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Animal Welfare in Post-Union Ireland

The place of animals in English culture of the Romantic and Victorian periods has been widely explored, but the topic remains generally unexamined in the literary, social, and cultural history of Romantic-period and nineteenth-century Ireland.[1] This is an unfortunate gap, as Irish animal welfare exemplifies a continual strain of reformist response to the political climate that came into existence in the aftermath of the rebellion of 1798 and Act of Union. The horrific conditions endured by many animals in post-Union Ireland attracted the attention of some well-known and other more obscure social reformers. Maria Edgeworth, Mary Leadbeater, Lady Morgan, William Hickey (Martin Doyle), Caesar Otway, and William Hamilton Drummond all noted disturbing tendencies to animal cruelty in Ireland. In a range of genres from pamphlets and lectures to novels, these writers attempted to inculcate animal welfare as a component of progressive attitudes that were increasingly commonplace in Britain.

Animal welfare was not a dominant discourse in this particular period of instability; nonetheless, the inculcation of animal welfare values was a significant component of the efforts of various reformers. These reformers were especially

1. The classic account of these developments, particularly as they pertain to animals, is Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500–1800* (London: Penguin, 1983). With regard to animals in Ireland, a helpful exception to the general lack of investigation is Juliana Adelman's account of Dublin Zoo in "Animal Knowledge: Zoology and Classification in Nineteenth-Century Dublin," *Field Day Review*, 5 (2009), 109–21. On the Romantic British context, see: Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*; David Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Timothy Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Christine Kenyon Jones, *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic Period Writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001). For the Victorian context, see: James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast: Animals, Pain and Humanity in the Victorian Mind* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), and Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987). For a more general historical and sociological discussion of animal rights and related discourses, see Keith Tester, *Animals and Society: The Humanity of Animal Rights* (London: Routledge, 1991). For an account of many of the principal themes, see J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). Research for this article was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK).

distressed that Irish animals continued to exhibit the signs of cruel treatment that bespoke a roughened, barbaric age. Animal welfare campaigners sought to end the sight of all those mistreated horses and dogs, and of their brutish owners, and to replace them with a supposedly moderate culture of human-beast relations. The moderating effects of reform—underpinned by kindness, harmony, quiet, and hard work—would, they believed, equip the rural poor to cope practically with the ever-intensifying social and economic demands of everyday life. Animal welfare was also significant to reformist attempts to articulate the need for a separation of public and private spheres (as well as distinctions between master and servant, and men and women), which they deemed to be insufficiently internalized in Ireland. By such means, animals were recruited to clarify seemingly fundamental distinctions of class as well as gender in post-Union Ireland.

Pleas for the humane treatment of animals feature strongly in Irish children's literature of the Romantic era, educational programs, didactic fiction, and guides to modern farming practices.[2] In the 1814 edition of Mary Leadbeater's fictional tract *Cottage Dialogues*, the virtuous young Martin rescues a dog from the "wanton cruelty" being exercised on him by a group of boys. These boys teased the dog until he became "mad" (or savage) with anxiety and rage. The dog was then rescued by Martin who calmed him

> and when he got his fright a little off . . . oh, how he wagged his tail, and jumped about my feet, and looked up in my face, and whinged, as if he said, "I am greatly obliged to you." Indeed, it was very pleasant; and I wondered of all things, how you could take delight in teasing and tormenting him, running after him, roaring and laughing like fools . . . and that you had no compassion on his frightened looks, when he heard the noise of the saucepan you tied to his tail.[3]

Martin explains that compassion to animals is important, as it makes it possible to feel compassionate toward other people in turn. Martin's kindness to the dog suffuses the beast with humanity; the dog is thus almost able to communicate in a human mode by effectively expressing—at some level of intelligibility—"I am greatly obliged to you." Cruelty to the dog had dehumanized it into madness, but Martin restores the dog's humanity by treating the animal with com-

2. Good examples of this literature can be found in the publications of the Kildare Place Society, which printed and distributed throughout Ireland such pamphlets as *Natural History of Domestic Animals* (1821), *Natural History of Animals* (1822), *Animal Sagacity, Exemplified by Facts* (1824), and *Natural History of Domestic Beasts* (1832). These were designed to instill a knowledge of natural history and an ethic of animal welfare. Indeed, the process of acquiring knowledge of natural history was understood to go hand-in-hand with that of developing compassionate and humane relations with animals.

