The Body Politics of James Joyce's Oeuvre: Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and Ulysses

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Dubliners, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Ulysses*

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Introduction

The representation of bodies within James Joyce's texts works to reveal a fragile Irish body politic. Joyce was explicit in his focus on physiology in *Ulysses*, writing: "Among other things, [*Ulysses*] is the epic of the human body" (quoted in J. B. Lyons 156). He also, however, incorporates observations on physiology into his earlier texts—his collection of short stories *Dubliners* and his first novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Through his attention to human bodies and the economic, political, and social factors that inform them, Joyce examines how his Irish characters and their physiology are products of the factors and powers at play in Ireland. He often does so while simultaneously offering powerful criticism of these same factors. In doing so, Joyce comments on the impoverished conditions of its lower and lower-middle classes, he depicts the implications of Ireland's occupation under imperial British rule and the dominion of the Catholic Church, and he pushes back against the limiting beliefs existing over which bodies were valued. In this thesis, I examine how Joyce's application of physiology in *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Ulysses* works to critically reflect on the body politic of Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century.

The human body has a long literary history of being used as a metaphor for the workings of a nation, and Joyce applies this metaphor in his texts. He does so most clearly in *Ulysses* through the schema he created and followed in writing and organizing the text. In a letter to Carlo Linati, Joyce wrote: "My intention is… to allow each adventure (that is, every hour, every organ, every art being interconnected and interrelated in the structural schema of the whole [text]) to condition and even to create its own technique" (quoted in R. Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* xvii). In this passage, Joyce reveals his intent to capture the interconnectedness of all facets of life, with specific focus on the body, which is noted by his intent to use human organs in the orientation of the text. This organization of *Ulysses* has the effect of creating an

analogy between the human body and the political body and it allows Joyce to evaluate the interconnectedness of the localization of disease and the social factors that inform Irish society.

The term "body politic" refers collectively to the people living within a nation, state, or society. In this thesis, it most often refers to collective Irish society. "Body politic" is also, however, a metaphor of applying systems of the body to the governing political body, and it was first employed by medieval writer Christine de Pizan, who examined the vulnerable body politic of fifteenth-century France in the face of political turbulence and classist tensions. She wrote:

> For just as the human body is not whole, but defective and deformed when it lacks any of its members, so the body politic cannot be perfect, whole, nor healthy if all the estates of which we speak are not well joined and united together. (De Pizan 90)

De Pizan metaphorized the common people as the belly, legs, and feet, placing the lowest classes of French society as the foundation of France's metaphorical human body. In *Ulysses*, Joyce draws a similar comparison, calling the "the Irish Catholic peasant… the backbone of our empire" (742). In this statement, Joyce comments on the exploitation of the Irish by the British Empire. As such, the "defective and deformed" body politic that De Pizan warned about in her writing could aptly be applied to Ireland's body politic in Joyce's texts. Joyce portrays the British Empire and its ruling class as profiting off Ireland's imperial subjugation while the Irish, particularly the majority Catholic lower and lower-middle classes, face economic uncertainty, poverty, and religious, political, and nationalist tensions. These tensions are all being explored in Joyce's texts.

The relation between bodies and power would eventually be coined "biopolitics" by French philosopher Michel Foucault in his 1978-79 collection of lectures "The Birth of Biopolitics." While "body politic" refers to the metaphor of applying the physical body to the

governing political body, "biopolitics" establishes bodies as "fluid sites of power and political contestation" (Harcourt 21). The term "body politics" refers, additionally, to the concept that "bodies are the core of political order as markers of status and power" (Waylen et al. 161). These terms are significant because Joyce's texts reveal that pre-Foucauldian theories of biopolitics and body politics were being explored in his lifetime. Joyce's awareness of this shift is apparent in the ways that he employs physiology in his texts to represent social and ideological issues, and, indeed, this connection between the body and society was being studied with increasing interest during and following the Victorian era, which preceded his writing. I use these terms "body politic," "biopolitics," and "body politics" to evaluate how the Irish bodies in Joyce's texts are a reflection of the systems governing Ireland in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

This thesis, then, offers a critical examination of Joyce's oeuvre with specific attention to *Ulysses* to explore the body politics of his works and to evaluate how the Irish bodies within his texts are used to examine the political, social, cultural, and religious influences at play in Ireland and their consequences. This thesis is divided into four chapters. "Chapter 1: Poverty and the body" is an evaluation of the socio-economic factors present in Ireland and the effects of poverty on the Irish bodies in his texts. "Chapter 2: Institutions and the body" examines the effect of the ruling institution and the religious denomination in Ireland—the British Empire and the Catholic Church—on Irish bodies. "Chapter 3: Women and non-normative bodies and the body politic" works to evaluate the consequences of the undervaluation of certain bodies, meaning those that not white, male, Catholic, and/or able, to the health of Ireland's body politic. As his novels are semi-autobiographical, it is only natural to also acknowledge Joyce as a product of Ireland's body politic. "Chapter 4: Joyce as a product of Ireland's body politic" is an evaluation of Joyce as a product of these same forces he evaluates through the Irish bodies in his texts.

Chapter 1: Poverty and the body

Poverty was a major factor in the vulnerable body politic of Joyce's Ireland. Each of his texts depicts the poor and precarious economic conditions present in Dublin at the time he was writing. Joyce created imperfect characters with imperfect bodies that have missing limbs and teeth and are often in varying states of ill health and decay. In doing so, Joyce positions Irish bodies as a space for critical examination, exploring how factors like wealth inequality manifest with real and lasting physiological consequences. In this chapter, I examine the socio-economic factors depicted in Joyce's texts and the historical basis of his writing to evaluate how poverty informs the bodies of his Irish characters.

Joyce focuses on the materiality of human life in *Ulysses*, including descriptions of different moments within a life cycle—birth, death, and decomposition—as well as descriptions of taboo subjects related to the body—bowel movements, masturbation, and menstruation. Many of these depictions of the human body include ailments and decay, which Joyce portrays as being a likely result of the unsanitary and impoverished living conditions of Dublin at the time. Joyce depicts the "wasted body" (*Ulysses* 4) of Stephen's mother and "the green sluggish bile, which had torn up from her rotting liver" (*Ulysses* 4), Dubliners "[l]iving in bogswamp, eating cheap food and the streets paved with dust, horsedung, and consumptives' spit" (*Ulysses* 16), and the Irish soil "quite fat with corpse manure, bones, flesh, nails, and charnelhouses" (*Ulysses* 137). These depictions of broken and decaying bodies appear alongside the poor socio-economic conditions present. The average life expectancy in Dublin in 1904 was about 50 years and the social conditions, like single-room accommodation, large families, tenements, and unemployment were a part of the socio-economic tensions that likely presented and exacerbated health challenges (quoted in Shanahan and Quigley 280). From Joyce's portrayal of Dublin in these scenes makes it clear that death and debris are very much a part of the city's physiology as well.

Edna Duffy in her essay "Setting: Dublin 1904/1922" further examines the socio-economic challenges present in Joyce's Dublin. She writes that despite appearing to be an Edwardian provincial city, "the Dublin of *Ulysses* is largely a city of lower-middle-class men who are precariously employed… with little or no actual work available" ("Setting: Dublin" 84). Wealth in Dublin, according to Duffy, was limited and socio-economic inequality existed below the city's imperial exterior. Duffy captures the irony of Dublin's imperial exterior alongside its citizens who are largely near-impoverished and Joyce captures this irony in his texts as well. *Ulysses* is set on a Thursday, a working day, yet in "Circe" and "Cyclops" men pass their time drinking in public houses rather than working, which likely reflects the lack of jobs and economic opportunity available. Of this lack of economic opportunity, Duffy writes that it produced Dubliners' "aimless quality, their drunkenness, their endless time for talk, and – perhaps – their desperate raucous quality, their sometimes profligacy" ("Setting: Dublin" 85).

Joyce reveals the Dublin that exists beyond the middle-class façade that Duffy exposes in "Setting: Dublin." The episode "Circe" in *Ulysses,* for example, opens with a description of the decrepit entrance to Nighttown, which was, according to medical historian F. S. L. Lyons in "James Joyce's Dublin," where one third of Dublin's population lived in 1904 (quoted in Nolan 121). Joyce depicts Nighttown's "uncobbled tramsiding set with skeleton tracks" (*Ulysses* 561) and "[r]ows of flimsy houses with gaping doors" (*Ulysses* 561). This dilapidated portrayal of Nighttown's infrastructure exists beside a depiction of its inhabitants. Joyce writes of "stunted men and women" (*Ulysses* 562) squabbling over meager "wafers between which are wedged lumps of coal and copper snow" (*Ulysses* 562), a "deaf mute idiot… [lifting] a palsied arm" (*Ulysses* 562), and a scene of implied domestic violence in which "[a] plate crashes; a woman screams; a child wails" (*Ulysses* 562) alongside the "roar" of a man (*Ulysses* 562). This introduction to Nighttown captures the effects of extreme poverty on Dublin's citizens. F. Shanahan and E. M. M. Quigley in "Medicine in the Art of *Ulysses*" write that

"Joyce was particularly interested in portraying the afflictions of society and disorders closely linked with lifestyle" (282). In his depictions of poverty, like in this introductory scene from "Circe," he reveals the socio-economic conditions of Dublin alongside its consequences, which include scarcity of resources, malnutrition, disease, and violence and crime. Joyce, throughout his texts, repeatedly reveals the socio-economic factors existing in Dublin with a covert evaluation of the social and health issues that accompany them.

Joyce often explores the embodied trauma of poverty through the Dedalus family and the instability of their economic situation. The precarious position of the Irish middle-class that Duffy writes of in "Setting: Dublin 1904/1922" is exemplified by the transformation of the Dedalus family from comfortably middle-class to penniless in Joyce's semi-autobiographical texts, *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*. Joyce's characterization of Mr. Dedalus, who is based on Joyce's father, and the change of fortune that the Dedalus family experiences is a fictional portrayal of the change of fortune Joyce's own family experienced during his childhood and adolescence. Richard Ellmann in his biography *James Joyce* explains that Joyce's relations appear in his texts "under thin disguises" (11). He writes that Joyce's father John Joyce, like Simon Dedalus, "filled his house with children and with debts" and was a "reckless, talented man, convinced that he was the victim of circumstances" (*James Joyce* 20). Joyce's characterization of Mr. Dedalus changes in a meaningful way over the course of these two texts, revealing how socio-economic status, economic opportunity, and class mobility affect Dubliners in real and meaningful ways.

