Before discussing alimentary symbolism in Ulysses, it may be helpful to look briefly at A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, where important alimentary images link the emergent artist of A Portrait with that of Ulysses.

We know that Stephen's growth as an artist is keyed to the Eucharistic image of the priest who transmutes "the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life."¹ (All subsequent references to Portrait are cited parenthetically in the text.) This image of the mass, spiritualized as it is, is grounded originally in the process of digestion. It is evolved to express the ingestion of the divine being which will effect a miraculous transformation and provide a different kind of nourishment for those who participate in the rite. It is not the physical origins of this image that seem important to Stephen, however. Nevertheless, the alimentary process is present, and the fact that it lies beneath the surface is significant in itself, for we know that Stephen's need to keep instinct and body functions repressed and the equally strong need to bring them to consciousness generate the tensions that are important to Stephen's (and Joyce's) kind of language and art.
However, we also recall that the artist/priest metaphor is not the final word about the alimentary process, for we also have Stephen's definition of Ireland as the "old sow that eats her farrow" (203). These two images vividly exemplify the nature of Stephen's psychological problems and suggest the cause of his rigid dualism. To fail to become the artist is to become devoured by country, church, and mother. Yet to become the artist is to become immersed in unconscious energies that are usually viewed as female, that is, the qualities usually associated with the female principle: instinct, emotion, biorhythmic processes.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, both Mark Shechner's and Jeanne McKnight's studies present illuminating psychoanalytical backgrounds for both novels and are particularly helpful in their discussions of Stephen's problems. Both writers also draw on Philip Slater's important work on mother-son relationships in the Greek family, to which Irish families bear some significant similarities. Indeed, Slater coins an interesting term that seems to describe Stephen's problem accurately, namely the "oral-narcissistic dilemma," the "desire to merge and the desire to be free and separate." Slater goes on to say that this conflict "originates in a failure to negotiate successfully the transition from the infantile state of total narcissism and total dependence to one involving an awareness of the separate existence of others," Slater also says that "the desire for symbiosis is matched by a fear of submergence implying loss of individuality and identity."

In another important psychoanalytic analysis of Joyce's work, Chester G. Anderson correlates events in Joyce's childhood with events in *A Portrait* and argues that the past is never relinquished: "In spite of his complex and intricate use of sublimation, projection, repression," he says of Joyce, "the repressed would return again and again in new forms, demanding new defenses." Shechner, McKnight, and Anderson emphasize the oral factors of Stephen's problem, his fear of being devoured, and his creation of language as bulwark; Anderson's analysis deals most strongly with the oral basis of Stephen's needs. He associates Stephen with the child whose Oedipal conflict leads him to an oral sadistic stage in which he fantasizes the ingestion of the mother. As Anderson explains it, the child, "his sucking libido unsatisfied and unsatisfiable, fantasizes destroying the mother's breast and eating his way through the flesh of her innards
However, Anderson's (and Freud's) heavy emphasis on the sadistic aspects of childhood fantasy is qualified by such Jungians as Erich Neumann who denies sadism or castration as components of the oral stage. To view the mother as an object of gratification is, Neumann says, "a genuine objective element in the primal situation, not an infantile projection."

In any case, Stephen's attitude about food, his tendency to relegate digestive functions to a lower world that is both attractive and threatening, is our main concern here. It is also important to note the relationship of the digestive process to his later attitudes about sin and hell, as well as his projection of devouring attributes on both male and female figures that he sees as threatening to him. Also significant is Stephen's use of earthy and excremental images to explain the basis of art and his use of the dynamics of peristalsis in relation to language.

The mention of food can't help but call to mind the famous Christmas dinner scene in chapter 1 where the young Stephen is first allowed to sit at dinner with the adults. The scene carries such heavy psychological, religious, and sexual reverberations in addition to the political ones that the role of food seems obvious and literal. Yet in the battle between Dante, Mr. Casey, and Simon, food serves as an important commentary.

As the quarrel begins, for example, Simon is giving Stephen a generous amount of sauce for his turkey. As the meal continues and the argument between Dante and the men intensifies, Simon attempts to break the tension by asking "Who's for more turkey?" (31). But he also seems to be undercutting Dante's obsessive concerns with more spiritual matters. Dante, worried about his insult to a priest, ignores the question and continues on the topic dearest to her: "Nice language for any catholic to use!" As the conflict worsens, Simon's attention to the dinner increases: "He heaped up the food on Stephen's plate and served uncle Charles and Mr Casey to large pieces of turkey and splashes of sauce. Mrs Dedalus was eating little and Dante sat with her hands in her lap" (32). Dante is hardly mollified when Simon next cuts off the turkey tail and offers it as the "pope's nose." When there are no takers, Simon says, "I think I had better eat myself" (33). But Simon is defeated by the women's hostility, and his dinner is, he admits, "spoiled." Getting angrier, he next attacks a priest, the "tub of guts up in Armagh. . . . You should see that fellow lapping up his bacon and cabbage of a cold winter's day" (33). He continues to use
food as a weapon against the women, or at least Dante, as he eats with features twisted into a “grimace of heavy bestiality” and makes “a lapping noise with his lips” (33).

But the real attack against Dante comes with Mr. Casey’s story about the “very famous spit,” offered, as Simon puts it, to “help us to digest” (34). The story is about a drunken old woman who screams accusations about Parnell and Kitty O’Shea at Casey. The hostility against Dante, implicit in the story, is deepened as Simon gnaws on a bone and tears “some meat from it with his teeth” (36). Then the old woman utters her denunciation of Kitty in “a name that I won’t sully . . . your ears . . . by repeating,” Casey says. His reaction is memorable: “She stuck her ugly old face up at me when she said it and I had my mouth full of tobacco juice. I bent down to her and Phth! says I to her like that” (36).

Behind the story’s crudeness we can see the life-affirming men fighting rather pathetically, and in symbolic terms whose full import they fail to understand, against the life-denying women (who not coincidentally evince little appetite), first by drawing attention to eating and thereby to things of the body, and second by telling a story whose denouement has implicit sexual overtones. Furthermore, the spitting suggests a rejection rather than an assimilation, an inverted ejaculation, and is a comment upon what the men have been denied. Sheldon R. Brivic is right in saying that the spitting scene is the “height of . . . male assertiveness,” but it is a pathetic assertiveness indeed. Beyond her embodiment as the church and the sterility of Ireland, Dante is also representative of the Terrible Mother. The scene reflects in rather remarkable terms the deep tensions, political, religious, but especially sexual, that permeate the household.

Thus at a dinner that celebrates the birth of Jesus and the birth, in broader terms, of the new sun (after the midwinter solstice), Stephen too is born into a new awareness. After the meal he tries to write a poem about Parnell. But his important reaction to the scene is more subtle. Stephen dismisses the physical act of spitting as “not nice” (37), and he goes on to ponder language. Neither the abundance of gravy on his plate nor the violence at the table reflected through the spit story seem to interest him so much as the question of what name the woman had called Kitty O’Shea. Language is, of course, one way in which Stephen will insulate himself against disturbing, and usually physical, aspects of his experience. Sometimes he will directly change
food into a word. During his illness at Clongowes for example, he is fascinated by Brother Michael’s pun, (‘butter you up’) on the toast brought to the sick Stephen. As he views the trussed turkey, Stephen ponders on why the word *turkey* also meant pandybat: “Why did Mr. Barrett in Clongowes call his pandybat a turkey?” (30)

At this point in his life, Stephen, although ambivalent, seems to be more sympathetic with his father who represents an energy he is initially attracted to. Another dinner scene suggests these basically positive feelings: “Stephen had been awaiting his father’s return for there had been mutton hash that day and he knew his father would make him dip his bread in the gravy” (71). Early in *A Portrait*, food seems more often mentioned in connection with men like his father, Mr. Casey, or Uncle Charles and seems to remind him pleasantly of natural life. In chapter 2, in the scene with Uncle Charles, eating and elimination are mentioned in conjunction with rhetoric as Uncle Charles, with lofty diction and pompous preparation, announces he will “repair to” the outhouse. His offering of an apple to Stephen (“They’re good for your bowels”61), may be accepted, but Stephen does reject his religiosity and his overblown rhetoric.