3. Leadbeater, *Cottage Dialogues* (Dublin: John Cumming, 1814), part 2, 28–29. This is the second and much expanded edition of the original 1811 text of Mary Leadbeater's *Cottage Dialogues*.

passion. Crucially, Martin's humane treatment of the dog also restores calm and order to this particular corner of rural Ireland in which Leadbeater's tale is set, thereby demonstrating the role of animal welfare to political stability and harmony. The noise of cruelty is eliminated, infusing the locality with the peace and quiet of compassion and suggesting the possibilities for broader social order.

The cruel treatment of animals suggests a worrying propensity to cruelty in general: "a boy that can torment and kill poor dead animals, for diversion, will not mind, when he is a man, how he hurts his fellow creatures."[4] The animalizing effects of cruelty to animals thus have broader political repercussions. Leadbeater wants all forms of animal cruelty—from killing spiders and stealing eggs, to throwing stones at birds and abusing cats—stamped out among children. She was troubled by what such barbaric actions metonymically represent regarding the cruelty latent in rural Irish society (of which the rural poor were themselves frequently the victims) as by the abuse of animals in and of itself. As such, animal welfare discourse unwittingly calls attention to the continuities between a pre-Union, non-reformed society and a post-Union reforming and, supposedly, ever-improving Ireland.

The plight of animals helped to call attention to those unreformed, excessive conditions that continued to linger in post-Union Ireland. Reformers understood cruelty to animals to be a manifestation of the impractical extremism that supposedly thrived in Irish culture. For some writers, the objections to the perceived extremes of republicanism and loyalism were expressed as much on the basis of their impracticality (or idealism) as on particular ideological grounds. Many post-Union reforming projects consciously strove for moderation in tone and methods, in contrast to the reactionary and radical polemics of the 1790s. In doing so, reformers articulated a desire to have politics in all its manifestations displaced by a neutralizing practicality of hard work and moral self-satisfaction. They hoped that the work of post-Union economic activity and development would subsume those rawer, indeed animalistic, political passions and energies that were manifest in the mistreatment of Irish tenants at the hands of their frequently absentee and irresponsible landlords. As such, a kind of quietism would come to typify the texture of ordinary, day-to-day life in post-Union Ireland, but not for any suspension of "cognitive and acquisitive faculties."[5] Instead, the hope was that such political quietism would help establish the ground for economic progress.

Most post-Union animal welfare campaigners held to a particular understanding of human-animal relations: animals need to be treated kindly, but

4. Leadbeater, 30.

5. Anne-Lise François, "'O Happy Living Things': Frankenfoods and the Bounds of Wordsworthian Natural Piety," *diacritics*, 33, 2 (Summer, 2003), 57.

never with excessive feeling or tenderness, as that tends toward the sentimental excesses associated with radicalism of various kinds. Human and animal space must be kept distinct, and a clear hierarchical relationship established between human and beast. This model of human-animal order—restrained, disciplined, and perhaps above all, calm—reflected the kind of reformed, non-revolutionary and non-reactionary organization that reformers envisaged for society in general. Arguably, this was a retort to the perceived excesses surrounding "rights" discourses in the 1790s, such as those for the "rights of man," woman, and even beast. Those campaigners who sought an end to animal cruelty in Ireland somewhat paradoxically articulated a discourse of animal welfare that was as much an objection to the "rights"of men and women as an expression of the necessity of freedom in a civilizing society. But by the 1830s, the idea of rights for animals had achieved wide consensus while the rights of man, if not those of woman, had achieved some recognition in Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the first Reform Bill in 1832.