As the Dedalus family becomes increasingly impoverished, Mr. Dedalus transforms from a generous, loving father to one who is unreliable and often absent from his children. In *A Portrait*, Joyce writes, "[Mr. Dedalus] always gave [Stephen] a shilling when he asked for a sixpence" (21) and Mr. Dedalus tells Stephen that "if he wanted anything to write home to

him" (7). Mr. Dedalus, additionally, "poured sauce freely" (*A Portrait* 25) and "heaped up the food" (*A Portrait* 27) on guests' plates during Christmas dinner, revealing his generosity. These early depictions of Mr. Dedalus in the first chapters of *A Portrait*, however, are in stark contrast to his characterization in later chapters and in *Ulysses*. As Stephen's family's wealth dwindles and their living situation changes, Mr. Dedalus becomes increasingly jaded, embittered, and disinterested in his children, leaving them to provide for themselves. He also becomes increasingly inclined toward alcohol consumption. Mr. Dedalus's relationship with his son has so deteriorated by the end of *A Portrait* that Mrs. Dedalus implores Stephen to "dry [himself] and hurry out for the love of goodness" (147) as Mr. Dedalus asks his daughter, "Is your lazy bitch of a brother gone out yet?" (147). This scene reveals that Stephen and his father are unable to be in the same room together. Through his portrayal of Mr. Dedalus and the transformation he undergoes as his financial situation worsens, Joyce captures the psychological consequences of financial insecurity, poverty, and scarcity. When Mr. Dedalus is able to provide adequately for himself and his family, he is depicted as a loving, kind man, but when he is unable to do so, his good character deteriorates as well as his relationships with his family members. It is important to note that many of the children of John Joyce also "grew to dislike him immensely" as well (*James Joyce* 21), according to R. Ellmann, which may have inspired this aspect of Joyce's semi-autobiographical text.

Joyce depicts the Dedalus's financial instability as having a negative effect on Stephen's emotional well-being in *A Portrait* as well. Early in the novel he admits to feeling "angry… with the change of fortune which was reshaping the world about him into a vision of squalor and insincerity" (*A Portrait* 21). The financial downfall of the Dedalus family that Joyce chronicles in *A Portrait* works not only as a depiction of his early life, but also, likely, as an allegory for many Dubliners, who were struggling to maintain their meager wealth and

support their families in imperial Ireland, where, as Duffy points out there was so little economic opportunity and work available ("Setting: Dublin").

Joyce captures the physical consequences of poverty on the Dedalus family in *Ulysses*, as well, depicting how the trauma of poverty is embodied by Stephen and his younger sister Dilly. Dilly, one of the youngest Dedaluses, asks her father and brother, Stephen, for a shilling. Mr. Dedalus, in response, corrects Dilly's posture, acting as her father, while initially refusing to give her money, failing to fulfill his role as her provider. Although he eventually relents, Mr. Dedalus evades Dilly's request. Of this scene, Budgen in *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* writes, "Simon Dedalus, without property or position, can only with difficulty give his daughters a shilling for food" (66). This is a stark contrast to the generous father Joyce portrays in the first chapters of *A Portrait*. Stephen, on the other hand, acknowledges Dilly's hardship, thinking, "She is drowning… Save her…" (*Ulysses* 313), before concluding, "She will drown me with her" (*Ulysses* 313). Stephen worries that if he helps Dilly, he will suffer the same circumstances. He ultimately decides against giving her financial aid despite the money he was paid earlier in the day. Mr. Dedalus's and Stephen's refusal to share their meager wealth is likely due to the fragility of their lower middle-class status. This moment in the text reveals the socio-economic reality of Ireland at the time Joyce was writing of, which was that there simply was not enough wealth accessible for it to be shared, even within families. The pervasiveness of poverty reveals the fragility of Ireland's body politic at the turn of the twentieth century.

Michael B. Katz in "The Biological Inferiority of the Undeserving Poor" explains that in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries a harsh new idea of poverty and poor people began to replace the ancient biblical view that the poorest citizens of a society were not "inherently immoral, dangerous, or different" (21). He writes that poverty was, and continues to be, viewed as "moral weakness" with poor people being considered different and inferior by

their peers (Katz 21). This changing view of the poor as lazy and immoral is in line with ideas that arose in the Victorian era, which linked wealth, status, and beauty with moral goodness. Consequently, poverty, disease, and disability became linked with "personal failure and inferiority" (Katz 21). Katz argues that at the time Joyce was writing:

> The idea that the culture of poverty works in insidious influence on individuals, endowing them with traits that trap them in lives of destitution, entered both scholarly and popular discourse… and endures to this day. (21)

These anxieties that Katz reveals were associated with poverty and the assumption that the poor were weak and inferior likely contributed to the dynamics of the Dedalus family. Mr. Dedalus hid his financial insecurity by continuing to drink and socialize in the Dublin community to the detriment of his children. Stephen, meanwhile, refuses to give his sister a shilling after being paid, reasoning that it is better if one of them is not destitute, and goes on to drink and socialize with his friends as well, choosing to ignore his sister's predicament. Both men maintain the façade of being middle-class by drinking with their peers. The reality, however, is that the Dedalus children are malnourished, Mr. Dedalus is near-penniless, and Stephen does not have a room to return to at the end of the day.

Mr. Bloom, in the same episode, observes Dilly, thinking:

> Good Lord, that poor child's dress is in flitters. Underfed she looks too… Potatoes and marge, marge and potatoes. It's after they feel it. Proof of the pudding. Undermines the constitution. (*Ulysses* 191)

Bloom is struck by Dilly's malnourishment, which is a symptom of Ireland's economic insecurity and limited access to wealth. Her hunger is also an example of how poverty is literally embodied. Joyce was aware of the reality of malnourishment and its long-term effects,

which is revealed through Bloom's comment. Joyce's awareness, however, is likely directly linked to personal experience. Historian J. B. Lyons in *James Joyce & Medicine* notes that Joyce had a "hand-to-mouth existence" (223) for most of his life. Joyce was, therefore, well aware of the bodily trauma caused by poor nutrition, which likely shaped his depiction of Dilly. Joyce additionally uses the term "constitution" (*Ulysses* 191), a political term, to refer to Dilly's body. In doing so, he makes her body political, acknowledging the connection between bodies and access to wealth and power. Dilly's experience was likely representative of many Irish women and children, who, in the absence of agency and power, were reliant on their male relatives to provide for their needs, which inevitably led to bodily harm when their male relatives were unable or unwilling to do so. Of this, Shanahan and Quigley write, "Children are usually victims of such urban squalor, and Joyce was sensitive to this" (280). Through the character of Dilly, Joyce sympathetically depicts poverty and its embodied consequences on the most vulnerable in Irish society.

Teeth are a symbol Joyce uses repeatedly throughout *Ulysses* to further examine the damaged body politic of imperial Ireland. Teeth are mentioned 47 times in *Ulysses*. While good teeth are a source of pride, teeth in *Ulysses* are most often depicted in varying states of decay. The earliest mention of teeth occurs in "Telemachus" with Stephen observing Mulligan's "even white teeth glistening here and there with gold points" (*Ulysses* 1). Mulligan, later, conversely, calls Stephen "Toothless Kinch" (*Ulysses* 27). Mulligan's "even white teeth" (*Ulysses* 1) and the dental work revealed by the existence of "gold points" suggest that Mulligan has access to wealth to afford dental treatment, while "toothless" Stephen does not. Joyce further establishes the connection between dental health and wealth in "Proteus" when Stephen thinks:

> My teeth are very bad. Why? I wonder? Feel. That one is going to. Shells. Ought to go to the dentist, I wonder, with that money? (*Ulysses* 64)

Stephen previously applied the metaphor of shells to the money he received from Mr. Deasy, considering how shells are "symbols… of beauty and power. Symbols soiled by greed and misery" (*Ulysses* 36). Joyce's reapplication of the shell metaphor positions teeth as symbols of beauty and power within the text as well and suggests that Stephen's have been "soiled by greed and misery" (*Ulysses* 36). Stephen's greed is likely his decision to spend his money drinking rather than visiting the dentist, while misery can be attributed to poor nutrition, poverty, and Stephen's general lack of hygiene. In this context, it is noteworthy how Joyce repeatedly applies imagery of teeth throughout *Ulysses*. Thus in "Lestrygonians" Bloom observes a man eating with "no teeth to chewchew-chew" (*Ulysses* 215) and, later in "Circe," considers his own "metal teeth" (*Ulysses* 613). Conversely, in "Sirens," Bloom examines Richie Goulding's "good teeth he's proud of" (*Ulysses* 351) and the "good smell of [Boylan's breath]" (*Ulysses* 84), which is prefaced with "[Boylan] has money" (*Ulysses* 84). In giving these depictions, Joyce connects healthy teeth to wealth, pride, vanity, and privilege, whereas rotting, damaged, and missing teeth are linked to poverty, greed, and, in the case of Stephen and Bloom, self-abuse.

In her work on biopolitics, sociologist Sarah Nettleton focuses on the mouth as a valuable space for critical examination, believing it to be a "vulnerable region between the internal body and the external source of pollution" (Aetiologies). Nettleton's research reveals how external influences, specifically poverty, malnutrition, and the priorities of governing political bodies, affect mouths. This means that the socio-economic conditions and the policies of the governing body within a society, which may, for example, fail to provide affordable access to medical and dental care, affects the health of the bodies living within a body politic. Joyce clearly made this same connection between teeth, power, and privilege in his portrayal of the Irish teeth in *Ulysses*, linking healthy teeth and dental care to wealth and missing and decaying teeth often to poverty and malnutrition. Nettleton writes, additionally, that "there has

been a shift in the localization of disease and illness from the pathological to the psychological and the social [since the nineteenth century]" ("Different Mouths"). This means that governments have increasingly focused on the health of the bodies within their body politics, recognizing the link between external influences existing within a society and the manifestation of disease (Nettleton, "Different Mouths"). Joyce was likely aware of this link due to the increased focus on the manifestation of disease during his lifetime that Nettleton points out ("Different Mouths") and because of his brief employment as a medical student. Joyce registered at the Cecelia Street Medical School in 1902 (R. Ellmann, *James Joyce* 101). R. Ellmann writes that Joyce "had Ireland for patient, to anatomize and purge" (*James Joyce* 101), and, while his experience undoubtedly informed his writing, particularly in *Ulysses*, he ultimately left the field (R. Ellmann, *James Joyce* 101). Joyce does, however, use bodily ailments to represent social issues in his texts, like the rotten teeth and empty bellies of his Irish characters in *Ulysses* to represent wealth inequality, extreme poverty, and an abundance of other issues related to Ireland's poor and precarious socio-economic conditions.

Chapter 2: Institutions and the body

Joyce evaluates how the institutions ruling Ireland affect the physiology of the Irish-Catholic majority in his texts. He examines how the Irish and, often, their ailments are consequences of the factors affecting Ireland, many of which are consequences of the institutions that govern it. Stephen, in the first episode of *Ulysses* "Telemachus" says, "I am a servant of two masters… and English and an Italian" (24), identifying the "two masters" within Ireland as the British Empire and the Catholic Church. Joyce poignantly casts a critical eye on both imperialism and Catholicism in his texts. In this chapter, I examine how Joyce evaluates Ireland through the lens of body politics in his texts, drawing a connection between the physical bodies of his Irish characters and the institutions that govern them.