There are other occasions in the early part of *A Portrait* where Stephen seems to retain pleasant associations with food and matters related to body functions and earth. Sometimes he is even moved by them. Anderson’s argument that Stephen rejects food when he is rejected or defeated seems a valid one when Stephen’s response to acceptance by his peers, for example, is examined.9 After his conference with Father Conmee and his victory over Father Dolan, the natural world seems less threatening. Hailed by his peers as a hero, he is suddenly aware of “the smell of the fields in the country where they digged up turnips to peel and eat them when they went for a walk to Major Barton’s” (59).

Stephen’s drive in the milk car is also a pleasant experience for him. His view of the cows “at grass” is positive. But when autumn comes and the cows are driven home, he has a different impression of them. In the cowyard there are “foul green puddles and clots of liquid dung and steaming brantroughs” (63) that momentarily “sicken” him. Again, he will deal with his fears, and the life of the milkman will become appealing enough for him to think of again. A second passage contains some of the rare alimental images to be found in *A Portrait* and foreshadows the time when, in the Martello tower, Stephen will
create stories from the figure of the milkwoman. But here his identification with the milkman dominates, and he is not yet old enough to reject this common mode of life: "He thought it should be a pleasant life enough, driving along the roads every evening to deliver milk, if he had warm gloves and a fat bag of gingernuts in his pocket to eat from" (64).

By the time Stephen has moved to Dublin, however, such feelings have been altered. Doubtless his emergent sexuality, coupled with his Catholic upbringing, have everything to do with this change, but also important is Stephen's developing awareness of his father's downward path in life. Where his father was associated positively with food and natural life processes (in contrast to his mother's more spiritual nature), this natural life takes on the characteristics of "squalor," a word Stephen will use many times to describe his environment, and natural life comes to signify for him ugliness, decay, bondage, and death.

Since Stephen has seen his father swallowed up by Ireland, church, and family, it is not surprising that his own fears of being devoured grow keener as he grows older. In fact, the motif of devouring remains a dominant one in both *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*.

It is in chapter 3, where his sexuality and consequent guilt dominate his consciousness, that Stephen seems most cognizant of eating: "He hoped there would be stew for dinner, turnips and carrots and bruised potatoes and fat mutton pieces to be ladled out in thick peppered flourfatted sauce. Stuff it into you, his belly counselled him" (102). Now he eats with "surly appetite" (111), feels "his belly crave for its food" (102), clears "thick scum from his mouth with his tongue" (111). He feels he has "sunk to the state of a beast that licks its chaps after meat" (111). His sense of self-abhorrence increases as he sees his soul "fattening and congealing into a gross grease" (111).

It is in this state of mind that Stephen, during the retreat, is to ingest the sermon of Father Arnall. This sermon, on death, judgment, hell, and heaven, is most memorable for its description of hell. If we look beyond the horror and the implicit sadism of its content, we find the sermon dominated largely by images of ingestion and elimination. The association of evil and the Christian hell with anality is acknowledged by most psychologists. What is also important is the aspect of sadism involved in the elimination of evil. Neumann might be speaking of Arnall when he says: "The Christian . . . who imputes to the saints so nauseating a pleasure in the sufferings of their fellow men is
obviously avenging himself on the saints for repressing his own chthonian aspect." That the struggle is against the lower body pole is most obvious in this type of Christian doctrine and severely intensifies Stephen's problem of assimilating the world and his lower self.

Father Arnall begins with one ingesting pair—Adam and Eve—who both ate to receive knowledge and thereafter fell. The price paid for their "epistemophelia" was their exile from Eden and their need to "earn their bread in the sweat of their brow" (118). Certainly their fall is replicated in the life of Stephen, whose family struggles every day to get enough to eat. Even the dangers of language are involved in this fall, for it was the "poison" of the serpent's "eloquence" "poured" into Eve's ear that was the cause of it all (118). Hell is, of course, the great devourer that "has enlarged its soul and opened its mouth without any limits" (117). Hell is also a maw with "boundless fire raging in its very vitals" (121). It eats but is never sated. Stephen seems deeply moved by this image. In this fantasy he is fearful of being eaten; he imagines his body first as dying, then as a corpse placed in a "long hole in the ground . . . to feed the mass of its creeping worms and to be devoured by scuttling plumpbellied rats" (112), to be "eaten with flames, gnawed by vermin" (132).

Besides these devouring motifs, Father Arnall's sermon focuses on hell in excremental terms. He speaks of the stench of hell as comprised of "all the filth of the world, all the offal and scum of the world," and of hell as a "vast reeking sewer" where the bodies of the damned themselves exhale . . . "a pestilential odour" (120). He also speaks of the damned whose tastes are tortured "with foul matter" (122).

Stephen can't help but be influenced adversely by such images since they reinforce his own sense of his soul as a "foul swamp of sin" (114), that as a "beast in its lair . . . had lain down in its own filth" (115). As his sense of his own sinfulness increases, the excremental imagery becomes stronger: "The sordid details of his orgies stank under his very own nostrils" (115).

The natural world is described in a similar fashion. Stephen views the rainy Dublin day in this manner: "It would rain forever, noiselessly. The water would rise inch by inch. . . . All life would be choked off, noiselessly: birds, men, elephants, pigs, children: noiselessly floating corpses amid the litter of the wreckage of the world" (117).
This passage is dominated by images of floating bodies, rising water that chokes life; in other words, the world, like hell, is a sewer. The references to noiselessness are interesting because Stephen seems to associate a lack of noise, words, language, with mystery and secrecy, ultimately with process and qualities of the female principle.

In any case, he returns to his room "to be alone with his soul" (136), a hounded and almost hysterical Stephen, who sees the "leprous company of his sins" (137) closing around him. Finally, in a description that suggests the operation of peristalsis, we are told: "The senses of his soul closed. They closed for an instant and then opened. He saw" (137).

What Stephen sees is a truly excremental vision that blends images of the natural world, body functions, and affirms the animal or chthonic nature of man:

A field of stiff weeds and thistles and tufted nettlebunches. Thick among the tufts of rank stiff growth lay battered canisters and clots and coils of solid excrement. A faint marshlight struggled upwards from all the ordure through the bristling greygreen weeds. An evil smell, faint and foul as the light, curled upwards sluggishly out of the canisters and from the stale crusted dung.

Creatures were in the field. . . . Goatish creatures . . . trailing their long tails behind them (137).

Yet even this essentially visual and essentially eliminative vision contains references to language: "Soft language issued from their spittle-less lips. . . . They moved in slow circles, circling closer and closer to enclose, to enclose, soft language issuing from their lips, their long swishing tails besmeared with stale shite, thrusting upwards their terrific faces" (138). Here upper and lower body poles, so rigidly separated in consciousness, merge. All lower body functions, already rendered evil, have thrown their characteristics off onto language that now carries connotations of dirt and evil. Mouths excrete and language becomes associated with dung. Stephen's vision of language contrasts markedly with that of the preacher who has earlier spoken of Christ as "the Eternal Word" (118). Different also is Stephen's own use of words, his "foul long letters" that he writes and leaves in the grass for girls to find (116).

This inversion, by which basically creative functions become imaged as evil, is paralleled in Stephen's physical reaction. The gluttony that marked his immersion in the world of natural instincts is trans-
formed; he now experiences “the reeking odour pouring down his throat, clogging and revolting his entrails” (138), and is forced to vomit.

His phobia regarding ingesting is thus given a more explicit rationale. Clearly Stephen is unable to assimilate his own instinctive nature, for that nature is too closely linked to the Dublin world of squalor, to the instinctual wisdom he fears, and against which he erects his bulwarks of intellectual, bookish wisdom. His resistance is manifested, not so surprisingly, in terms of choking, clogging. Into the washstand that must, in his mind, be associated with the wash basin at the Hotel Wicklow and the word *suck*, Stephen vomits, that is, he allows his body’s substance to be sucked from him. At the same time, his vision is reduced in power, and his forehead is cold and damp.

