found soup kitchens "degrading," and "would prefer to receive wages or cook food rations themselves" rather than "being made beggars" by receiving cooked soup (112). The method of distribution, furthermore, was detested. Unlike Soyer's Dublin kitchen where people drank soup on the spot with the bowls provided, the other soup kitchens had a different procedure of distribution: each person had to bring a bowl or pot and stood in a line until his or her turn came to have soup ladled into it—much like what Bloom pictures in mind that "All [trot] down with porringers and tommycans to be filled. Devour contents in the street" (*U* 8.704-06). Such a method "outraged Irish pride" as it was thought to degrade them to "the bearers of pots and pans" (Woodham-Smith 295). Resistance was of no avail, though; "the choice was the soup kitchen or death from starvation," comments Woodham-Smith (295). In spite of the people's aversion to soup kitchens, the scheme did tackle the problems of food scarcity and huger with some success (Ó Cathaoir 127). During its period of operation, crimes such as cattle stealing and plundering decreased (Kinealy, *Impact* 43).

But soup kitchens repulsed the Irish in a yet more abhorrent respect: their association with proselytism. As Bloom reflects: "They say they used to give pauper children soup to change to protestants in the time of the potato blight" (*U* 8.1071-73). To avoid the possibility of proselytizing, the government requested a representative from each of the major religious denominations to sit on the relief committees (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 102). Nevertheless, the government failed to prevent private philanthropy from the acts of proselytization. Although the Quakers were well-known "for not using their social activities as a platform for proselytizing," a number of English religious groups took the opportunity of the Famine to convert the destitute Catholics (*Impact* 68, 64). Their proselytizing activities cast a long, dark shadow over the life of the Irish, leaving a legacy "which was still evident at

the end of the twentieth century" (23-24).[6] That Bloom refers to their activity in 1904 demonstrates this long-lasting impact. Whether the private or the official, soup kitchens were controversial despite their provision of food for the needy. That many of the survivors refused to admit their reliance on soup kitchens bespoke their repugnance against the scheme.

Conclusion: Bloom and Famine Memory

"The harp that once did starve us all" (*U* 8.606-07), Bloom changes thus the lyrics to Thomas Moore's song, "The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls" (Gifford and Seidman 176). Ireland, undeniably, starved her people in the mid-1840s. Successive years of potato blight, combined with "ideological, political and commercial constraints," resulted in "a truly terrible tragedy [that] occurred at the heart of the richest and most powerful Empire in the world" (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 15). To remember such a tragedy was painful, yet to forget it was impossible. Throughout *Ulysses*, Lowe-Evans stresses, "the Famine surfaced again and again (albeit rhetorically) in the Dublin of 1904" (13). Echoing Lowe-Evans, Ulin asserts that the Famine "exists in explicit and direct references throughout Joyce's work as well as through a series of signs and images recognized by those with access to the cultural memory" (59). Joyce has inherited this cultural memory, and his incorporation of Famine representations into his text illustrates his familiarity with the tragedy. In "Lestrygonians" in particular, images and thoughts of hunger recur in Bloom's streams of consciousness. Ulin therefore argues that "Bloom's thoughts do not seem far from the Famine throughout this episode" (50).

Indeed, Bloom's thoughts are not far from the Famine throughout "Lestrygonians," an episode abounding in descriptions of foodstuffs *and* images of starvation. The contrast between the plenitude of foods and numbers of famished skeletons unmistakably recalls the Famine era when Ireland produced plentiful foodstuffs while her own people were starving due to their lack of entitlement to them—and Bloom's remark, "The harp that once did starve us all" (*U* 8.606-07), serves as a reminder of this nightmarish history. Moreover, the evocation of Famine icons in this episode—walking skeletons, ravenous eaters, and so on—suggests the lingering of Famine memory, if not the long-term impact and continuation of Famine horrors.

[6] For instance, proselytism deepened existing divisions within society. See Kinealy, *Impact* 23-24.