David Perkins has suggested that the cause of animal rights in Britain "did not enlist many dedicated persons."[6] A notable exception, however, is the landlord and politician Richard Martin (1754–1834), who was motivated in part by his experience of severe, yet commonplace, animal cruelty in the West of Ireland.[7] But Martin's concern for the suffering of animals did not extend to a condemnation of hunting, which he considered a gentlemanly activity, as carried out by the upper classes, and thus quite distinct from the inhuman animal cruelty practiced by the lower classes in his native Connemara. In conjunction with the abolitionist William Wilberforce and others, Martin relentlessly pursued his animal rights campaign through parliament until he succeeded in having legislation passed in 1822 as An Act to Prevent the Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle. A few years later—again with Wilberforce—he was involved in the establishment in London of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.[8] Martin, however, did not focus his campaigns on Ireland, where there were other less overtly pub-

6. Perkins, 44.

7. In his *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, William Lecky recounts how such cruelties as the attaching of "ploughs and harrows to the tails of horses"—which had been made illegal in 1635—and the "pulling off the wool from living sheep instead of shearing them" remained fairly widespread in Ireland. William Lecky, *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol.1 (London: Longmans, Green, 1892), 336. For a discussion of Martin in the context of Lecky's description of eighteenth-century animal welfare in Ireland, see Wellesley Pain, *Richard Martin* (London: Leonard Parson, 1925), 46. On debates surrounding the prevalence of this practice, see E. Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways* (London: Routledge, 1957), 3.

8. For an account of the origins of the Society for Prevention to Cruelty to Animals in the wake of Martin's bill, see Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast*, 39–45. On the contradictions of Martin's position, see Tester, *Animals and Society*, 108–10.

lic and famous advocates for animal welfare. As Lady Morgan noted, "in spite of our own dear Dick Martin," animals in Ireland "are worse treated than in any other part of the world."[9] In *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), Glorvina establishes her humanness and civility for Horatio Mortimer by scolding a young boy who mistreats a dog.[10] In addition, in her 1827 novel, *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*, she associates "the barbarous custom" of "ploughing, harrowing, and drawing horses, garans, and colts by the tail" with backward agriculture and the consequent development of "impoverished" breeds of Irish horses.[11]

In this period, the cause of animal welfare created common ground for campaigners from a variety of different Protestant religious backgrounds: the Quaker Leadbeater was united in the cause of animal welfare with the Church of Ireland clergyman William Hickey (Martin Doyle), with Maria Edgeworth, a member of the Church of Ireland, with the Unitarian Hamilton Drummond, and with the evangelical clergyman Caesar Otway. These writers would not always have agreed on theological matters or the place of religion in post-Union Ireland, nor would they have agreed about modern culture more generally. But they most certainly did agree on the need to seek an end to the supposed pervasiveness of animal cruelty. In *The Intellectuality of Domestic Animals*, a Zoological Society Lecture delivered in Dublin in 1840 (though not printed until 1848), Otway enthusiastically recommends Drummond's writings on animal rights, but is keen to point out that he emphatically does not endorse the Unitarian's sermons.[12]

The common ground of animal welfare, however, excluded the participation of Catholics. In the minds of most animal welfare campaigners, animal cruelty was primarily a Catholic problem and was as such inextricable from some of the most difficult political problems of the period. The discussion of animals both allowed for and obfuscated debate on the actual threat to post-Union social order posed by what was understood to be the voluble, noisy, and cantankerous Catholic poor—as opposed to all the horses, pigs, and dogs in the country who were hardly in a position to rebel against their owners. Implicit in animal welfare discourse is anxiety regarding the perceived dehumanized and brutish state of the Catholic poor as an animalistic (or perhaps "swinish") "multitude." In the writings of Leadbeater and Doyle in particular, the animalistic poor of Ireland and those undisciplined animals with which they co-existed side by side could

9. Lady Morgan, *Book of the Boudoir*, vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1829), 70.

10. Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl*, ed. Kathryn Kirkpatrick (1806; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), 82.