It is inevitable that under these conditions, Stephen must confess, or vomit up his sins, and his act is described in particularly evacuative terms: “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. There was no more to tell” (144). Thus in a complex train of associations, Stephen has transformed normal ingestion, transformation, and elimination into a metaphorical state in which his mouth and soul become orifices of elimination. The stream of vice produced in this confession lacks any element of creativity that, on a psychological level, is usually associated with the eliminative functions. Stephen not only is unable to assimilate his experience, he is also unable to transform it and must expel it.

Nevertheless, the act of expelling, even in this rather inverted form, is a kind of purge, and at the end of this chapter, as Stephen sits by the fire in his own kitchen, he views food in a more neutral manner. He observes: “On the dresser was a plate of sausages and white pudding and on the shelf there were eggs. They would be for the breakfast in the morning after the communion in the college chapel. White pudding and eggs and sausages and cups of tea. How simple and beautiful was life after all!” (147). At communion the next day, his eating is regarded in somewhat different terms. It is now God whom he wishes to assimilate; incorporeal substance cannot harm him:

*Corpus Domini nostri.*
Could it be? He knelt there sinless and timid: and he would hold upon his tongue the host and God would enter his purified body (146).

Chapter 4 reflects the same neutral, mortifying moods. Certainly Stephen's attitude toward the passions indicates how real his sense of mortification, of being emptied, is. He is, for example, unable to "harbour," that is, he is unable to contain, "passions" (149). We are told that "a brief anger had often invested him, but he had never been able to make it an abiding passion and had always felt himself passing out of it as if his very body were being divested with ease of some outer skin or peel" (149, italics mine).

In this chapter, each of his senses is mortified. The gluttony he has indulged in (or imagines himself indulging in) that is both a feature of guilt and a condition of it is replaced by mortification of his sense of taste, and he now diverts his mind from food. His sense of smell poses other problems that suggest that his new mode of existence will be shortlived. This sense, the one least respected by man and the most highly developed in animals, is the one that Stephen still possesses and even values to a high degree. Indeed, he likes smells and is so comfortable with them that he must seek out particularly bad ones in order to successfully mortify this sense, finally discovering a certain "stale fishy stink" (151) to which he can subject himself.

Stephen is so removed from life and bodily processes at this point that he can only picture himself as a celebrant: "It was as in the pictures of the mass" (159). Even the sacrament, which involves ingestion, of course, becomes problematic. It fails to truly enter him and seems to "have turned into dried up sources" (152). Furthermore, he finds that "his actual reception of the eucharist did not bring him the same dissolving moments of virgin self-surrender" (152).

Yet finding that a purely mystical type of surrender will not succeed, that stasis in terms of body functions as well as in terms of psychic life is destructive, he recognizes his need for surrender and dissolution. This need seems to remain a threat to him, and his attempt to transform it into an intellectual state does not diminish its power or presence: "The idea of surrender had a perilous attraction for his mind now that he felt his soul beset once again by the insistent voices of the flesh which began to murmur to him again" (152, italics mine).

Thus the "grave and ordered and passionless life" (160) he envisions after the Prefect's proposal is a passing fantasy. The unrest in him is
too great, and as he contemplates this life, he begins to 'ingest' the sights and smells of another one: "His lungs dilated and sank as if he were inhaling a warm moist unsustaining air and he smelt again the warm moist air which hung in the bath in Clongowes above the sluggish turfcoloured water" (161). He realizes that he will not join the priesthood, that he is destined to be "elusive of social or religious orders" (162), and yet, in spite of this disturbing vision of the future, life, even the squalid life of Dublin, calls to him in positive ways: "The faint sour stink of rotted cabbages came towards him from the kitch­ engardens on the rising ground above the river. He smiled to think that it was this disorder, the misrule and confusion of his father's house and the stagnation of vegetable life, which was to win the day in his soul" (162).

He returns to his own kitchen where a description of a simple dinner table’s contents takes on aspects of desolation: "The last of the second watered tea remained in the bottoms of the small glassjars and jampots. . . . Disgarded crusts and lumps of sugared bread, turned brown by the tea which had been poured over them, lay scattered on the table. Little wells of tea lay here and there on the board and a knife with a broken ivory handle was stuck through the pith of a ravaged turnover" (163). Stephen's strange view of the remnants of a family meal certainly reinforces Anderson's argument that his attitude toward food is phobic. Yet the wording is vivid and also suggests that he can assuage his fears and pain in regard to the uglier aspects of life by means of language.

That his mind is moving in this direction we can see during his walk along the strand. Here he views himself as the artist "forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being" (169). Although this newly awakened purpose seems to reflect sublimation more than anything else (for the end result will be a body "purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude and made radiant and commingled with the element of the spirit" (169), still, Joyce makes us see his Icarian fall, his failure to abandon the "dull gross voice of the world" (169). The cries of his swimming comrades "O, cripes, I'm drownded!" bring us back. Nevertheless, Stephen does momentarily overcome his fear of water, and as he wades, his soaring thoughts become diverted from sky to sea, finally merging as he observes: "The water of the rivulet was dark with endless drift and mirrored the high-drifting clouds" (170). And
again: "He felt above him the vast indifferent dome and the calm processes of the heavenly bodies; and the earth beneath him, the earth that had borne him, had taken him to her breast" (172, italics mine). If earth and sky, matter and spirit, are not reconciled in Stephen’s mind and heart, they suggest at this moment a benign environment and supply him with comforting symbols of nurturing.

By chapter 5 there is an acknowledgement of the need to accommodate the uglier sides of life described at the end of chapter 4, and in the opening scene there are images of food, water and excrement: “He drained his third cup of watery tea to the dregs and set to chewing the crusts of fried bread that were scattered near him, staring at the dark pool of the jar. The yellow dripping had been scooped out like a boghole and the pool under it brought back to his memory the dark turfcoloured water of the bath in Clongowes” (174). The image of the “turfcoloured” water appears many times and is obviously associated both with process (cycles of decay, dissolution, birth, and integration) and liquidities that describe the female principle. Other images repeat this association. The lane that Stephen walks through is “waterlogged” with “heaps of wet rubbish” and “mouldering offal” (175). The “rainsodden earth” gives off a “mortal odour,” “a faint incense rising upward through the mould from many hearts” (184).

Besides his environment, Stephen has difficulties accepting his male companions without projecting upon them threatening aspects involving eating as well as the mouth and teeth. This important motif is carried over into Ulysses and appears most predominantly in “Telemachus.” Even in chapter 5, Stephen’s companions are almost always associated with natural processes or with eating. One lean student possesses an “open moist mouth” (196); another gulps down “the spittle in his throat as if he were gulping down the phrase” (198); and another has a “pallid bloated face” (210). Stephen accuses Lynch of eating pieces of “dried cowdung” as a boy (205). Even Stephen’s attempt to define beauty is thwarted by food. In a conversation with Lynch and Cranly, he says to Lynch: “Do you remember the night? Cranly lost his temper and began to talk about Wicklow bacon” (207). Later he admonishes Lynch: “Art,” he tells him, “is the human disposition of sensible or intelligent matter for an esthetic end. You remember the pigs and forget that” (207). Stephen’s juxtaposition of the subject of art with Cranly’s eating points up the general tendency he has to create his world in terms of polarities—himself against Cran-
ly, art against physical process. He would naturally, therefore, see Cranly's eating and preference for discussing food as standing opposed to him, to matters dealing with art and the intellect.