Imperialism

Joyce is preoccupied with the role of imperialism in Ireland's history as well as its effect on everyday life. Stephen in *Ulysses* episode "Nestor" says, "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (42), revealing that Ireland's past invades and informs Stephen's present reality. Englishman Haines in "Telemachus" additionally says, "We feel in England that we have treated you rather unfairly. It seems history is to blame" (*Ulysses* 24). The "you" Haines refers to is the Irish collective rather than Stephen alone. These moments in the text identify British imperialism, and likely the long history of resistance and acquiescence that accompanied it, as a defining historical factor that continues to shape everyday life in Joyce's Ireland. Joyce, in his texts, incorporates commentary on British imperialism but he also reveals how imperialism informs and affects Irish bodies. The ailments of his Irish characters in *Ulysses*, which include "rotten teeth and rotten guts" (16) and, possibly venereal disease, accompany commentary on British imperialism, revealing a link between the two.

It is Buck Mulligan who first observes the differences between Irish and English physiology in "Telemachus," saying, "God, these bloody English. Bursting with money and indigestion" (*Ulysses* 2). He later refers to Ireland as a "country full of rotten teeth and rotten guts" (*Ulysses* 16). Joyce draws the connection between Irish bodies under imperial subjugation in contrast to the wealth and power of the English as well as their physiology in this passage. While the English suffer from "indigestion" (*Ulysses* 2), which is nothing less than an embodied response to wealth and a diet of rich foods, the Irish suffer from "rotten teeth and rotten guts" (*Ulysses* 16), markers of poverty and malnutrition. In other words, Ireland's imperialism yoke under British rule had real and lasting consequences on the Irish which infiltrated every sector of Irish society and each of its citizens. Buck Mulligan's observation of the disparity between English and Irish bodies works to reveal the existing disparity of wealth between the Irish and their imperial ruler, creating an evocative metaphor for the British Empire "eating well" off of Ireland's imperial subjugation.

Joyce's characterization of the effects of imperial rule on the Irish demonstrates clearly how imperialism, in the words of historian Kris Manjapra in *Colonialism in Global Perspective*, "came to penetrate the body at deep levels" (201). Manjapra argues that imperial and colonial forces enacted control by regulating, commodifying, extracting labor from, and using the bodies of the colonized as a means to the empire's ends (201), a vivid example of how bodies are affected by the systems that govern them. The "rotten teeth and rotten guts" (*Ulysses* 16) Buck condemns following his observation of the English "[b]ursting with money and indigestion" (*Ulysses* 2) reveal how imperialism informs Irish and English bodies with the colonized suffering from malnutrition and decay while the colonizers grow fat on Irish resources.

The way Joyce juxtaposes the "rotten teeth and rotten guts" (*Ulysses* 16) of the Irish with the wealth of the English under British imperialism reflects a history of English exploitation of the Irish which resulted in disastrous consequences. As Joyce was writing *Ulysses* in 1922, the Great Famine remained in living memory, which is supported by Mr. Deasy referencing it in "Nestor," saying, "I remember the famine" (*Ulysses* 38). Mary C. Kelly explains in *Ireland's Great Famine in Irish-American History* that the basic argument behind the 1845-1849 famine is that it "overwhelmed a native population ill equipped to counter its effects (1). The Irish characters within *Ulysses*, on the other hand, view the famine as a consequence of imperialism. In "Invalid Port: The Politics of Consumption in James Joyce's *Ulysses*," Matthew Hayward argues that Joyce's Irish characters view the famine as a "systematically genocidal act" (150). Hayward refers to the moment in *Ulysses* when the citizen in "Cyclops" says, "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" (*Ulysses* 428). The citizen's statement captures the Irish sentiment that the famine was a genocidal act, referring to the British as "hyenas" who exploited the Irish potato crop while letting the Irish starve without meaningful intervention. Hayward supported this sentiment, writing that "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" (150). The famine also, however, is a clear example of how imperial politics affects bodies. The exploitation of the Irish potato crop by the British resulted in a famine that prompted the deaths of around one million Irish and the exodus of another one million through emigration (Geber 149). It also, however, resulted in malnutrition that likely affected Irish bodies for generations, according to anthropologist Jonny Geber. He writes that exposure to the famine resulted in physiological changes in the human body, which he supports in his study by looking at the skeletal remains of Irish famine victims and survivors (Geber

149). Luke Gibbons in *Joyce's Ghosts* supports the prolonged and embodied consequences of hunger in Ireland after the famine and the appearance of this theme in Joyce's texts. Gibbons writes, "The point of ghosts is to remind us that the past may materialize in the present, and that far from being distant memories, chronic hunger, disease, and sectarian wars still stalked Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century" (190). The work of both Geber and Gibbons supports the real and lasting embodied consequences and bodily trauma that imperialism had on the Irish as well as its relevance within Joyce's texts.

Joyce in "After the Race," one of the stories in *Dubliners,* further connects Dublin's impoverished conditions and the bodily harm it prompts to imperialism. The story symbolically examines the implications of imperialism. Irishman Jimmy surrounds himself with "Continentals" (*Dubliners* 33), meaning men from the Continent. Although he admits that they are "not much more than acquaintances" (*Dubliners* 32), he clearly covets their friendship due to their wealth, status, and reputation. Jimmy, who is the son a moderately wealthy butcher and businessman, characterizes Ségouin, the wealthy Frenchman, as having "laid a finger on the genuine pulse of life" (*Dubliners* 33). In the company of these Continentals, Jimmy believes that, at last, "this was seeing life, at least" (*Dubliners* 36). In these passages, Jimmy equates wealth with life, which reflects the opportunity and overall health and happiness that accompanies wealth. Here, the health of imperial wealth is juxtaposed with the damaged, malnourished body politic of Joyce's Ireland. Joyce, additionally, criticizes the "inaction of Continent" (31) and ironically characterizes Irish citizens as "gratefully oppressed" (*Dubliners*31).

Jimmy, however, over the course of the night loses what Joyce alludes to as being a large sum of money in a card game, while the "Continentals" (*Dubliners* 33), Ségouin and Routh, an Englishman, dominate the game. In the end, Jimmy and an American, Farley, are the

"heaviest losers" while the game "lay between Routh and Ségouin" (*Dubliners* 37), the two continental Europeans from major imperial powers. Routh wins in the end, and this moment works to reinforce the image Joyce creates throughout his texts of imperial England being a parasite eating well off of Irish disenfranchisement. Jimmy also, ironically, leaves the boat knowing "he would regret in the morning but at present he was glad" (*Dubliners* 37). In other words, at the close of the text, Jimmy is "gratefully oppressed" (*Dubliners* 31), which is how the Irish are characterized in the opening passage of the story. Jimmy and the American, who are both outsiders and from nations that were currently or formerly under British control, are swindled hugely by men from two imperial European powers, England and France. "After the Race" works as an allegory for Irish disenfranchisement under British rule. Hayward writes of the historical factors that likely influenced this short story in his essay on politics and consumption. He explains that, from at least the eighteenth century onward, British policy effectively precluded Irish industrialization, forcing Ireland—with some exceptions—into a position of an agrarian producer (Hayward 150). Ireland, additionally, according to Hayward, was excluded from the British market and had its tariffs abolished by the British, which resulted in Irish industry having no protection against cheaper, mass-made British manufacture (150). It is these realities of British imperialism that Hayward explores that Joyce is examining and casting a critical eye upon in "After the Race."

Dublin's occupation by the British Army is another example of how imperialism weakens Ireland's body politic within Joyce's texts. Joyce, in *Ulysses*, writes that the British Army is "rotten with venereal disease" (88), and he later, in the episode "Circe," depicts British soldiers in Nighttown engaging in prostitution with Irish women. Greg Winston in "Barracks in Brothels" explains that Edwardian Dublin's sexual and military economies were deeply interdependent upon one another, writing: "Policies of regulation and encouragement to the Irish sexual economy were as much a part of the British army as battle plans and supply lines"

(105). The British Army's engagement in prostitution with Irish women, however, created unique issues related to power, control, and exploitation because Ireland was under British imperial rule. Mark Osteen in *The Economy of Ulysses: Making Both Ends Meet* writes that "British soldiers in Nighttown claim to 'protect Ireland' but treat her as a whore" (337), pointing out the hypocrisy of the British soldiers that occupy Dublin engaging in prostitution with Irish women. Hayward writes that "consumerism is inherently political, with even the most trivial acts of consumption bound up in complex power relations" (150), and the British Army's engagement in Ireland's sexual commerce was an exceptional example of such complexities. Irish women engaging in prostitution with British soldiers were both objects of British consumption as well as subjects of domination in the greater scheme of British global imperialism.

The women engaging in prostitution in Nighttown, additionally, occupy a vulnerable space in Irish society because they likely had little economic opportunity, social mobility, and agency. Irish prostitutes and women, in general, were treated as commodities at this time. Cissy Caffrey is one such example of an Irish woman exploited by British soldiers. She appears throughout "Circe" beside two British officers. Cissy says that she is "a shilling whore" (*Ulysses* 687), revealing explicitly that she takes part in prostitution. Her occupation as a prostitute, however, is a departure from her role as caregiver to her two younger brothers in "Nausicaa." Cissy engaging in prostitution is, therefore, likely due to her economic survival. As a fight breaks out between the British officer Cissy is with and Stephen, Bloom says to her, "You are the link between nations and generations. Speak, woman, sacred life giver" (*Ulysses* 694). Bloom, in this statement, recognizes the importance of Cissy's role as a woman in Irish society, positioning her as the propagator of future generations. His statement, however, likely has a dual meaning. Cissy's engagement in prostitution with British officers weakens the Irish body politic by offering services to the men enforcing Ireland's exploitation and imperial

submittance. Bloom's comment also, however, likely points out Cissy's physical vulnerability as she engages in the high-risk profession. Winston writes that Irish women who engaged in prostitution also often became victims, becoming infected with syphilis (106), making the Irish women prostitutes vulnerable to disease which would then spread through the Irish population, further weakening its body politic. The risk of women like Cissy contracting a venereal disease from British officers was a real risk indeed. According to study done by scholar Peter L. Fishback, the British Army had the highest incidence of venereal infection of any European army by far (330), meaning British soldiers occupying Ireland presented a great risk to the health of the Irish body politic. There was, additionally, according to Winston, a definite correlation between the British Army's occupation and the spread of syphilis in Dublin, which led to an epidemic of syphilis in Ireland (106). Bloom comments on this in "Lestrygonians" when he says that the British Army is "rotten with venereal disease" (88). Winston, however, makes the argument that Irish women in the fight for Ireland's liberation from the British Empire "[played] an unexpected role in the military liberation of the country… armed with their biological weaponry" (106). By biological weaponry, he means venereal disease, likely syphilis. While Irish women prostitutes may have indeed weakened the imperial British Army by inadvertently spreading syphilis among the soldiers as Winston posits in his essay, the sexual commerce they exchanged likely also weakened the collective Irish body politic as well in a profound and deeply shameful way, spreading disease through the entire population.