11. Lady Morgan, *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* (1827; Peterborough: Broadview, 2014), 289.

12. Caesar Otway, *The Intellectuality of Domestic Animals: A Lecture Delivered Before the Royal Zoological Society of Ireland, 1840* (Dublin: McGlashan, 1847), 44; hereafter cited parenthetically, thus: (*IDA* 44).

not be readily brought within any vision of a modernizing, self-disciplining economy. These observers were repulsed by those numerous cabins in which pigs, cows, and poultry as well as domestic pets resided beside their owners, eating and sleeping in the same crowded and invariably noisy space. Animals inside the house indicated an absence of proper hierarchical relations between human and beast, and compounded the generally animalistic and hectic nature of the typical Irish cabin with its dung heap at the door and swinish inhabitants within.[13]

Many Irish reformers unequivocally condemned the practice of human and animal cohabitation, which supposedly led to practical problems ranging from unpleasant overcrowding to unsanitary conditions. The reformers saw the practice as emblematic of immense cruelty to animals in the culture at large. Rather than human-animal co-existence encouraging greater sensitivity to animals, in nineteenth-century rural Ireland at least, it would appear that such arrangements were perceived to be detrimental to animal welfare.[14] To many observers, such a situation was a sign of a more endemic, even catastrophic, form of disorganization. The absence of boundaries between animals and humans was part of a generally unreformed and cruel culture in which children were beaten, wives were flogged, and tenants were mercilessly rack-rented. Landlords, of course, did not share domestic space with pigs and cows, but their treatment of the rural poor did at times manifest the very kind of barbarity that was at one with the abuse of animals. To the reformers, the situation was clear: achieving a non-radical reforming modernization in Ireland would depend, in part, on the establishment of a regime of kindness that would shape relations between humans and animals as well as between the various social groups that inhabited the post-Union state. If such reforms were not achieved, a more radical project of social change might well get nurtured instead.

Much as in Britain, Irish animal welfare discourse in part received its impetus from a particular, though varied, group of texts. These ranged from sermons and the poetry of Edward Thompson, Oliver Goldsmith, and the very widely

13. However, the agriculturist Arthur Young—whose agricultural writings did much to propel strains of Irish rural reforming discourses—did not view human and animal co-habitation in Ireland as negatively as others when he traveled through the country in the late 1770s. When noting that animal "sties" were becoming more common in Ireland, he seems to regret that this will exclude "the poor pigs from the warmth of the bodies of their master and mistress." He explains that as "beds are not found universally" in Ireland, it is common for the family to lie together on straw, which is "equally partook of by cows, calves and pigs." The introduction of the pig sty would alter this widespread and, to Young's mind, beneficial sleeping arrangement. Arthur Young, *Tour in Ireland*, vol. 2 (Dublin: James Williams, 1780), 36.

14. This perception would conform to the shift in attitude toward animals in this period documented by Thomas in *Man and the Natural World*, 87–92.

read poet William Cowper, whose influence is pronounced in almost all claims for animal welfare from the mid-eighteenth century onward. Cowper was, as Perkins notes, often read aloud in households, because for many "he seemed not to be radical."[15] Cowper is widely quoted, for example, in such didactic "animal" fiction as Sarah Trimmer's *Fabulous Histories* (1786), a treatise on animal welfare, but also a treatise against more radical claims for animal rights *avant la lettre*, and the popular *Keeper's Travels in Search of his Master* (1798) by Edward Kendal—a text that was emphatically condemned as pro-animal rights Jacobinism by the education reformer Sarah Trimmer.[16]

Trimmer's strongly Christian animal welfarism was notably influential, but it had to co-exist with both Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism and rights-based discourses that emerged in the 1790s with the Jacobin John Oswald and the French revolutionary sympathizers, Mary Wollstonecraft, Thomas Paine, and John Lawrence.[17] In *A Philosophical and Practical Treatise on Horses and on the Moral Duties of Man* (1796–98), Lawrence declared his objective to be the lessening of "the sum of animal misery in the world," while also providing detailed practical advice on the maintenance of horses and other work animals. Lawrence makes clear that animals must be treated with compassion; moreover, he dares to call attention to the horse's "natural rights . . . his claims as an animal endowed with fellow feeling."[18] The assertion that such a thing as a horse-based "fellow feeling" exists contains fraternal, revolutionary connotations. It implies that the extension of rights to animals should be—as Wollstonecraft urged regarding women—an entirely logical component of a republican state. Despite his radicalism, Lawrence nonetheless paved the way for many Irish writers who would emphasize a practical approach to animal maintenance and welfare, albeit without any trace of fraternal oneness with beasts.