It is not surprising that Cranly, as his closest friend and his most formidable opponent, is associated with food in a number of places. He is first seen dislodging "a figseed from his teeth on the point of his rude toothpick" (229). Cranly is also described as rooting "at his gleaming uncovered teeth," and as "sucking at a crevice in his teeth" (230). Throughout the pair's conversation (234-39), we have no less than five references to Cranly's fig chewing. As Stephen enters the group he sees that "Cranly had taken another dried fig from the supply in his pocket and was eating it slowly and noisily" (234). As the boys' conversation continues, Cranly continues to eat, at one point "holding out what remained of the halfchewed fig," which he jokingly offers to another (235). The fig is then described as "munched pulp" (235), a detail that is meaningless by itself but one to be reconsidered in the light of Molly's chewed seedcake. The development of the latter in Ulysses stems from Joyce's interest in the image as a commentary on nurturence and knowledge.

The conflict between Cranly and Stephen becomes intensified as Stephen tells Cranly that he has refused to make his Easter duty. Although Cranly's reproach is softened by his allowing that religious doubts can be overcome, a disturbed Stephen replies, "I do not wish to overcome them" (239). This reply causes Cranly to take out another fig and Stephen protests: "Don't please. You cannot discuss this question with your mouth full of chewed fig," upon which Cranly, throwing the fig into the gutter, disclaims, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (239), an act reminiscent of Stephen's rejection of food in chapter 3. Stephen still views physical ingestion as incompatible with the intellectual kind.

Cranly challenges him still further, however, and probably comes closest to making Stephen confront the nexus of the problem when he explains to Stephen his reluctance to "communicate": "You are not sure of that too, because you feel that the host too may be the body and blood of the son of God and not a wafer of bread? And because you fear that it may be?" (243). Stephen's answer is affirmative. "I feel that and I also fear it," he says, and Cranly, pursuing the question, asks, "But why do you fear a bit of bread?" (243). Stephen's reply is, "I imagine . . . that there is a malevolent reality behind those things I
Stephen and Bloom at Life's Feast

say I fear" (243). What he fears is the “chemical action which would be
set up in my soul” (243). Below the metaphorical language, the fear of
ingestion has been transformed into a fear of cannibalism that, para­
doxically, involves not only Stephen’s ingestion of the divine body,
but a chemical reaction whereby he himself would be dissolved.

Later in his diary entries, he will bring up Cranly and the figs one
more time. In his transformation of the earlier scenes, Stephen now
projects Cranly as a John the Baptist figure. Having thus somewhat
neutralized Cranly’s threatening aspects by making him a precursor
figure to the coming of Stephen, Cranly’s food is poetically trans­
formed too; “He eats chiefly belly bacon and dried figs. Read locusts
and wild honey” (248). Yet for the harbinger of Christ, this food
represents a fasting act more than the kind of ingestion we might
normally associate with Cranly. By rendering Cranly in Biblical and
mythic terms and his acts as a mortification rite, Stephen has, once
again, created in the name of art a psychic shield.

Besides these male companions whose threatening features involve
alimentary imagery, there is Stephen’s attitude toward kissing to be
considered. As a young boy, Stephen seems confused by the act. At
Clongowes he is teased because “he kisses his mother every night”
(14) and when he denies that he does so, he is teased anyway. The
ambivalence of both his and the boys’ feelings seems to disturb him:
“He felt his whole body hot and confused in a moment. What was the
right answer to the question?” (14). It is interesting that his body plays
so dominant a role in his reaction here, although his mind, as always,
gains dominance eventually. The result is a lot of thought about the
subject of kissing: “What did that mean, to kiss? You put your face up
like that to say goodnight and then his mother put her face down.
That was to kiss. His mother put her lips on his cheek; her lips were
soft and they wetted his cheek; and they made a tiny little noise: kiss”
(15). Since we know that Stephen is made uncomfortable by both
softness and wetness, and we also know that the “tiny little noise”
may be associated in Stephen’s mind with the disturbing word suck as
well as with Dante’s “noise after dinner” (11), we might infer that
kissing here is not totally comfortable for him.

Later, Stephen’s ambivalence about kissing seems more explicit. At
one point he muses on the “language of memory” revealing “kind
gentle women” with “sucking mouths” (233). In his encounter with
the prostitute, we are told that “his lips would not bend to kiss her”
This sentence is repeated twice. And yet Stephen also wants “to be held firmly in her arms, to be caressed” (101). He thus seems to desire surrender, to want to be absorbed while at the same time recoiling from the embrace. When he finally does surrender to the kiss, his emotions are profound: “He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly parting lips. They pressed upon his brain as upon his lips as though they were the vehicle of a vague speech” (101). Although Stephen seems to close his eyes and surrender his mind, he never abandons his cognitive processes that are his protection against total absorption. That her lips press on his brain indicates how conditional his surrender really is. Bearing in mind what has been said about Stephen’s use of language as a defense against engulfment, we can note here, as in a number of instances, that women are associated with some kind of speech to which Stephen lacks access. I think Stephen’s reference to the mute speech of women, or, as in this case, the “vague speech” of the woman’s lips, is indicative of his deepest fears. Obviously women have some hold on a kind of language that he does not possess.

Closely linked to eating and kissing is Stephen’s fascination with the image of the bat. A number of years ago William York Tindall, in a discussion of Chamber Music, noted that Joyce endowed “bats and the softness of a kiss” with the “inescapable suggestion of vampirism.”

Joyce’s apparent interest with the female as bat figure derives from the basically alimental character of the image. First, the kiss has long been known to have its basis, not in affection between the sexes, but in eating. As Robert Briffault has observed, “Sexual attraction, sexual ‘hunger’ as it has been aptly called, is a form of veracity. The object of the male cell in seeking conjunction with the female cell is primarily to improve its nutrition, in the same manner, and by virtue of the same fundamental impulse as it seeks food.” Vampirism is also associated with eating and cannibalism as well as with the domain of the Terrible Mother. Thus this image seems to suggest that for Stephen, female figures never truly become animas but retain their associations with the mother. Despite his efforts to render his females into bird figures, they never really transcend their associations with earth.

Joyce’s most important use of the bat image in A Portrait emerges from the story of Davin’s encounter with the strange country women. Although Stephen is only told of the event, it seems to move him.
That the woman is an archetypal figure is evident from the fact that she offers Davin a mug of milk, that she is bare-breasted, apparently pregnant, and that she invites him into her cottage for the night. Stephen thinks of this woman as a “batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness” (183). “Batlike soul” seems almost a contradiction in terms since the bat is an animal associated with eating as well as flying, but the soul usually transcends both darkness and abodes like caves where a bat would live. The woman seems to represent elemental energies. She offers nourishment and sexual gratification, but to enter her darkness is to be devoured. Davin would not be the only one to decline her invitation.  

Despite Stephen’s recourse to language as a protection against the devouring tendencies of country, church and mother, his use of language and his thoughts about the creative process contain a good deal of alimentary symbolism. Of course Stephen tries to make his brain take over all the functions of his body. At one point he envisions his “soul shrivelled up,” as he walks “on in a lane among heaps of dead language” (178-79). This internal conflict does not cause him to create, but seems instead to suggest a sterile elimination to him: “His own consciousness of language was ebbing from his brain and trickling into the very words themselves which set to band and disband themselves in wayward rhythms” (179). What he creates is a verse that begins, “The ivy whines upon the wall” that he immediately characterizes as “drivel” (179). But he raises the word ivy to ivory and attempts thereby to remove from it all of its earth-associated and organic nature so that “The word now shone in his brain, clearer and brighter than any ivory sawn from the mottled tusks of elephants” (179).

When he is not relegating the digestive process to his brain, he is still struggling to “express from lumps of earth” (189) his sense of beauty. He says to Lynch that through the understanding of things, the artist must “try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth, or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand” (207). McKnight, picking up on Stephen’s use of the word express rightly observes: “Language also becomes an excrescence, and through language the artist can express himself, press himself out of a confining space. Parturition and peristalsis seems fused together.” But Stephen the
artist and Joyce the artist are not synonymous. Stephen, who is "wounded . . . to think that he would never be but a shy guest at the feast of the world's culture," striving to "forge out an esthetic philosophy" (180), is not the complete artist that Joyce is. Stephen prefers aesthetics to kinesis; Joyce knows that kinesis is necessary, for he is Leopold Bloom as well. The problems of creativity rely on the body for solution, and Joyce's "epic of the body," *Ulysses*, offers a fuller and more satisfying comment on that important relationship between body and the creative process.