Joyce made explicit the connection between the Irish and the effects of imperial rule in a conversation with Budgen, saying:

> Ireland is what she is… and therefore I am what I am because of the relations that have existed between England and Ireland. Tell me why you think I ought to wish to change the conditions that gave Ireland and me a shape and destiny. (Budgen 152)

This comment is one of many by Joyce that connects imperialism and the complexities of Joyce's Irish identity. Joyce's view on how imperialism informs Irish bodies and the Irish experience reflects feminist writer Wendy Harcourt's theory on body politics. She writes that bodies are "cultural products in which the plays of powers, knowledge, and resistances are worked out" (Harcourt 22), and imperialism, according to Joyce, is one such power that affected the Irish and their bodies. Joyce evaluates the effects of imperialism throughout his texts, and, in doing so, he reveals that Ireland's history of British domination, exploitation, and occupation had real, tangible consequences on the health of Ireland's body politic.

Catholicism

Joyce evaluates the implications of Catholicism, the ruling religious denomination in Ireland, through the manifestation of anxiety, disease, self-abuse, and violence on the bodies of the characters in his texts, exploring how the Catholic Church's teachings affect Irish bodies. Stephen, as well as various other characters within Joyce's texts, navigates his Catholic faith and its teachings alongside feelings of anxiety, guilt, and shame, which, at times, manifest as physical ailments. Joyce explores, additionally, how the Church's permittance of the corporal punishment of children hurts young boys, specifically, both physically and psychologically. Joyce also depicts how the Church employs violence as a method of control which is then replicated outside of the Church through the physical punishment of children by their parents and community members.

A Portrait, specifically, is permeated by the implications of Catholicism on Irish bodies. In the first chapter, young Stephen thinks of God's omnipresence and all of the implications that go with omnipotence. He admits that it makes him "tired to think that way" (*A Portrait* 13), and he reveals that he feels "small and weak" (*A Portrait* 13). In this moment, Stephen is navigating a paradox that reoccurs throughout *A Portrait*, which is the impossibility of both

submitting to his faith in God as a Catholic along with continuing to develop critical thinking skills as a student and creative thinker. Stephen's navigation of his crisis of faith and free-thinking informs much of *A Portrait*. This moment in the text in which Stephen admits to feeling "small and weak" (*A Portrait* 13) also reveals that Stephen's Catholicism is a source of anxiety. In the same passage, he goes to bed remembering he must first pray "so that he might not go to hell when he died" (*A Portrait* 15). He kneels in the cold, "shaking and trembling" (*A Portrait* 15), and repeats his reasoning for doing so, which is that "he would not go to hell when he died" (*A Portrait* 15) if he first prayed. As he sleeps that night, Stephen has fever-induced dreams, which causes "a long shiver of fear" to pass through his body (*A Portrait* 15). Stephen's anxiety over death and the Catholic teachings of heaven and hell color his fever-induced dreams. Joyce explores the effect of the Church's teachings on young Stephen's psyche in this passage along with the physical symptoms that manifest over his fear of sin and the Church's depiction of hell.

Stephen's anxiety over the Church's teachings follows him into adolescence. In chapter three of *A Portrait*, teenage Stephen obsesses over "his first violent sin" (87) after visiting a prostitute at the close of the preceding chapter. He fears that he is in "danger of eternal damnation" (87). Stephen feels intense shame, worrying "his soul lusted after its own destruction" (*A Portrait* 87), and he considers his "unworthiness" (*A Portrait* 88) alongside the many other sins he has committed, like his "gluttonous enjoyment of food" (*A Portrait* 89). The narrator's words in the chapter reproduce the tone and lexicon of the Church, revealing how deeply Stephen is indoctrinated by the beliefs, ways, and teachings of Catholicism.

Father Arnell, also in chapter three, gives a dark, fear-inciting homily on sin that leaves Stephen filled with anxiety. In this scene, Stephen's tongue, writes Joyce, is "cleaving to his palate" (*A Portrait* 114) and he is "praying with his heart" (*A Portrait* 114). Stephen is, again,

filled with a fever-like anxiety and dread that resembles the fever-induced dreams that he had as a child in the first chapter. Joyce writes:

> His hands were cold and damp and his limbs ached with chill. Bodily unrest and chill and weariness beset him. (*A Portrait* 115)

Stephen, additionally, imagines his "sincorrupted flesh" (*A Portrait* 115), thinking of how "he had sinned so deeply against heaven and before God that he was not worthy to be called God's child" (*A Portrait* 115). His anxiety, guilt, and shame result in him vomiting "profusely in agony" (*A Portrait* 116), a poignant example of an embodied response to his Catholic guilt and shame.

Stephen attends a confessional service in the hopes of absolving his sin as well as his fear. Of this visit, Joyce writes:

> His sins trickled from his lips, one by one, trickled in shameful drops from his soul festering and oozing like a sore, a squalid stream of vice. The last sins oozed forth, sluggish, filthy. (*A Portrait* 121)

Joyce metaphorizes Stephen's confession as a sore being purged, and his description along with its context, a sexual encounter, suggests the sore is a venereal disease. Kathleen Ferris, in her book *James Joyce and the Burden of Disease*, writes:

> For centuries venereal infection has been viewed by society as a cause for shame, as something more than a physical disease, as God's punishment for sexual sins. (149)

Ferris's statement further connects venereal diseases with Catholic conceptions of sin and shame. Ferris also, however, reveals how these diseases, and particularly those that have visible symptoms, have implications for sufferers, who, she writes, were viewed as immoral by their

peers (65). The shame associated with the disease in addition to the Catholic view of premarital sex, which the priest refers to as "a terrible sin" (*A Portrait* 122) that "kills the body and it kills the soul" (*A Portrait* 122), both likely inform Stephen's shame in this moment.

The priest tells Stephen: "As long as you commit that sin, my poor child, you will never be worth one farthing to God" (*A Portrait* 122). In chapter three of *A Portrait*, "He knelt there sinless and timid: and he would hold upon his tongue and the host and God would enter his purified body" (*A Portrait* 123). Despite this initial feeling of transformation and being free of his prior transgressions, Stephen is unable to shake "a restless feeling of guilt" (*A Portrait* 129) that remains with him and he resorts to small acts of self-abuse. These instances of self-abuse include walking with downcast eyes, "[shunning] every encounter with the eyes of women" (*A Portrait* 127), and engaging in acts that allow him to "[suffer] patiently" (*A Portrait* 127). He does so in an attempt to lessen his complex feelings of guilt, shame, and fear over his first sexual transgression. These small acts of self-harm that Stephen subjects himself to as a means of self-induced repentance prompt larger instances of self-abuse, like refusing to bathe and failing to care for his teeth in adulthood. In *A Portrait*, Stephen's mother laments, "Well, it's a poor case… when a university student is so dirty that his mother has to wash him" (146), and, in *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan says of Stephen, "The unclean bard makes a point of washing once a month" (18). Stephen's distress over his sinful actions results in self-abuse that negatively impact his body, revealing how the church's fear-based teachings on sex and shame inform Catholic minds and bodies.

Joyce throughout his texts employs the human skin as a medium to explore the implications of the Catholic faith on Irish bodies. He uses skin both as a physiological barrier and a metaphorical space. Stephen, in *A Portrait,* turns "scarlet with shame" (43) after having his hand beaten by Father Dolan and Bloom in *Ulysses* observes a Catholic mass, thinking,

"Confession… Penance… Repentance skindeep. Lovely shame. Pray at an altar. Hail Mary and Holy Mary... Hides her blushes" (102). Joyce includes descriptions of his characters flushing and blushing out of embarrassment and shame often in conjunction with the Catholic faith. In her essay "Skindeep," Maud Ellmann writes that shame is socially constructed and manifests on the skin through blushes and hot sweats (57). She, additionally, examines how skin reveals and emphasizes the social implications existing within a society and its relevance to Joyce's application of skin in *Ulysses*. While scholars now connect skin to the social politics of a society (M. Ellmann 57), nineteenth-century theorists on degeneration believed skin deformities revealed both physical and moral decline (M. Ellmann 59). In Joyce's texts, skin works to reveal the implications of the Catholic Church and its shame-based teachings on sin through flushes, blushes, and visible skin diseases. Joyce himself expressed dissatisfaction over the connection between morality and venereal disease, specifically. In a letter to his brother Stanislaus, he wrote: "I don't see where the judgement of God comes into it nor do I see what the word 'excess' means in this connection" (quoted in Winston 106). Joyce noted that the disease was caused by "anti-hygienic conditions" (quoted in Winston 106) rather than immorality. His observations reveal the fallacy that venereal disease was punishment for immoral sins, which was perpetuated by the Catholic Church and its teachings.

Each of Joyce's texts is uniquely preoccupied with sex and disease, reflecting the preoccupation of Dubliners at the time, who were navigating desire alongside fear of disease and the Catholic doctrine. Syphilis, according to Ferris, ravaged Europe for centuries before a cure was developed in 1943 (72), and Joyce's texts have many references to the disease. In *Ulysses*, a poster of the Royal Dublins reminds Bloom of "an army rotten with venereal disease" (88); and, while thinking of Molly, Bloom worries over Boylan giving her one: "Eh? No.. No. No, no. I don't believe it. He wouldn't surely? No, no… Think no more about that" (194). Prostitute Zoe exclaims to Bloom, "You have a hard chancre" (*Ulysses* 599), which is a

symptom of syphilis, but her fears are mitigated when Bloom pulls a "black shriveled potato" (*Ulysses* 599) from his pocket. While the potato serves as a talisman and heirloom to Bloom, it can also be seen as a damaged phallic symbol, and syphilis, of course, has physical symptoms that could lead to impotence and issues with reproductive health (Ferris). Molly, additionally, thinks of Mrs. Breen's husband, who "used to go to bed with his muddy boots on when the maggot takes him" (*Ulysses* 880), and "the maggot" (*Ulysses* 880) is another reference to syphilis. Richard Kaplan in "Doctors, Disease, and James Joyce," writes that Joyce always feared syphilis and had several episodes of venereal disease resulting from his visits to prostitutes (668). Kaplan's observations reveal that Joyce's own experience with the disease may have informed his writing. Venereal disease is omnipresent in *Ulysses*, appearing repeatedly but often veiled in euphemism, complicating contemporary readings. Shanahan and Quigley write, "Venereal disease, with which he did have personal experience, is the infectious disease alluded to the most in *Ulysses*" (282). They write, additionally, that some authors have claimed that syphilis is a major theme of *Ulysses*, further supporting its repetition and appearance throughout the text. The purpose, however, is to reveal the fear of diseases present in Dublin, the omnipresence of disease, and, critically, the stigma associated due to Catholic teachings on sex and shame.

The Church in Joyce's novels has a clear link to violence toward children and, specifically, young boys. Violence toward children is a thematic concern in *Dubliners* and occurs in *A Portrait*, as well. In "An Encounter," a short story in *Dubliners*, an old man discusses and covertly fetishizes the beating of a boy, Mahony, with the boy's friend Murphy. Murphy recounts:

> He said my friend was a very rough boy and asked did he get whipped often at school… He began to speak on the subject of chastising boys… He said when boys were that

> kind they ought to be whipped and well whipped. When a boy was rough and unruly there was nothing would do him any good but a good sound whipping. A slap on the hand or a box on the ear was no good: what he wanted was to get a nice warm whipping. (*Dubliners* 17)

Murphy thinks, " I was penitent, for in my heart, I had always despised [Mahony] a little" (*Dubliners* 27). Later in "Counterparts," while Farrington is beating his son because of his own "smouldering anger and revengefulness" (*Dubliners* 83) toward his employer, his son cries: "O, pa! He cried, Don't beat me, pa! And I'll… I'll say a Hail Mary for you… I'll say a Hail Mary for you, pa, if you don't beat me… I'll say a Hail Mary" (*Dubliners* 84). The physical punishment or threat of violence these boys experience occurs alongside references to Catholicism, revealing a link between the two. Murphy expresses his penitence after expressing secret despisal of his friend and Farrington's son tries to remedy his beating by praying for his father. These two passages within Joyce's text explore the physical punishment that was dealt to young boys and the connection between physical abuse and Catholicism. In doing so, Joyce establishes the Church as a propagator of abuse toward children in Ireland.