Animal-welfare discourse generally insisted that the condition of animals—rife with oppression, suffering, pain, and humiliation—could no longer be countenanced by a society that prided itself on its otherwise increasingly more humane approach to a range of persecuted groups, such as the poor, slaves, prisoners, and religious minorities. Because the diminishing of all creaturely suffering is intrinsic to the larger utilitarian project of humanizing and liberalizing human experience, it is unsurprising that it was such abolitionists as William Wilberforce who had first attempted to introduce legislation prohibiting cruelty to domestic animals. The insistence on the need to treat animals with humanity

15. Perkins, 40.

16. Sarah Trimmer, *The Guardian of Education*, 1, 1802, 400.

17. For an overview of aspects of these debates, see Darren Howard, "Necessary Fictions: The Swinish Multitude and the Rights of Man," *Studies in Romanticism*, 47, 2 (Summer, 2008), 161–78.

18. John Lawrence, *A Philosophical and Practical Treatise on Horses and on the Moral Duties of Man* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1796–98), 2.

rather than savagery—in, for example, Thomas Young's 1798 *Humanity to Animals*—is a commonplace of animal welfare rhetoric in this period. But this position could also contain emphatically practical and non-sentimental connotations, in part motivated by a sense that animal cruelty was an expression of social forces that obstructed economic, and thus human, potential. There might have been considerable public skepticism toward the notion of the extension of rights to animals—associated with the perceived extremism of such figures as the radical Lawrence or, more particularly, the Jacobin Oswald—but there was a quite general consensus on the need to treat animals with compassion. Such humane values were implicit in economic and industrial progressivism.[19] That said, however, the animal welfare parliamentary bills introduced by Wilberforce in 1800 and 1802 and by Thomas Lord Erskine in 1809 were readily defeated and widely mocked. They suffered pointed ridicule by the counter-revolutionary William Windham on the basis of their presumed rhetorical affinities with Jacobinism and Methodism.[20] But by 1822, there was sufficient political consensus for animal cruelty legislation to be passed in parliament. Despite Windham's derision, much animal welfare discourse presented no threat to the traditional structures of the state, and even—in the context of post-Union Ireland at least—worked to enforce them. Animal welfare was an economically progressive and thoroughly practical project. Its proponents had little time for any sentimentalizing or idealizing of the natural world.

These desentimentalizing strains are central to Maria Edgeworth's *Practical Education* (1798), which counsels against giving pets to young children. Edgeworth explains that children will lavish immense compassion on their pets in one instance, but then inflict cruel acts on their brother or sister in the next. She recounts how "a boy of seven years old once knocked down his sister to prevent her from crushing his caterpillar."[21] For Edgeworth, such excessive childlike behavior is an example of the very kind of Romantic misanthropy—too complete an immersion in nature at the exclusion of society—that she was warning against. Lavishing attention on animals in this way was, to her mind, typical of the kind of excess that a practical (as opposed to a theoretical) education was designed to counteract. She held that like "uneducated people," children are attracted by extremes of emotion and spectacle as the corresponding condition to a residual inertia, or "listless state."[22] An excess of feeling toward animals complements the listlessness of a non-social and non-productive condition. In addition,

19. For a discussion of animals and "rights" discourses in the 1790s, see Howard, "Necessary Fictions." For an account of Oswald's reception in the 1790s, see Morton, 21–23; 23–25.

20. For a detailed account of these debates, see Kenyon Jones, 79–94.

21. Maria Edgeworth, *Practical Education* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1798), 283.

22. Edgeworth, 282. Though not chronologically a post-Union text, a new edition of *Practical Education* was published in 1802 and its influence was pronounced in the first three decades of the nine-

this kind of excess co-exists with a rampant cruelty toward both humans and beasts that is irreconcilable with social and economic progress. For Edgeworth, disproportionate feeling for animals reflects the excessiveness of particular ideas of nature and the natural—as to be found, for example. in the work of Rousseau—that are at one with the "theoretical" education she is attempting to displace. Edgeworth was as keen to place limits on human relations with nature as she was to prescribe the ways in which children behaved toward their pets and other animals. This suggests a desire to denaturalize experience to the extent that a fully humanized, entirely social, condition of existence would be achieved.