*Ulysses*

It is quickly apparent that the Stephen of *Ulysses* is still characterized by his fear of being devoured and a tendency to conceptualize body functions. That is, Stephen's physical functions become analogues of spiritual ones, since functions of the lower body pole are still associated with sin. Thus, turning these functions into a language of metaphor, Stephen diminishes their threatening nature. "Telemachus" is dominated both by the figure of Buck Mulligan and the image of Stephen's dead mother. We learn early that Stephen's guilt over his mother's death is connected to his rebellion against the Church and his self-imposed exile from Ireland. In "Telemachus," the mother figure is, therefore, a complex of images and is associated with the "snotgreen sea," the "scrotumtightening sea," the sea that drowns. (All subsequent references to *Ulysses* are cited parenthetically in the text.)

Another prominent, devouring figure that Stephen has to contend with is Mulligan, whose threatening aspect is manifested in part by the many references to his mouth or to his eating. It is no accident that "Toothless Kinch" (22) sees himself pitted against "Chrysostomos" (3), "golden mouth" Mulligan. So dubbed because his teeth are "glistening" with "gold points," (3) Mulligan's mouth is commented upon a number of times. For example, Stephen notices his "curling shaven lips," his "edges of . . . white glittering teeth" (6), his "white teeth" (13). We also hear a lot about Mulligan's plumpness. He has a "plump face" (6) and a "wellfed voice" (5), and unlike Stephen, seems to eat a lot. At breakfast Stephen watches him fill "his mouth with a crust thickly buttered on both sides" (15).

Mulligan is also a "mocker," a "usurper" and a "false priest," and it seems clear in this chapter that part of his threat to Stephen derives
from the fact that he is both an assimilating and expressive figure. We are far more aware of his eating than we are of Stephen's, for it is Mulligan who sings, chants, laughs, eats, and drinks. In exuberance, he even combines song, language and food in typically saturnalian verse:

\[
O, \text{ won't we have a merry time} \\
\text{Drinking whisky, beer, and wine,} \\
\text{On coronation,} \\
\text{Coronation day?} \\
O, \text{ won't we have a merry time} \\
\text{On coronation day? (11)}
\]

It is also clear that Mulligan is the maker of language. He intones his "ballad of Joking Jesus" (as Stephen tells Haines) "three times a day, after meals" (19). His recitation of the Introit during the opening paragraph, when he raises his shaving bowl and razor, suggests his parody of the mass, of course, but the bowl is also a container that has associations with Stephen's mother.

It is less the chalice that Stephen imagines, a \textit{vas mirabili} of transformation, than it is the bowl into which she vomits bile. Also, Mulligan's razor is the attribute of "Kinch"—an implement now turned against Stephen.

Mulligan's threatening aspects are also illustrated by the large number of references to aggressive behavior or pointed objects. Besides his pointed teeth, his slice of bread is "impaled" on a knife. He is seen "hewing thick slices from the loaf," and we are told that he "hacked through the fry on the dish and slapped it out on three plates" (12).

Perhaps the most threatening aspect of Mulligan involves more intangible concerns, especially those involving process, that is the manifestation of energy in growth, maturation, and decay, all the transformations that involve man and the cosmos. When Mulligan calls Stephen "dogsbody" (6), and also refers to his mother as "beastly dead" (8), he is outraged. Previously, in A Portrait, Stephen has been able to acknowledge to Lynch, "We are all animals. I also am an animal" (206), but the idea never sits well with him. The suggestion of his animal nature, which also implies the omnipresence of process, leads to questions about boundaries constructed by the intellect. Mulligan, in these instances and throughout this episode, seems to function as a kind of mediator, both for the mother figure and for the process for which she stands.
For example, Mulligan is called "Mercurial Malachi" (17), both here and later on in "Circe," and as he begins his dive off the forty-foot, the image of Mercury is used again. He is described as "fluttering his winglike hands, leaping nimbly, his Mercury's hat quivering in the fresh wind that bore back to them his brief birdlike cries" (19). Mulligan, like Mercury, is a trickster figure, an archetypal personification of the dissolution of boundaries. Like all trickster figures, he is comfortable in water; yet he is also a bird; he dives and ascends, paralleling the ability of the trickster figures to pass between heaven and the underworld, to have both animal and human parts. Stephen's great fear of dissolving boundaries, expressed metaphorically in his hatred of water, his fear of sexuality, his guilt over his mother, is thus projected onto the figure of Mulligan who can save men from drowning, who wears priestly robes that suggest the blending of sexes as well as the blending of the sacred and profane.\textsuperscript{17}

Mulligan's association with the \textit{omphalos}, usually taken to mean the navel and which is also associated with things phallic, has some interesting antecedents in the myth of Heracles. The word \textit{omphalos} derives from \textit{Omphale}, the name of the queen who held Heracles captive. During his captivity, Heracles often dressed in women's clothes. Robert Graves observes that the later interpretations of the myth saw the \textit{omphalos} as "the seat of female desire" and Heracles as the slave of a domineering woman. But the earlier meaning, he says, involves ritual practices in which Heracles was a deputy of the queen and assumed her garments as he assumed her functions.\textsuperscript{18} These interpretations shed some light on Mulligan's function as a priest. It is he who loves the sea, who reminds Stephen of his "sin" against his mother, who becomes associated in Stephen's mind with guilt. Mulligan's role as a mediator also seems to be suggested by the fact that, as Mulligan tells Stephen, his aunt "won't let me have anything to do with you" (5). Mulligan's subservience and his aunt's role as punisher of Stephen seem strange unless we view the aunt and Mulligan as servants of the archetypal mother. Mulligan's association with the goddess is also suggested by the fact that he is comfortable with fluids, with change.

In any case, it is Mulligan's reproach that calls to memory Stephen’s dream about his mother. Stephen's vision involves mostly smells—"odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, that had bent upon him, mute, reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes" (5). But it is also
“maybe a messenger,” “a witch on her toadstool” (13) Yet although the scene disturbs him, he develops some interesting images about her. She is a “lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror and her gay betrayer” (14)—Haines and Mulligan. But she is also, as Stephen repeats, “a messenger from the secret morning” (14), the personification of energy from the unconscious who serves to awaken something in Stephen. It is out of this breakfast that Stephen will begin to make his art. His vision of the old woman with the “old shrunken paps” is also a vision of that woman “crouching by a patient cow at daybreak in the lush field,” the witch with “wrinkled fingers quick at the squirting dugs” (13-14). Although she is old and dried up, she can supply rich milk. She is not just a figure of death, associated with Stephen’s mother; she is the substance of Stephen’s art, an energizing image, the figure he must first assimilate and render harmless.

In “Nestor,” where memory and history are dominant concerns, Stephen contends with Deasy and another kind of stasis—that produced by history, which is also an inhibitor of process but at the same time a betrayer of life and therefore of truth. As in “Telamachus,” Stephen indicates an aversion to process and a preoccupation with the mouth in terms of certain kinds of language.

Stephen’s first conflict with history, however, is in relation to his students who exemplify process to him. For example, he notices one student, Armstrong, whose satchel is filled with figrolls, crumbs that “adhered to the tissues of his lips,” and his “sweetened boy’s breath” (24). Other students also have “breaths, too, sweetened with tea and jam” (25).

But Stephen feels removed from these boys; their laughter suggests to him their lack of innocence. They ingest figrolls; he ingests knowledge. Memory creates for him the library of St. Genevieve where “he had read, sheltered from the sin of Paris,” and he thinks, “fed and feeding brains about me” (25). As Stephen continues, “in my mind’s darkness a sloth of the underworld, reluctant, shy of brightness, shifting her dragon scaly folds,” (25), we see again that for him natural functions carry the stamp of sin, and feeding becomes a mental process. Feeding the brain means starving the mind’s darkness, which is imaged as female. The threat of being devoured must come to his mind now because his train of associations involves drowning and devouring. Talbot recites the verse of “Lycidas,” “Sunk though he be
Stephen beneath the watery floor” (25), and Stephen recalls Aristotle’s phrase that “floated out into the studious silence of the library” (25). His thoughts about his mind’s darkness are countered by Talbot’s further recital about “Him that walked on the waves” (26). Stephen fears being sunk to the watery floor; he depends on words “to float” him so that he, like Jesus, can walk the waves.