A Portrait explores more deeply the corporal punishment of young boys in connection with the Church. Boys discuss the imminent flogging of their fellow students at recess. While they laugh over the matter, Stephen observes "that they [are] a bit afraid" (*A Portrait* 37). In the following scene, Stephen has his hand pandied by Father Dolan for being a "lazy idle little loafer" (*A Portrait* 42) after breaking his glasses, despite being excused from the lesson by his teacher Father Arnall. Joyce captures the pain of the "hot burning sting" (*A Portrait* 42) and the shame, frustration, indignity, and unfairness of Stephen's treatment. The way Joyce captures this moment reveals the commonality and senselessness of the corporal punishment of boys in schools that were headed by the Catholic clergy. Joyce, additionally, by employing

a stream-of-consciousness narrative technique in *A Portrait*, reveals how Stephen's memories are connected. These two moments of abuse, the flogging of his schoolmates and his own pandying, are presented side-by-side, revealing a link between these two scenes of violence against children by church leaders in his memory. These moments also reveal that the Catholic clergy in his texts use corporal punishment as a method to assert control over young boys, and they do so by publicly shaming their students into obedience of Church doctrine. The harsh unfairness of Stephen's pandying also reveals the abuse of power by clergy that reappears throughout Joyce's works.

The short story "The Sisters" in *Dubliners* contains another example of abuse of power by Catholic clergy that may have affected Irish children's bodies and, at the least, their emotional well-being. In "The Sisters," our narrator, a boy, has complex feelings about Father Flynn, the priest who was a mentor to him, following his death. Father Flynn suffered from three strokes, which resulted in paralysis. The boy, however, equates the word "paralysis" with "some maleficent and sinful being" (*Dubliners* 1). In doing so, he appears to conflate Father Flynn with his condition, suggesting that there was indeed something "maleficent and sinful" (*Dubliners* 1) about the priest. The other characters in the story also have complex feelings about the dead clergyman as well, but they express their negative feelings and observations inexplicitly, reflecting the religious code in place in Ireland that empowered the clergy. Old Cotter says, "No, I wouldn't say he was exactly… but there was something queer… there was something uncanny about him" (*Dubliners* 1) and "I wouldn't like children of mine… to have too much to say to a man like that" (*Dubliners* 2). Cotter repeats, "It's bad for children" (2), meaning Father Flynn was bad for children, but he does not elucidate why he thinks this, and the boy is left trying to "extract meaning from his unfinished sentences" (*Dubliners* 3). Later, in the story, a sister says, "They say it was the boy's fault" (*Dubliners* 9), in reference to Father Flynn's eventual unraveling. Joyce leaves his readers to infer what his characters are alluding

to when speaking of Father Flynn. Journalist Russel Shorto, in an article on the sexual abuse of children by clergy ongoing in Ireland entitled "The Irish Affliction," writes:

> The sexual mistreatment and corporal punishment that went along with the code of purity were hidden in plain sight all along. A careful reader of James Joyce's *Dubliners* knows this is a part of Ireland's cultural past. (NY Times)

Shorto indirectly references "The Sisters" in his article, and, in this passage, he connects the sexual abuse of children to the "code of purity" that abusers within the clergy likely used to manipulate their victims, using shame, again, as a method of control. In this story, Joyce is depicting, as Shorto writes, the abuse of power by clergy that was "hidden in plain sight all along" in Irish society (NY Times). The short story reveals another way that the Catholic Church and its officials abuse their power in his texts, employing shame as a method of control and manipulating children and adults into silence.

Joyce examines the Catholic Church in each of his texts, evaluating the ways it shapes Irish society and informs the bodies within Ireland's body politic through its teachings and its practices. Of the Catholic Church, Joyce wrote in a letter to his fiancé Nora Barnacle: "I make open war upon it by what I write and say and do" (quoted in Lernout 332). His texts, in many ways, work to reveal the negative implications of the Catholic Church on the bodies and minds of his Irish characters, revealing the embodied effects of prolonged fear, shame, and guilt, the corporal punishment, and, possibly, the sexual abuse of children by Catholic clergy, which the Church's code of purity, teachings on sin, and distribution of power allowed.

Chapter 3: Women and non-normative bodies and the body politic

The complexity of navigating issues related to identity is thematic in Joyce's texts. In *Dubliners*, citizens navigate the implications of their Irish identity; Stephen's Irish race and Catholic religious identity inform and complicate his transformation into an artist in *A Portrait*; and Joyce poignantly gives special attention to women and non-normative bodies—not male, white, Catholic, and/or able—in *Ulysses*. His episodes "Nausicaa" and "Penelope" both contain narration from a woman's point of view, centering around Gerty MacDowell, Molly Bloom, and their experiences. Gerty, additionally, is disabled, which imbues the texts with a perspective that has been historically ignored and undervalued. The majority of his other episodes in *Ulysses* center around Bloom, who is Jewish, a minority in Catholic Ireland that Joyce depicts as facing much anti-Semitism and discrimination throughout his texts. Through Gerty, Molly, Bloom, and the other women and non-normative-identifying characters in his texts, Joyce depicts how Irish bodies are affected by the social factors and tensions existing within Ireland's body politic. In this chapter, I examine how Joyce evaluates social issues alongside the risks and consequences these factors have on the women and non-normative bodies in his texts.

Women bodies

Joyce carefully portrays the spaces men and women are valued in in his texts and he examines how women were undervalued and often vulnerable to violence in Irish society. As such, he reveals the consequences that social factors had on women's overall health and, in turn, the health of Ireland's body politic. He also, however, pays critical attention to women's experiences in his texts *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*, depicting the thoughts, feelings, motivations, and desires of women. In this section, I examine Joyce's women characters through the lens of body politics, evaluating how the gender-power relations depicted in Joyce's texts affect the

health and physiology of his women characters. Joyce portrays how the treatment of women led to real, tangible consequences on the well-being of Ireland's overall body politic.

The undervaluation of women in contemporary Ireland recurs throughout Joyce's texts. Mrs. Kearney in the short story "A Mother" in *Dubliners* is bullied by Mr. Holohan, who tries to take advantage of her by failing to pay her daughter for her participation in his concert. When Mrs. Kearney becomes angry and demands payment, Mr. Holohan responds, saying, "You might have some sense of decency" (*Dubliners* 133) and "I thought you were a lady" (*Dubliners* 133). Mrs. Kearney is ostracized for standing up to Mr. Holohan when he treats her and her daughter unjustly and her "conduct was condemned" (*Dubliners* 132) by her peers as a result. While Mrs. Kearney faces social exile for demanding compensation for her daughter's services and acknowledging injustice, Mr. Holohan is told, "You did the right thing" (*Dubliners* 134). Joyce uses the treatment of Mrs. Kearney to reveal the power relations that exist between genders. Mrs. Kearney is unable to assert her rights and ensure she and her daughter are fairly compensated while simultaneously maintaining the decorum expected of a woman of her class and status. There are poignantly no such expectations regarding decorum placed on the men in the story. Joyce comments on the difference in expectations for men and women, writing, "they wouldn't have dared to have treated [Mrs. Kearney] like that if she had been a man" (*Dubliners* 132). Joyce also reveals that Mrs. Kearney "appreciates [her husband's] abstract value as a male" (*Dubliners* 126), which, additionally, reveals that men hold much greater weight in Irish society than women do.

Women in other *Dubliners* short stories face similar prejudices. Mrs. Cunningham is considered "an unpresentable woman who was an incurable drunk" (*Dubliners* 141) in "Grace" and Mrs. Sinico in "A Painful Case" is considered "unfit to live" (*Dubliners* 100) and "an easy prey to habits" (*Dubliners* 100) by Mr. Duffy, her former friend and admirer, after her death

announcement alludes to her being an alcoholic. Of this, Joyce wrote that Mrs. Sinico "had been in the habit of going out at night to buy spirits" (*Dubliners* 99). These cynical and mean-spirited views of Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Sinico are ironic because alcoholism is accepted and tolerated when an Irishman is the alcoholic. Mr. Henchy in *Dubliners* short story "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" says, "Many's the good man before now drank out of the bottle" (*Dubliners* 113). Mr. Dedalus, additionally, in *A Portrait* refers to his grandfather with pride, saying, "a fierce old fireeater he was" (79), meaning that old John Stephen Dedalus was, at the least, a very avid drinker. The men in Joyce's texts are often found in public houses, drinking, often to excess and with damaging results. Mr. Kernan, earlier in the short story "Grace," for example, bites off a part of his tongue and Farrington in "Counterparts" returns home drunk and beats his child. The engendered attitudes toward alcoholism and alcohol-drinking work as another example of a difference in how men and women are perceived, treated, and expected to act in Joyce's texts. These passages further reveal the gender-power relations ongoing in Ireland at the time Joyce was writing.

Margaret Olivia Little in "Why a Feminist Approach to Bioethics?" writes of the biopolitics of femininity. She argues that:

> One of the central themes of feminist theory is that human society… tends to be androcentric, or male-centered. Under androcentrism, man is treated as the tacit standard for human: he is the measuring stick, the unstated point of reference, for what is paradigmatic of or normal for humans. (95)

Little explains that the androcentric stance "places man in an unfairly privileged position, since he is not only a constituent, but the representative, of all humanity" (96). The effect of this belief, which was still firmly held in the time Joyce was writing, was that women were unfairly categorized as a "deficient human" and that femininity was devalued (Little 99). Joyce captures

this view in his writing in the moments in *Dubliners* that depict women characters, like Mrs. Kearney, Mrs. Cunningham, and Mrs. Sinico, mistreated, criticized, and ostracized by their peers for acting in a manner that is deemed unacceptable for women. These same actions, however, are pardonable and even celebrated when done by a man.

Joyce depicts how the undervaluation of women in Irish society has consequences on the health of Ireland's body politic in his texts. He depicts how women's undervaluation makes them vulnerable to violence, often at the hands of men within their own families, in *Dubliners*. Eveline considers fleeing Ireland in the hope of a better life in the short story "Eveline." The narrator reveals that she "felt herself in danger of her father's violence" (*Dubliners* 27), which is a critical factor in her decision-making process. Joyce writes that Eveline knew the constant threat of her father's violence had given her "palpitations" (*Dubliners* 27), which is an embodied psychological consequence to her vulnerability to her father's violence. Her body is also, of course, physically vulnerable. The physical and psychological consequences of her father's violence work as another example of how bodies are informed by the social factors existing within Irish society.