Ireland in 1904 was still haunted by famished ghosts who, in mid-nineteenth as in early twentieth century, had no access to food owing to imperial domination and colonial exploitation. As is generally admitted, Bloom, with his Jewish lineage, acts as a cultural outsider in the Dublin community. At the sight of the ravenous eaters at Burton’s, he shows his distaste: “Out. I hate dirty eaters” (*U* 8.696). This act not only reveals his non-belonging to this group (Wurtz 109), but also indicates his detachment from the “dirty eaters” frequently seen in Famine Ireland. Ulin observes that many of Bloom’s thoughts in “Hades”—communal hinge coffins, for example (*U* 6.817)—offend Famine memory (42-47). In “Lestrygonians,” Bloom further offends Famine memory: his thoughtfulness for the police, his idea of the communal kitchen, and his refusal to dine with ravenous patrons. Ulin declares that Bloom as a cultural outsider “shares no memory of [the] greatest trauma” of Irish culture (41). Truly, Bloom—as well as Joyce and the majority of Bloom’s fellow Dubliners—shares no memory of the Famine because he did not experience it himself; what he shares, as Morash suggests, is the memory of the “literary representations of the Famine” (“Making” 40), which are so widespread and penetrating that even Bloom, a cultural outsider, has borne in mind these icons and images, albeit his sense of detachment and alienation from them. To put it another way, Bloom is familiar with the iconography of the Famine as other Dubliners do, but stays outside the pain, stupor, and sentiment associated with it on account of his being an outsider. Ulin has it that Bloom’s status allows him to remain outside of the culture’s “power to paralyze”; such a characteristic makes him the sole character who “operates continually throughout the text to forestall or prevent eviction, homelessness, starvation and poverty in his relationship with both the Dignam family and Stephen Dedalus” (58). In portraying his protagonist as a cultural outsider who remembers representations of the Famine but remains outside of its paralyzing power, Joyce suggests a “healthier” attitude toward the Famine: to remember, but not to be enslaved.[7] In this respect, it may be argued that Joyce is a precursor of the Famine studies emerging in the 1980s as he attempts to simultaneously confront the Famine and lead the way out of its entrapment.

It is noteworthy that the episode of “Lestrygonians” ends with Bloom’s search for the potato in his pocket and his safe avoidance of Boylan:

[7] Simon Dedalus, for example, is enslaved by the Famine memory of being unable to bury the dead, as testified to by his fierce adherence to death rituals. See Ulin 30-33.

> His hasty hand went quick into a pocket, took out, read unfolded Agendath Netaim. Where did I?
>
> . . . .
>
> His hand looking for the where did I put found in his hip pocket soap. . . . Ah soap there I yes. Gate.
>
> Safe! (*U* 8.1183-93)

Looking for the talismanic potato inherited from his mother, who had certainly experienced the Famine, Bloom also finds in his pockets the Agendath Netaim advertisement and soap. Agendath Netaim, a planters' company aiming at helping the Jews to settle in Palestine, advertised that it set up farms for the prospective settlers and sent them the crop (Gifford and Seidman 74; *U* 4.191-99). Soap, on the other hand, played a minor but crucial part in the Famine: the lack of access to soap resulted in the unhygienic clothing and homes of the poor, contributing to the spread of disease and high mortality (Kinealy, *Death-Dealing* 93). Bloom's possession of the talismanic potato, Agendath Netaim, and soap, and his subsequent "safe" avoidance of an unwelcome guest, are worth pondering upon. In a subtle but witty way, Joyce seems to suggest that to lead a secure life free from deadly threats like famines, the potato, plantation, and soap are all indispensable: the potato sustains the lives of numerous Irish in times of good harvest; the plantation ensures extra supplies of food and offers the opportunity of emigration in times of want; and soap assures cleanliness and helps prevent the spread of disease and high mortality. The Famine, indeed, is in Joyce, whether his mind or his text.

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