Stephen next creates a special kind of language. For those who couldn’t understand, Jesus spoke in parables. Stephen speaks in riddles. But his riddle is not a legitimate one. It is unanswerable and confusing to the students:

The cock crew
The sky was blue:
The bells in heaven
Were striking eleven.
Tis time for this poor soul
To go to heaven (26).

The boy’s question, “What is that?” seems to ask whether the poem is, in fact, a riddle at all. Although the students appear interested in the answer, it is really Stephen who needs to know it. His conclusion, “The fox burying his grandmother under a hollybush” (27) is certainly not enlightening. Most critics see the lines as an attempt by Stephen to rid himself of guilt over death of his mother. Certainly the displacement of mother for grandmother is tenable, but more than an attempt to bury any crime, it seems necessary for Stephen/Christ/fox to bury the threatening aspects of the mother who stands for all threats to his identity. It is also an attempt on Stephen's part to control his animal nature through language. The poem, with its rigid form and meter, provides a safe structure for the dangerous energies evoked by the images of the fox and the death of his mother.

Still the images of process haunt him. The boys explode into activity, fleeing him for the hockey game in a “clamor of... boots and tongues” (27). Their noise replaces Stephen’s obscure language. One child, however, remaining behind, intensifies his feeling of engulfment. This child, Sargent, has, like the young Stephen, “misty glasses weak eyes” and cheek “dull and bloodless” with a mark of ink upon it “recent and damp as a snail’s bed” (27). “Like him was I” (28), Stephen thinks as the boy’s image revives his musings about art. Instead of being rendered immortal by fading into his art, Stephen is forced to face himself as a fragile but very alive child; the ink on the
boy's face has not made beautiful language, but has become a "stain," a "snail's bed" (27). Then the boy himself becomes a snail with "weak watery blood." The implications of process refuse to remain buried. "Was that then real?" Stephen asks himself, recalling his mother's "prostrate body" (27). Again his mind pulls back the image of the fox. This time the language is more powerful, truly evocative: "On a heath beneath winking stars a fox, red reek of rapine in his fur, with merci­less bright eyes scraped in the earth, listened, scraped up the earth, listened, scraped and scraped" (28). Critics have long suspected that the fox is trying to uncover as much as he is trying to bury. But it is not so much Stephen's misdeeds that he must disinter as the knowledge he needs to be creative. The rapine nature of Stephen and the fox involves a need to descend into mystery, in Jungian terms, to undergo a uroboric descent. This descent is a symbolic return to the womb whereby the hero, if he survives, is born again, but this time becomes the father himself.

Garrett Deasy represents another example of the refusal of the past to be buried. With his hoarding tendencies and his materialism, he indeed manifests "all the traits of a typically anal-retentive personality," as Suzette Henke suggests. And he also represents another threat to Stephen. Mulligan was all digestion and expression; Deasy hoards, and his expression is characterized by flatulence. Mulligan is active, Deasy represents stasis; Mulligan represents fluidities, Deasy represents solids.

Deasy's interest in the mouth and its words is particularly sterile and life-denying. "Do you know," he asks Stephen, "what is the proudest word you will ever hear from an Englishman's mouth?" The answer is "I paid my way" (30). Beyond the materialistic values implicit in the answer, Stephen is disturbed by the boastful language. Furthermore, for him, Englishmen are the heirs to the Roman watercloset and victims of indigestion. The association of words with things monetary is also alien to him. Deasy is, of course, full of words, but they are only rhetorical clichés. He tells Stephen loftily, "We are a generous people but we must also be just" and Stephen answers, "I fear those big words" (31). Deasy's linguistic creation is, appropriately, an editorial on foot and mouth disease. Again, Joyce enjoys blending language with content. Deasy says to Stephen, "Mark my words," and later on adds, "I don't mince words, do I?" (33). Mincing words is an alimentary metaphor and is exactly what Deasy does do. He is
Stephen

affected, and his rhetoric is constipated and choppy. An example: Speaking of his cure for foot and mouth disease, he says, "Now I'm going to try publicity. I am surrounded by difficulties, by . . . intrigues, by . . . backstairs influence." (33). His accusation that the Jews "eat up the nation's vital strength" (33) is ironic since Deasy is himself dessicated, eaten up, and yet, according to him, there are no Jews in Ireland.

James H. Maddox makes the point that Stephen and Bloom think of "the world of process as essentially feminine." In "Nestor," this idea is pointed up in negative terms in Deasy's projections on powerful—therefore threatening—women such as Cassandra, Eve, Helen, Kitty O'Shea. What these projections also signify is the deficiency of his own feminine nature. His anal retentiveness, suggesting on a physical level the absence of fluidity, marks him as psychologically rigid. He is reminiscent of Mr. Duffy of "A Painful Case" and here personifies for Stephen the dangers of repression, atrophied intellect, meaningless rhetoric, as well as the dangers of getting caught—emotionally, intellectually, and linguistically—in linear time and in surface, or ego consciousness.

J. Mitchell Morse has stated, in his discussion of the "Proteus" episode, that if Stephen is to be a serious artist, he must experience the beast; he must "become identified with the beast, mere nature, the universe, the unconscious and indifferent all-embracing all," but that he must be "neither put off nor absorbed." Thus, "Pan's hour, the faunal noon" (49), that Stephen seems to recognize as a time when boundaries dissolve, is the time in which he must deal with his own dissolution of, or reconciliation with, matter, a task necessitated by the dictates of process. This struggle inevitably involves body functions, some of which are digestive.

As usual, food and ingestion are often disguised or sublimated by Stephen, and when direct references to food appear in his thoughts, they are usually associated with people whose lives and minds are much different from his own, people who tend to be simple, whose natures are more animal and instinctual. Thus we find Stephen recalling food in connection with Paris, where its citizens are "globbers" who "fork spiced beans down their gullets" (42). He recalls "eating your groatsworth of mou en civet, fleshpots of Egypt" and being "elbowed by belching cabmen" (41). The unappetizing stew, the reference to fleshpots of Egypt (a phrase used by the sorrowful children
of Israel upon their exile from the land where “we did eat bread to the full.” suggests Stephen’s ingestion of Paris life and is also accompanied by a disgust that is similar to the kind that Bloom will experience as he watches the eaters in the Burton. Stephen also recalls from his Paris stay “moist pith of farls of bread,” the “kerchiefed housewife” “a saucer of acetic acid in her hands,” and Yvonne and Madeleine . . . shattering with gold teeth chaussons of pastry, their mouths yellowed with the pus of flan breton” (42). The acetic acid suggests the bowl of bitter waters associated with Stephen’s mother, and the gold teeth are reminiscent of Mulligan’s.

Stephen also recalls his meeting with Kevin Egan, the Irish nationalist (a man not unlike his own father), in terms of eating. He describes Egan as follows: “Around the slabbed tables the tangle of wined breaths and grumbling gorges. His breath hangs over our saucstained plates, the green fairy’s fang thrusting between his lips” (43). This scene conveys Stephen’s disillusionment with the romantic and sentimental personalities of his father and Egan.

His reverie on Uncle Richie Goulding contains another food reference that also suggests his association of food with the common people like his father. In his imagination he sees himself going to Richie’s house and being offered “a rich of a rasher fired with a herring” (39). But Richie’s house is a house of “decay,” and it seems clear that Stephen further associates food with the world of poverty and decay. He also, of course, associates eating with devouring females. In “Proteus” he refers to Queen Victoria twice as the “old hag with the yellow teeth” (43, 50).