Violence forms a tangled web in Joyce's texts. Budgen commented on this, writing that "[Irish] countrymen are men of violent beliefs" (152), exposing the proclivity of violence in imperial Ireland. In the "Catholicism" section of chapter two of this thesis, I examine how the abuse of young boys is practiced by Catholic clergy on their students as a method of control, which is a likely factor in the abuse of children in Irish homes. The prevalence of violence toward women in Joyce's texts is likely also a consequence of the social factors existing in Irish society—likely nationalist ideology and the discourses on violence and masculinity that accompany it. Stephanie J. Miller in "The Great Criminal, the Exception, and the Bar Life in James Joyce's *Ulysses*" writes:

> In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, theories of the state increasingly grappled with the ethical questions raised by specters of colonial violence that give rise to equally violent nationalist revolutions. In few places has this violence been so sustained and long-drawn-out as in Ireland. (187)

This passage supports the prevalence of violence in Ireland and connects it to the nation's imperial history. Understanding the conditions and tensions present in the imperial context Joyce was writing of is crucial to understanding the recurrence of domestic violence and the tensions underpinning it in Joyce's texts. In "Unworkable Compound: Ireland and Empire in 'Eveline,'" Maxwell Uphaus writes, "What was and is really there at the core of native Irish life, "Eveline" ultimately implies, is violence" (38). Uphaus connects the history of imperial violence that was enacted on Ireland with the nationalist violence it prompted during Joyce's lifetime. He then connects the nationalist violence of Joyce's Ireland with the domestic violence enacted on Eveline by her father in Joyce's short story. Eveline's father likely re-enacts the violence he has witnessed as a method of asserting control and power over his daughter, revealing how violence is perpetuated, often against the most vulnerable in Irish society.

The link between nationalism and violence against women in Joyce's Ireland is complicated by masculinity as well. Gabriel Conroy, in the *Dubliners* short story "The Dead," "longed… to crush [his wife Gretta's] body against his, to overmaster her" (*Dubliners* 199). Gabriel expresses a desire to physically dominate his wife in response to her emasculating him by talking of her love for another man who had died when she was young. In a paper on the connection between masculinity and nationalism in *Dubliners,* Christopher Michael Elias writes that "masculinity was central to the Irish independence movement" (230). He explains that masculinity "provided [Irish nationalists] a means of conceptualizing their own sense of

freedom, self-determination, and control" (Elias 230). Gabriel's desire to reassert the power and control that he feels entitled to over his wife reflects the nationalist desire to reassert the autonomy and control that the nationalist citizens desire within Ireland's imperial context. In both "Eveline" and "The Dead," it is clear that nationalism and its accompanying discourses on violence, masculinity, and control all complicate and threaten women's space in society, resulting in moments and threats of domestic violence within Joyce's texts.

Joyce sets up women's health as an undervalued sector in *A Portrait*. He then explores the embodied consequences of its undervaluation explicitly through Ireland's high infant death rate in *Ulysses.* In *A Portrait,* a medical student refers to Liverpool as "[a] frightful hole" (181) with "nothing but midwifery cases" (181). His statement reveals that the male students are uninterested in maternity and fail to recognize its importance to the functioning of a healthy society. The undervaluation of women's reproductive and infant health is not only reflected by the student's disinterest and scorn, but also through the poor payment of those services, which are, Joyce writes, only "half a crown" (*A Portrait* 181). Conception and the role of the female body in gestation were topics of focus and debate in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century (Shaw 117), and many studies linked nations with low infant death rates directly to decades of female enfranchisement (Stern 35). While health and well-being has now "emerged as one of the central objectives of government" (Nettleton, "Aetiologies") across European societies, Joyce reveals contemporary Ireland's failure to prioritize women's and maternal health in this moment in *A Portrait*.

The repercussions of the undervaluation of women's health are examined explicitly in *Ulysses* episode "Oxen of the Sun," revealing another way that Irish bodies are affected by the state of Ireland's body politic and the social tensions existing within it. In the episode, Joyce depicts men genially positing over the cause of Ireland's high infant death rate in a maternity

hospital as Mina Purefoy is engaged in a challenging three-day birth. Joyce explores infant death as an example of the embodied trauma of the Irish while engaging with the social factors that cause it—poverty, the undervaluation of women's health, and, again, violence. The episode works to reveal that Ireland's failure to support healthy births is a direct result of its failure to support the health and well-being of Irish women. The men posit amicably over the cause. Mulligan "blames the sanitary conditions… by inhaling bacteria which lurks in the dust" (*Ulysses* 548), which reveals another way that Dublin's impoverished conditions affect the health of its citizens. Crotthers, on the other hand, argues that the "heavy labours in the workshop and marital discipline in the home" (*Ulysses* 548) are behind Ireland's high infant death rate. His argument positions Ireland's poor socio-economic conditions and domestic violence as the causes. Crotthers statement, like Mulligan's, works as another example of how poverty, lack of economic opportunity, and violence affects the health of those within Ireland's body politic. Poverty, he suggests, results in women performing manual labor out of economic survival to the detriment of their health and well-being as well as that of their unborn babies. Domestic violence, on the other hand, which can be inferred by Crotther's statement on "marital discipline" (*Ulysses* 548), is likely another consequence of Irish nationalism and the discourses on violence, masculinity, and control that accompany it.

The episode reveals how Ireland's body politic is weakened by the nation's failure to support women and provide safe conditions for them to carry and deliver Irish babies. The nation's failure to do so results in an infant death rate that has implications for the future of the nation. Duffy in her essay "Interesting States" writes that "Oxen of the Sun" was "an episode written, we know with hindsight, when the Irish state was, with great difficulty, itself being born" (211). Duffy points out that the Irish War of Independence was ongoing in 1919 through 1921, and she writes that it "had just began as Joyce was reflecting on young men, motherhood, and some versions of nationhood in "Oxen of the Sun" ("Interesting States" 210). These

moments that deal with birth and maternity in Joyce's texts reveal tension, and perhaps an allegorical link, between issues of childbirth in his texts and Ireland's struggle to create its own nation and national identity.

Joyce in "Oxen of the Sun" also delivers commentary on the spaces where men and women are valued in Irish society and the implications of these divisions. While the events of "Oxen of the Sun" occur because Mina Purefoy is giving birth, the reality of the birthing process is poignantly absent from the chapter. The birth of her baby and the factors related to childbirth and Dublin's high infant mortality rate are, instead, discussed pragmatically by men, who are removed from the actual birthing event. Of the setting of the episode, Budgen writes:

> Men drinking ale and women bearing children: there is reason Joyce's bringing these two phases of life together… Each sex is at its most specialised function. One is producing bodies and the other making societies. (217)

Budgen explores where men and women are valued in Irish society in this passage. Women carry the responsibility of child-birthing and rearing, while the men are seen drinking and discussing politics, medicine, and the problems of the nation. In his texts, Joyce evaluates how women's general undervaluation in society and he positions the threat of violence women face and Ireland's infant death rate as consequences of the social factors oppressing women in Ireland.

Non-normative bodies

Joyce examines the implications of having a body that is not valued in contemporary Ireland through Gerty in *Ulysses* episode "Nausicaa" and his protagonist Bloom in the whole of *Ulysses*. He evaluates how both of these characters are governed by "the corridors of power structured to accommodate the associated characteristics of male, heterosexual bodies of

dominant racial and ethnic groups" (Waylen et al. 161). Because Gerty is neither male nor able and Bloom has a Jewish racial and ethnic identity, these two characters have less access to power and are generally undervalued. Through Gerty and Bloom, Joyce evaluates the eugenic ideology that was pervasive in Ireland and throughout Europe during Joyce's lifetime. He alludes to the threat the eugenics movement presented to non-normative bodies, meaning not white, male, Catholic, and/or able. In Europe, the rise of eugenic biomedical science by the late-nineteenth century into the twentieth was, Manjapra writes, "premised on using and destroying the bodies of 'undesirables' – the colonized, the poor, and the disabled – for the supposed greater good of the imperial 'noble race'" (141). Readers today may be struck by how Joyce's texts foreshadow the unfathomable genocide that would unfold less than two decades after the publication of Joyce's first prose fiction text *Dubliners*. The Holocaust began in 1933 with the opening of the first concentration camp by the National Socialist German Workers' (Nazi) Party. The Nazi eugenic policies prompted the internment and extermination of many minority groups with traits deemed undesirable. European Jews and the disabled were both targeted by these policies and faced internment and death on a massive scale. Joyce's engagement with the limiting beliefs that would later inform Nazi eugenic policies through his portrayals of Gerty and Bloom works as a critical argument against modes of classification and discrimination.

Eugenic ideology appears explicitly in *Dubliners*. Joyce writes that "Mr. Duffy abhorred anything which betokened physical or mental disorder" (*Dubliners* 93) in his short story "A Painful Case" and Joyce includes numerous allusions to eugenic and racist ideologies in "The Dead." A "beautiful pure sweet mellow English tenor" (*Dubliners* 182) is praised, while the partygoers express disinterest in "a negro chieftain… who had one of the finest tenor voices [Freddy Malins] had ever heard" (*Dubliners* 181). When the diners ignore Freddy Malins praise of the chieftain, he asks, "Is it because [the musician] is only black?" (*Dubliners*

181), calling out the racism that underpins partygoers disinterest. The word "vulgar" is repeated throughout the story, adding to the eugenic undertones present as well. "Vulgar" in this context means anything non-normative, undesirable, un-Irish, and/or different. These moments within *Dubliners* reveal the limiting beliefs and eugenic and racist ideology present in Dublin at the time Joyce was writing of.

To examine the implications of having a body that is disabled, Joyce employs Gerty in *Ulysses* episode "Nausicaa." He uses satirical elements in the episode, like the romantic language and cliches characteristic of Victorian literature, to poke fun at Victorian ideals of purity and perfection that reinforced eugenic ideology. Gerty does not fit easily into Ireland's body politic because she is disabled. Bloom's realization, "No. She's lame! O!" (*Ulysses* 479), changes Bloom's perception of her. He thinks, "Jilted beauty. A defect ten times worse in a woman" (Joyce 479), commenting on the social implications of her disability which is complicated by her gender. Angela Nemecek in "Reading the Disabled Woman: Gerty MacDowell and the Stigmaphilic Space of 'Nausicaa,'" however, argues that Gerty's role in the text is to create a "space in which models of identity and social relations that rely on normative bodies can begin to be challenged and revised" (73). Gerty's existence, in other words, works as a resistance to the limiting forces existing in the Ireland of Joyce's texts. Nemecek writes:

> Through Gerty's brief relationship with Leopold Bloom, we begin to see that physical difference occupies a crucial position within the novel, helping to illuminate a space in which models of identity and social relations that rely on normative bodies can begin to be challenged and revised. (173)

Nemecek argues that by Gerty revealing her disability, "her source of stigma" (180), to Bloom in the episode, "she chooses her stigma as a source of affiliation" (180). Gerty, according to

Nemecek's argument, owns her disability rather than hiding it, which results in Bloom's pleasure rather than his disdain. Nemecek writes that Gerty "causes Bloom (unknowingly at this point) to gaze upon and desire her for the very feature that, according to cultural mores, he should revile" (180). Joyce's decision to focus on Gerty and her point of view in "Nausicaa" also, however, reveals a commitment to depict characters with identities and experiences that are often ignored and undervalued in contemporary Irish society. Gerty's mere appearance in *Ulysses* as a character rather than a symbol works to depict a non-normative, disabled body through a normative lens, meaning as a complex and valuable member of Irish society.