Sometimes Stephen makes food and language blend in sound. Recalling his meeting with Egan’s son Patrice, he thinks: “lapped warm milk with me in the bar MacMahon. Son of the wild goose, Kevin Egan of Paris. My father’s a bird, he lapped the sweet lait chaud with pink young tongue, plump bunny’s face. Lap, lapin” (41). Again Stephen focuses on plumpness and on animal qualities, but out of these animal and assimilative images he creates language.

For the most part, process in Stephen’s consciousness involves a sense of devouring, and the eating function is transformed into a vast symbol of devouring by nature. One aspect of this symbol involves Stephen’s childhood fascination/revulsion with the word suck. In A Portrait it is sound, the swallowing aspect of the basin full of water and its threatening whiteness that moves him. In “Proteus” Stephen
seems to encounter the word as a force especially associated with his mother and the process of eating. In the opening lines of the chapter, he sees himself "walking into eternity" (37). He also sees the two cocklepickers are in the same predicament as he is with "splayed feet sinking in the silted sand. Like me, like Algy, coming down to our mighty mother" (37). Later he thinks of Sandymount strand as "unwholesome sandflats" that "waited to suck his treading soles" (41). This phrase, perhaps with a pun intended, followed by a description of the sand as "breathing upward sewage breath" (41), leaves no doubt that he views the mouth as associated with the downward-pulling tendency of earth, an orifice associated more with decay than the new growth. There is also a porter bottle standing up "stogged to its waist, in the cakey sand dough" (41). Personified as a sentinel, the bottle has also been swallowed by this "isle of dreadful thirst" just as Stephen may become swallowed by a country that drinks up its people's vitality. When he gets even nearer the sea, so that it even covers his boots, he thinks of his feet again sinking "slowly in the quaking soil" and commands himself to "turn back" (44). He does turn back to the tower where Mulligan and Haines wait in the "cold domed room" but, neither returning nor surrendering, we are told that he lifts, "his feet up from the suck and turned back by the mole of boulders" (44).

Sitting on his "stool of rock" he encounters now the "bloated carcase of a dog" (44). Stephen seems to call up a number of images of bloating (the drowning man is also bloated), and the associations of bloating with death, although natural enough, also shows his inclination to mark ingestion in yet another negative way. People who eat, in his mind, are men like his father and Richie, or drowned men who have eaten the sea, or the dog, bloated by decay—the stopping of process, also sunk in sand. Surely this image serves to objectify Stephen's fears for himself, and it is at this point that he makes his interesting metaphor about sand and language. He thinks, "These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here" (44). Although the dog has been partially swallowed by sand, sucked under too, the sand can also be a medium; in its dynamic relationship to the two other elements—water and air—it becomes a signature, the medium through which the elements express themselves.

The live dog that next appears on the scene is just as threatening to Stephen in real terms as the dead dog has been in metaphorical ones. Its behavior is especially interesting and foreshadows Stephen's. It
approaches the carcass of the dead dog, and its actions are translated into interesting language by Stephen: “He stopped, sniffed, stalked round it, brother, nosing closer, went round it, sniffing rapidly like a dog all over the dead dog’s bedraggled fell. Dogskull, dogsniff, eyes on the ground, moves to one great goal. Ah, poor dogsbody. Here lies poor dogsbody’s body” (46). Interestingly, the language of Deasy and Mulligan seems to preside over the body of Stephen’s image which is sunk in mud and bloated by the sea. But what seems to lie here is his deadened intellectual self, his fragmentizing intelligence, while the living dog and its instinctual energy seem actually to grow out of the dead.

As the dog changes again, so also does Stephen’s view of it. It urinates on a rock and Stephen notes: “His hindpaws then scattered sand: then his forepaws dabbled and delved. Something he buried there, his grandmother. He rooted in the sand, dabbling, delving and stopped to listen to the air, scraped up the sand again with a fury of his claws, soon ceasing, a pard, a panther, got in spouse-breach, vulturing the dead” (46-47). The last phrase makes explicit Stephen’s fear that he is really the eater of the dead, that the burial of his hostility toward his mother is countered by his need to disinter that hostility and confront the fears upon which is based.

Despite his protests in “Circe,” “Cancer did it, not I” (580), he does view himself as responsible for his mother’s death, and his guilt is depicted in digestive terms.

Then the images of the dog, alive and dead, coalesce and aid Stephen in producing a vision of process imaged also in terms of eating. He makes a history grounded in the physical nature of things, in which: “A school of turlehide whales stranded in hot noon, spouting, hobbling in the shallows. Then from the starving cagework city a horde of jerkined dwarfs, my people, with flayers’ knives, running, scaling, hacking in green blubbery whalemeat. Famine, plague and slaughters. Their blood is in me, their lusts my waves. I moved among them on the frozen Liffey” (45). Beginning with a history of a slaughter, Stephen then dissolves past time by establishing himself as protean, as a part of process, as he takes the attributes of Mulligan and Deasy as his own. Out of them he makes, at least temporarily, a new substance of himself. Nevertheless, he does remain separate, saying, “I spoke to no-one: none to me” (45).
The dog remains threatening, a "dog of my enemy," and Stephen narrates his experience as it happens: "I just simply stood pale, silent, bayed about." This last phrase, linking the baying of the dog with the waters that surround him, causes him to think of Mulligan who has "saved men from drowning and you shake at a cur's yelping" (45). Perhaps, he thinks, he could save someone. "I am not a strong swimmer. Water cold soft. When I put my face into it in the basin at Clongowes. Can't see" (45). Now his thoughts are literally drowned in water images. Not to be able to see is to surrender ego consciousness to the unconscious. This surrender is imaged in the drowning man and the mother. Both figures merge in his thoughts: "A drowning man. His human eyes scream to me out of horror of his death. I . . . With him together down . . . I could not save her. Waters: bitter death: lost" (46). Again his efforts to be a hero like Mulligan fail, and the drowning man represents both the mother he could not save and the self who is afraid to drown in powerful if repressed feelings. This drowning-man image continues to play an important role in "Proteus," and I shall return to it later. First, however, some other images of woman need mention.

The cocklepickers Stephen first sees are transformed into midwives. Like the old milkwoman, their association with process is cast in a negative light. Like the milkwoman, they connote mystery. "What has she in that bag?" Stephen asks. But his answer is, a "misbirth" (37). He next contemplates Eve's navel-less "belly without blemish bulging big" (38). This image too becomes negative and the belly becomes a "womb of sin" (38).

Memory of his mother causes him to remember Mulligan's aunt, and he chants a little song called "Hanigan's Aunt," which he, of course, in keeping with the chapter, has changed. Zack Bowen points out that the song, about a domineering woman, has final lines that Stephen doesn't sing but which may be relevant to his resentment of his mother and his dislike of process. These are:

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But still, I'd like to add—
If Hanigan isn't about—
That when we plant Mat Hanigan's Aunt,
We won't be too put out.27
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Stephen's omission of these lines may indicate that the planting metaphor as well as the song's ambiguous attitude toward the aunt hits too close to home.
In any case, the cocklepickers change again to become gypsies, and the woman (now there is a man and a woman) takes on aspects of a temptress. Stephen imagines her “calling under her brown shawl from an archway where dogs have mired” (47). This fantasy is a foretaste of “Circe” and combines the squalor of Dublin and the sinfulness of women with dog’s excrement—all the elements with which Stephen must come to terms. Interestingly, the woman does evoke more than a few lascivious lines. As she passes him she becomes metamorphosed into Woman, fallen Eve, tracking “across the sands of all the world” (47). His muse, his temptress figure, moving across sand suggests that he needs her to chart, to make a path of language in those sands which will serve as his signature, his medium. But again the image fades into that of his mother, and he thinks: “Bridebed, childbed, bed of death, ghostcandled. Omnis caro ad te veniet. He comes, pale, vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth’s kiss” (47–48).