Gerty also, however, is firmly indoctrinated into the same Victorian perfectibility that has social implications for her body. Joyce writes that she has a "lovely reflection" (*Ulysses* 457), shows off her "slim graceful figure to perfection" (*Ulysses* 457), and carefully positions herself with a "wellturned ankle [displaying] its perfect proportions" (*Ulysses* 457). Gerty's narrative is largely concerned with vanity, appearance, and perfection, exemplifying how she is a product of the Victorian ideals that shaped literature, advertisement, and mainstream culture. These are the same ideals that became conflated with the aims of the eugenics movement, which was to perfect the human race by removing heritable characteristics deemed undesirable—traits which Gerty embodies as a disabled woman. This means that Gerty is both a product and a victim of the eugenic forces and its related tensions at play in Irish society.

Joyce uses Bloom's racial identity to further examine the implications of having body that is not valued in Irish society. Anti-Semitism is introduced in the first episode of *Ulysses* when Haines refers to the Jews in England as "our national problem, just now" (*Ulysses* 25). Later, in "Cyclops," characters ask, "Why can't a jew love his country like the next fellow?" (*Ulysses* 438), and wonder if Bloom is "jew or gentile or a holy Roman or a swaddler" (*Ulysses* 438). In these moments, the text explicitly explores questions and implications of race, nation,

and identity. Bloom is subjected to social exile and disdain by his Irish-Catholic peers despite him identifying as an Irishman. When his Irishness is questioned, he asserts that Ireland is his nation, saying, "Ireland… I was born here" (*Ulysses* 430). Despite Bloom's patriotism, his Jewish racial identity eclipses his Irish nationality in the eyes of his Catholic, male peers.

Feminist scholar Veronique Mottier in "Reproductive Rights" writes that there was an overall "collective preoccupation with the racial hygiene of the nation" (220) in imperial contexts. She writes that "fear about the degeneracy of the national race were intertwined with anxieties about miscegenation" (Mottier 220). Joyce highlights these fears in his texts by dealing with the implications of having a non-normative body through the focus of his narrative on Jewish Bloom. While Joyce, according to R. Ellmann, was not "a propagandist for better treatment of minorities" (*James Joyce* 384), he did draw inspiration from the world around him and cast a critical eye on racism, xenophobia, and prejudice by depicting anti-Semitism unsympathetically and focusing the majority of his narration in *Ulysses* on Jewish Bloom, the hero of the text.

Joyce, in portrays how Bloom's racial identity makes him vulnerable to violence in Ireland in "Cyclops." The threat of physical violence toward Bloom and the reader's awareness of his vulnerability as well as his social persecution escalates in the text with "Cyclops" being the climax. R. Ellmann writes that the "citizen" is a chauvinist, who believes fully that "everything Irish is good, everything unIrish is vile" (*Ulysses on the Liffey* 112). Bloom, of course, due to his Jewish racial identity, falls into the later category in the eyes of the citizen. R. Ellmann also writes, "In one way or another all the characters [in the episode] are monocular" (*Ulysses on the Liffey* 112), meaning their vision is metaphorically impaired by their racist and xenophobic worldview. Notions of nationality, race, and gender were linked with a set of practices and discourses that devalued certain members of a society (Davis 64).

The nationalist, anti-Semitic violence Bloom flees from at the close of "Cyclops" is a powerful example of how racial identity makes some within a body politic more vulnerable to violence than others (Waylen et al. 161). *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics* acknowledges that certain members of a body politic are at greater risk of being punished with harassment, bullying, battering, and sexual assault (Waylen et al. 162). The anti-Semitism present in Joyce's novels and the threat of violence it imposes on Bloom in *Ulysses* explores how his racial identity prevents him from living safely within Dublin because his body is not valued as a member of its body politic.

Of "Cyclops," scholar Vike Martina Plock in "Bodies" writes:

> Set in a decidedly Irish space of Barney Kiernan's pub, this chapter focuses on colonialism, Irish nationalism, and racial xenophobia as interconnected discourses that converge in the figure of the boisterous "citizen" whose mutinous, masculine body becomes Joyce's target for parody and critique. (190)

Joyce, again, in "Cyclops," as Plock argues, draws attention to the complexity of Irish nationalism along with violence and masculinity, which are often fueled by alcohol in settings dominated by men, like the public houses that appear in Joyce's texts. He explores these same connections in the *Dubliners* short story "Counterparts." Feeling "humiliated and disconnected" (*Dubliners* 82-3) following a conflict with his employer Farrington drinks at a bar before returning home "full of smouldering anger and revengefulness" (*Dubliners* 82). While his employer and triviality of his job as a clerk is the source of his anger and frustration, he beats his child, an act of violence that is causeless, senseless, and directed at the most vulnerable. Farrington's perceived servitude as a clerk and the anger and frustration that accompanies it works as an allegory to Ireland's political situation. His anger symbolizes Irish national frustration and the violence he enacts on his child symbolizes nationalist violence

which is often directed toward the most vulnerable in Irish society—women, children, and non-normative bodies, like Bloom's in "Cyclops"—rather than the British Empire, the true source of nationalist frustration. Joyce poignantly refers to Farrington both by his name and as "the man" throughout the chapter, suggesting that he works as an allegory for Irish men. Joyce's word repeated word choice in referring to Farrington has the effect of positioning him as both a man and "every man" and he does, indeed, represent a common set of practices and ideas existing in Ireland at the time, which Joyce casts a critical eye on throughout his texts.

Bloom's masochism throughout *Ulysses* is another example of how society informs the body. His masochism is used to explore both the physical and psychological effects of his persecution within his Dublin and greater-Irish communities. Joyce reveals that Bloom's masochism is linked directly to his racial identity in "Circe," in which he alludes to Bloom's lifetime of alienation in Catholic Ireland as being a critical factor. Joyce employs Bloom's masochism to explore the physical and psychological effects of his persecution throughout *Ulysses*. Bloom's imaginings in "Circe " include allusions to Ireland's political and religious contexts, revealing the link between his masochism and the ruling institutions in Ireland. While Bloom imagines being accepted despite his racial identity, for example, and celebrated as a "credit to [his] country" (*Ulysses* 606) and a "man like Ireland wants" (*Ulysses* 606), he simultaneously imagines Mulligan publicly testifying that Bloom is "prematurely bald from selfabuse… and has metal teeth" (*Ulysses* 613). Here, Joyce connects Bloom's self-abuse to the historical context of Ireland. Joyce critically connected his own self-hate with his Irish ethnic identity, and he found the same self-hate in his Jewish acquaintances. Neil R. Davison discusses this in his book *James Joyce, Ulysses, and the Construction of Jewish Identity*; he writes:

> As an adolescent, Joyce of course became obsessed with the paralyzing self-hate of his own ethnic Irish legacy. When he moved to the Continent and began socializing with Jews, he discovered a similar self-hatred in many of those whom he became closely acquainted. Recognizing the parallel… (8)

This self-hate that Joyce found characteristic of both the Irish and the Jewish reveals how, according to Harcourt, "knowledge on bodies is irreducibly interwoven with other discourses" (22). Joyce was, therefore, able to draw an interesting parallel between the marginalization of the Irish in Europe and the Jewish in Ireland. The "otherness" Joyce felt the Irish were cast as within Europe and that the Jewish certainly were within Ireland, according to Joyce's *Ulysses*, is depicted by Joyce as manifesting with physical and psychological symptoms because both Stephen and Bloom repeatedly reveal their tendencies toward self-abuse and, in the case of Bloom, masochism. Joyce condemns these limiting beliefs that were both perpetuated by and onto the Irish, and he modelled tolerance and compassion toward those deemed different or undesirable through Bloom, his Irish Ulysses. R. Ellmann explains that some scholars feel that the relation between Bloom and Ulysses is tenuous (*James Joyce* 371). Bloom, however, he writes that "he is a worth man. Joyce does not exalt him, but he makes him special" (R. Ellmann, *James Joyce* 372). Bloom's characterization as the "Ulysses" or "hero" of Joyce's text is critical to his reception because Bloom expresses a worldview that is very different than those around him and it is, Joyce suggests, in many ways, a kinder, more tolerant, and perhaps superior one.

The overall tolerance and sympathy that Bloom expresses toward those who are different in *Ulysses* likely works as a warning against the eugenics movement and the discriminatory practices and policies it inspired. Bloom clearly and explicitly presents an alternative to eugenic ideology in "Circe," further supporting that Joyce was opposed to the

movement. Bloom imagines himself being celebrated in Ireland opposed to the reality of his racially-motivated social exile. He imagines himself "shaking hands with a blind stripling" (*Ulysses* 608), "placing his arms around the shoulders of an old couple" (*Ulysses* 608), kissing bedsores (*Ulysses* 608), and "[taking] part in a stomach race with elderly male and female cripples" (*Ulysses* 608). The people Bloom interacts with are the same people that are devalued and targeted by eugenic discourses. Bloom's "[c]ome on, boys! Wriggle it, girls!" (*Ulysses* 608) directed at the undervalued members of Dublin society shows a celebration of those who are different. Joyce also explores opposition to eugenics through Bloom's vision of "social regeneration" (*Ulysses* 611), which encompasses a society with "mixed races and mixed marriages" (*Ulysses* 611). Bloom's vision for this racial utopia would have been incredibly taboo at the time. Davison writes that both the Irish and the Jewish "had played crucial roles in the development of Europe, yet both were disempowered by cultures that portrayed them as 'racially' inferior and thus destructive to 'blood-based' political programs" (6-7), revealing that both groups were targeted by the eugenic programs that Joyce is sceptical of in his texts. Joyce takes Bloom's desire for interracial harmony further with an androgenous Bloom giving birth to eight male yellow and white children, who are born "wellconducted, speaking five modern languages fluently and interested in various arts and sciences" (*Ulysses* 614). Bloom's vision of competent, successful biracial children subverted eugenic ideology that was rooted in racism, xenophobia, and ableism. This scene implicitly pushes back against pervasive eugenic ideology, presenting a kinder and more tolerant society instead.

Chapter 4: Joyce as a product of Ireland's body politic

This thesis thus far serves as an analysis of the way Joyce uses the bodies of his characters to evaluate the social issues existing within Ireland's body politic. In this chapter, I evaluate the role of health and medicine in Joyce's texts and the historical factors that likely informed his writing. I, additionally, examine Joyce's preoccupation with disease, disability, and decay in *Ulysses*, evaluating how this aspect of the text is likely an expression of his own physical vulnerability as he aged, a fascination with physiology revealed by his short tenure as medical student, and a consequence of the trauma he embodied as a result of his early life in Ireland. This chapter, therefore, works as an evaluation of Joyce as a product of Ireland's body politic.

Health and medicine are integral to Joyce's *Ulysses* in addition to the physiology of his characters. Of this aspect of the text, Shanahan and Quigley write:

> Much has been written of Joycean themes: life and death, father-son relationships, motherhood, religious oppression, parochialism, nationalism, and human sexuality. However, health, medicine, and disease are equally important aspects of the human experience, and here Joyce also succeeds. (278)

In this passage, they position health, medicine, and disease as being of thematic importance within *Ulysses.* J. B. Lyons supports this observation, noting that many medical practitioners and scientists are mentioned repeatedly throughout *Ulysses* and that its anatomical allusions are frequent and sometimes remarkably detailed (156). He writes that Joyce had remarkable knowledge of the human body, its anatomy, and its functions for someone outside of the medical field, which J. B. Lyons posits was likely due to his brief occupation as a medical student (18). "Oxen of the Sun" is the clearest example of this, in which Joyce sets the episode in the Holles Street maternity hospital. He references the Celtic view on medicine, writing that it was "highly honoured" (*Ulysses* 501), and names its greatest doctors: "the O'Shiels, the

O'Hickeys, the O'Lees" (*Ulysses* 501). He mentions "the late ingenious Mr. Darwin" (*Ulysses* 533), meaning Charles Darwin, naturalist and creator of the theory of evolution, and many embryologists, "Culpepper, Spallanzani, Blumenbach, Lusk, Hertwig, Leopold, and Valenti" (*Ulysses* 547). Joyce additionally lists common ailments and diseases, writing: "enlarged glands, mumps, quinsy, bunions, hayfever, bedsores…" (*Ulysses* 555). Of the focus of the body and medicine in *Ulysses*, Duffy in "Corrigan's Pulse" argues that medicine was pivotal in modernist Irish literature (190) and that "medicine foregrounds" many Irish texts (194). She explains that this feature of Irish literature is a reaction to the great era of Dublin medicine that occurred between the 1820s and 1880 ("Corrigan's Pulse" 190). During this time, there was a burst of medical research in Ireland ("Corrigan's Pulse" 190), and it is likely that the great era of Dublin medicine informed Joyce's writing. It also, however, informed the physiology of the city of Dublin. Shanahan and Quigley explain that there were three medical schools in Dublin in 1904, which had a population of 300,000 (278). They write that, for this reason, "it is not surprising that 'medicals' feature prominently in *Ulysses*, and we can infer much from their behavior and dialogue" (Shanahan and Quigley 278), meaning that the role of health and medicine likely informed Dublin society in addition to Joyce's *Ulysses*. It is, therefore, no surprise that health and medicine are featured prominently in the text.

In evaluating the effect of the bodies and their health in Joyce's texts, it is important to note that both *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are semi-autobiographical texts with the protagonists, Stephen and Bloom representing Joyce in different life stages. Stephen in both texts represents young Joyce while Bloom in *Ulysses* is Joyce in middle-age or, as Budgen writes, "Bloom *is* while Stephen is becoming" (59). The ages of Joyce's protagonists are significant because Stephen is twenty-two, the age Joyce was when he left Ireland, and Bloom is thirty-eight, Joyce's age while writing *Ulysses* (Ferris 39-40). Stephen and Bloom act as foils for one another. Physically, Stephen is young while Bloom is middle-

aged. Despite this, Stephen reveals the onset of many maladies that would plague Joyce through adulthood. While Bloom is characterized as having "trouble eyes" (Joyce 194), "greasy eyes" (*Ulysses* 334), and a "cod's eye" (Joyce 384), revealing poor vision, Stephen also complains about his eyesight, thinking, "must get glasses… Distance. The eyes see all flat" (*Ulysses* 666). Later in *Ulysses*, Bloom warns Stephen of the dangers of Nighttown, saying the prostitutes are a "regular deathtrap to young fellows" (*Ulysses* 706), which is notable because venereal diseases are referenced throughout the novel and Bloom having a sexual disease or disorder is insinuated as well. Bloom's sloping walk and visible eyes problems, which are revealed through observations of his "greasy eyes" (*Ulysses* 334), and a "cod's eye" (Joyce 384), reflect Joyce's own ailments (Ferris 64), which Ferris, in her book, associates with syphilis. Bloom is, additionally, characterized as a shadow of his young self. While Molly remembers Bloom being handsome in his youth, the characters in the novel characterize his appearance as "greasy" (*Ulysses* 334) and unattractive. Similarly, Bloom evaluates Stephen as being one of Ireland's "cultured fellows... nipped in the bud of premature decay" (*Ulysses*748), suggesting Stephen's appearance is sickly or uncared for as well. Ferris argues, "The primary metaphor for physical destruction in Joyce's autobiographical fictions… is that of the fall" (103). Within *Ulysses*, the fall manifests physically through the bodies portrayed in the text. The ailments Joyce wrote for his protagonists were the same he suffered from. J. B. Lyons explains that Joyce was tormented by poor health (223), and, indeed, Joyce was bothered by his eyesight, stomach issues, had problems with his teeth that resulted in their extraction, and likely suffered from syphilis (Ferris 157-9; J. B. Lyons 185). Both protagonists within the novel show signs of physical decline that mirrored those that plagued Joyce, suggesting Joyce was grappling with his own physical vulnerability as he aged while writing *Ulysses* and the way disease informed his lived experience.

Ferris writes that since Joyce's death in 1941, "there has remained a great untold segment of Joyce's life that none of his biographers has explored" (5), referring to his ailments and, specifically, the suspected role of syphilis in the chronic health problems that plagued him throughout adulthood. She posits that his biographers, specifically Robert Ellmann, likely avoided writing in-depth of Joyce's health out of fear of hurting and angering the friends and family of Joyce, who were still alive when he began writing his biography *James Joyce* in the early 1950s, that he had built relationships with through his writing process (Ferris 2). Ferris, for this reason, writes that she finds R. Ellmann's work "incomplete and misleading" (2). Because of Joyce's interest in the human body and his commitment to *Ulysses* being "the epic of the human body" (quoted in J. B. Lyons 156), it is important to evaluate Joyce's body as a product of Ireland's body politic as well. Many of the same factors that affected the diseased and disabled Irish bodies within Joyce's texts affected Joyce's body as well.

Joyce's body and the bodies of his friends, family, and community members were likely shaped by the trauma they embodied living in Dublin at a time when Ireland was characterized by the same British exploitation, growing nationalst sentiments and violence, and the Catholic Church's doctrine with its emphasis on suffering and shame—that he explores in his texts. Joyce wrote in a letter to his wife Nora, "I was fighting a battle with every religious and social force in Ireland" (quoted in R. Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* xv), revealing the oppressive nature of these forces. Of the effect of the social factors and tensions present in Ireland on Joyce, J. B. Lyons writes:

> By most present-day student health clinic standards James Joyce would have been regarded as 'emotionally disturbed.' Environmental factors, religious conflict, problems of identity, and of a creative personality. (17)

This passage points out the hardships Joyce faced as a member of Ireland's body politic in childhood, adolescence, and his young adult life. As a consequence of these factors, Joyce did

indeed face a "hand-to-mouth existence… poor health… [and] unreliable work" well into middle-age (J. B. Lyons 223). These factors complicated his overall health and wellbeing, exacerbating and perhaps causing his health conditions. Joyce, according Kaplan, suffered from gastrointestinal and stomach issues throughout his life that were often attributed to lack of food, stress, alcohol, and 'colitis' (668). Joyce, however, connected the external tensions of his own life with his physical ailments, which is revealed in a letter to his brother Stanislaus about stomach issues he was experiencing. Joyce wrote, "I am not very well. All this trouble and bustle always finds its way into the bosom of my stomach" (quoted in J. B. Lyons 211). J. B. Lyons explains, "Because of [the stomach's] rich endowment of autonomic nerves the stomach is at the mercy if the emotions and reacts to tension, anxiety, and disappointment" (211). J. B. Lyons's revelation suggests that Joyce was very much aware of the psychosomatic relationship between his body, mind, and environment. This understanding of the connection between what Nettleton calls "the internal body and the external source of pollution" ("Aetiologies") by Joyce informed his texts and the depiction of bodies within them. Shanahan and Quigley support this aspect of his texts, writing that "Joyce was particularly interested in portraying the afflictions of society and disorders closely linked with lifestyle" (282). The stomach issues referenced by Joyce, Kaplan, and J. B. Lyons, it is important to note, troubled Joyce until his death following a ruptured stomach ulcer in 1941 (Kaplan 668).

Joyce refused to sentimentalize Ireland and often employs the sentimental tropes of Irish literature satirically, particularly in "Cyclops," in which Joyce juxtaposes Irish myth alongside the villainous figure of the violent nationalist "citizen." Joyce, according to Joycean scholar Declan Kiberd, "hated the past and those who sentimentalized its many failures as covert triumphs" (lxxv). Joyce instead saw Ireland's "conscience as 'uncreated'" (Kiberd lxxv). Joyce problematizes British imperialism and Irish nationalism as well as Catholic dominion in Ireland through its employment of bodies in his texts. Stephen says in *A Portrait*: "This race

and this country and this life produced me… I shall express myself as I am" (170). In saying this, Joyce acknowledges his commitment to representing Ireland as it was in *Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* and *Ulysses*. Shanahan and Quigley argue that Joyce's "work is teeming with reference and allusion to human experiences, smells, senses, emotions, secretions, bodily functions, disease, and death—but mostly life" (283). His texts all work as a representation of life in Ireland as it was, but these works, like their author, are products of the many competing forces in Ireland. Joyce also poignantly offers powerful criticisms of the same forces that formed the Irish bodies, which is a critical point of understanding in the reception of his texts.

Conclusion

Joyce critically examined Ireland, the setting of his texts, and the reality of living in Dublin at the turn of the century through the bodies that inhabit it in his fiction. He uses Irish bodies to explore and contest the political, social, cultural, and religious influences at play in Irish society and to explore the implications these factors had on Irish bodies. In doing so, he evaluated Ireland's body politic but he also examined the physical maladies plaguing the Irish people along with the socio-cultural issues that may have caused them. Joyce explores the connection between physical symptoms and external influences, examining the biopolitics and body politics of Ireland in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. His oeuvre also serve as a critical assessment of the limiting beliefs present at the time, which encouraged persecution within and outside of Ireland. These beliefs included the Victorian perfectibility and eugenic ideology that arose in the second half of the nineteenth century and spurred one of the largest human rights violations and genocides in human history, the Holocaust, which began in 1933 after Joyce's death. Additionally, because of Joyce's childhood and young adult life in Ireland, it is important to note that he is a product of Ireland's body politic. He explored this implicitly in *Ulysses*, evaluating Ireland through his protagonists Bloom and Stephen, who are fictionalized versions of himself, and the many Dubliners he created or portrayed in his texts. *Ulysses*, specifically, likely allowed Joyce to express and process his physical vulnerability as he aged and consider his position as a product of Ireland's vulnerable body politic at a critical point in both Irish and World histories.

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