Especially important here is the significance of kissing. Always an ambivalent act for Stephen, it is a sign of surrender, a sign of lust, but beyond that it retains its most primitive character. The pale vampire image is assumed to be an image of death, of course. Shechner observes that Stephen views the moment of his mother’s expiration as a “ghostly kiss,” by the “hangman God.” God as the pale vampire is needed a threatening image for Stephen, especially since he changes Hyde’s life from “mouth to her mouth’s kiss” to “mouth to my mouth” (The poem Stephen composes on the strand on a piece of paper torn from Deasy’s editorial does not appear until the “Aeolus” chapter). Shechner, pondering homosexual implications in this line change, argues that Stephen may be indulging in his own kiss of death fantasy, but may also be “witness to the murderous kiss and the deadly incubus and the victim of murderous oral rape.” Shechner seems to give the lines too much emphasis here, and I am not sure that Stephen’s view of the vampire as male or female matters in a chapter where sex changes seem appropriate. I think the image is masculine here because breath is associated with the creator/father and the masculine principle. Nevertheless, Stephen still shows us a consciousness terrified of being devoured by elemental energies. Here the threat is neither earth nor water but air. The rumination continues, and the phrase alters again to “mouth to her womb. Oomb, allwombing tomb. His mouth
moulded issuing breath, unspeeched: ooeeehah: roar of catactic planets, globed, blazing, roaring, wayawayawayawayawayawayawayawayawayawayawayaway, Paper” (48). Breath is “unspeeched.” It involves the upper body pole. While urinating he creates a wave-speech, and the lower body pole becomes the source of creation. Both poles create language out of matter, and it seems as if Stephen has achieved, at least for the moment, some reconciliation of opposites.

Body functions are particularly in evidence of this episode. Stephen thinks about Arius, the “illstarred heresiarch” who dies in a water-closet with “clotted hinderparts” (38). Stephen still associates sin with excrement. But his urination seems a positive act, making its own statement about his encounter with elemental energy. Although he still views process as “to no end gathered: vainly then released, forth flowing, wending back” (49-50), he nonetheless evolves a language out of his urination that shows us a Stephen who does not seem to be repressed or intellectualizing, as his language seems to grow out of the act itself. The passage must be quoted in full:

In long lassoes from the Cock lake the water flowed full, covering green-goldenly lagoons of sand, rising, flowing. My ashplant will float away. I shall wait. No, they will pass on, passing chafing against the low rocks, swirling, passing. Better get this job over quick. Listen: a fourworded wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseciss, ooos. Vehement breath of waters amid seasnakes, rearing horses, rocks. In cups of rocks it slops: flop, slop, slap: bounded in barrels. And, spent, its speech ceases. It flows purling, widely flowing, floating foampool, flower unfurling. (49)

Stephen’s own water “covering greengoldenly lagoons of sand,” is of course a correlative of his own writing, the creation of language on sand by the tides it replicated in his symbolically fructifying act. For a moment, he thinks of his ashplant that might “float away.” Nevertheless, and in spite of the risk of being seen by the cocklepickers, he continues. He turns to hear a new language, a “wavespeech.” This “breath of waters”—air metamorphosed into water—becomes visual forms of animals, “seasnakes” and “rearing horses” as well as inanimate matter, rocks. His fructifying waters, joining with the sea, create both sound and sights. When they cease to make language, they still retain action—flowing on, becoming a “flower unfurled.” The passage seems a remarkably comprehensive one. In it we have seminal waters identified with air in an almost Heraclatian transformation/rotation of elements.
This momentary reconciliation of the ego with the unconscious, the solitary with the unitary, does not keep Stephen from evoking his darkest vision of the drowning man. On the contrary, it may be what allows him to face the nature of sea change and make language an evocation process. Having imagined the “corpse rising saltwhite from the undertow” (50) he imagines himself instrumental in bringing it up. I think his imaginary role is important. To counter Mulligan’s ability to save men from drowning, Stephen will pull drowned men to the surface: “Bag of corpsegas sopping in foul brine. A quiver of minnows, fat of a spongy titbit, flash through the slits of his buttoned trouserfly. God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain. Dead breaths I living breathe, tread dead dust, devour a urinous offal from all dead” (50). Besides the recognition of the uglier sides of process, in the symboliotic nature of all life with its inevitable cannibalism, Stephen seems aware of his own role as a “chewer of corpses” as the “pale vampire.” It is this unpleasant fact of reciprocity on the alimentary level that Stephen needs to assimilate to become the artist. And, in fact, assimilation does seem to begin in “Proteus.”

It is probably no coincidence that after this harrowing vision Stephen says, “Come, I thirst” (50). Although there may be some reference to the crucifixion and Christ’s thirst on the cross, I think his words indicate a thirst for life that has suddenly become more physical and less intellectual.

Stephen performs one other interesting act before the chapter ends. He picks his nose and deposits the mucus on a rock. There are a number of interpretations of Stephen’s act. Richard Ellmann views it as a sign of his acknowledgement of the corruption in life. Ruth von Phul, arguing that the rocks themselves allude to the church, views the act as a kind of purge. Stephen, she says, defiles the church, but at the same time, since the dried mucus represents a blockage of breath, “he is purged, having freed himself of that which threatened life itself—impeding the flow of air into and breath from his being—in an ambiguous symbolism of the pneuma as Holy Spirit.” This interpretation is ingenious but tenable. I think the nosepicking is a kind of purge, but it is also a creative act. There have been numerous references to mucus in “Telemachus.” The “snotgreen sea” and its relationship to the “green sluggish bile” convey mostly negative associations. But here
Stephen has bestowed his own creative products—liquid and solid—on nature. He has impregnated the sea with his own waters, and he has joined his mucus to earth.

Some positive changing has transpired in this chapter. Stephen has created poetry: he has confronted his worst fears and transformed them into language. Turning his face “over a shoulder, rere regardant” (51), he again acts out, in a gesture, what he has also enacted in his imagination; he has not only looked backward, he has looked beneath.

Later, in “Scylla and Charybdis,” Stephen attempts to structure his psychological troublings in terms of an intellectual schema. The conflict between Aristotelian logic, dogmatism and rationalism (the rock), and Platonism and mysticism (the whirlpool), are convenient Odyssean frames of reference, but they are also two elemental female symbols of devouring too, and they suggest that although the intellectual sides may be clearly drawn, the psychological ones underlying them remain cloudy and unresolved. If the ethereal, formless, less-than-rational systems imaged in the whirlpool are threatening to Stephen, Stephen’s Aristotelian temperament and education only form another species of monster. Underneath these conflicting systems lies Stephen’s abiding concern with process.

Even here process underlies all. The library contains “coffined thoughts,” and “mummycases, embalmed in spice of words” (193). The corpse of John Shakespeare “rots and rots” (207). Stephen, too, continues to change: “Molecules all change,” he thinks, “I am other now” (189). Later he reflects, “We, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies . . . from day to day” (194). His thoughts on fatherhood, art, and on the figure of Shakespeare as personification of problems related to both, also involve process. When A. E. describes art as a revelation of ideas, “formless spiritual essences” (185), Stephen translates his phrase into: “Formless spiritual. Father, Word and Holy Breath. . . who suffers in us every moment. This verily is that. I am the fire upon the altar. I am the sacrificial butter” (185). Obviously his attempts to gain ascendency over process through an identification with the Christ/Logos fails, and sacrifice involves again an alimentary metaphor. Later he links art with process and also with a female
activity when he thinks that like our bodies, "so does the artist weave and unweave his image" (194).

Intellectual bulwarks suggested by the rock are not enough to solace Stephen. Fatherhood remains a "mystical estate" (207) founded on incertitude. *Amor matris* may be more certain but hardly less threatening. Blavatsky's elementals and A. E. 's "living mother" are no less disturbing than the wounding/destroying figures of Venus and Ann Shakespeare.

However, amidst this atmosphere of intellectual debate, a lone figure, who has himself just come from a reflection upon the "mesial grooves" of the goddesses, arrives. So they appear, Stephen and Bloom, together yet alone in their cogitations, Stephen pondering on cerebral essences, Bloom on alimentary essentials.