Edgeworth's position articulated a rationalizing ambition, in which nature was demystified of its visionary connotations in both religious and secular senses. Such an ambition was fundamental to reforming projects in Ireland and elsewhere in the post-Union and post-revolutionary period. The reforming program was bound up with a need to contain the perceived political, religious, and cultural excesses of Irish culture in the period surrounding 1798, the Act of Union and Emmett's Rebellion of 1803. Those excesses—of absenteeism, drunkenness, and cruelty—were understood to be intrinsic to Irish popular culture, politics and even, it would appear to human-animal relations. In Edgeworth's *The Absentee* (1812), the drunken Larry Brady (who is himself a victim of chronic absenteeism and the severe inequalities of the post-Union period) is hastily driving the reform-minded Lord Colambre to Dublin in a journey that is supposed to exemplify the process by which absenteeism in Ireland is to be brought to an end. Larry plies the whip to his horses, "lending his soul at every lash," as well as pouring ale down their throats in order to propel them along. Colambre warns Larry that his drunkenness makes him into "an idiot and a brute."[23] As such, Colambre is already beginning to infuse post-Union Ireland—which abounds with abused horses—with the kind of humanist compassion that will eventually eradicate all brutality. The presumption in the text is that all brutishness could be eliminated by the return to Ireland of its absentee landowners, who—once properly equipped for their role as enlightened modernizers—would rid the country of its premodern roughness and economic backwardness. The urging of restraint and discipline, implicit in the reformist rhetoric of liberals and conservatives alike, pertained to activities as diverse as farming methods, the well-being of the rural poor, the consumption of alcohol and the treatment as well as existential place of horses, dogs, and pigs in a post-Union social order.

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teenth century. Drummond approvingly cites Edgeworth's discussion of animals in his *Humanity to Animals* (1830).

23. Maria Edgeworth, *The Absentee*, ed. W.J. McCormack and Kim Walker (1812; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 254–55.

The reformist discourses assumed that distinctions between human and beast would be made firm in a properly ordered domestic space. Farm animals would not be permitted inside the home at any time, let alone to eat and sleep there. In practice, animals were often permitted to roam in and out of many rural Irish cabins in a seemingly undisciplined manner. In her fictional tracts for the lower classes, Leadbeater attempts to demonstrate the difficulty with this kind of domestic and more general social disorganization. In *Cottage Dialogues* (1811) the reforming Rose points out to her non-reformable neighbor Nancy the horrific consequences that can follow from the confused human-animal space of a typical Irish cabin and small farm. As a means of urging Nancy to help her mother look after the children, Rose tells her that on one occasion a man of her acquaintance "was left, when he was an infant, in the cradle by himself" and that "an ugly brute of a pig came in, and ate off his poor little hand." Rose then goes on to recount another, even worse incident:

> there was a sow and little pigs on the floor with a young child, and its mammy went out, and bid its daddy take care of it, and he bid another child watch it, while he took a nap, and when he wakened, he asked the child how the little one was; and she said he was very well, playing with the little pigs: then the man bounced up in the greatest fright that could be, and the poor little thing was all in a gore of blood, and its face so eat by the nasty sow, that the life was out of it sure enough.[24]

These anecdotes are supposed to frighten Nancy into helping her mother look after her baby brother while she has to be away from the house. But the pig is also supposed to serve as a signifier of much of rural Ireland and the unreformed conditions of the rural poor. The brutality and horror that results from the absence of the reforming domesticity that Leadbeater was attempting to instil are made clear. For Leadbeater, domestic order depended upon fundamental oppositions between human and animal, inside and outside, and cleanliness and dirt—oppositions that were, in her mind, troublingly missing in rural Ireland. What this account suggest is the existence of an unrestrained beastliness, which can—perhaps like politics?—erupt unpredictably in the undomesticated, as non-separated, conditions that obtained in the unreformed context of post-Union Ireland.

Later in *Cottage Dialogues*, the definition of domestic space is fully blurred or not even considered by Nancy who allows the pig as well as the cat into her house. The cat drinks the milk and the pig eats the clothes. Nancy goes to Rose

24. Mary Leadbeater, *Cottage Dialogues Amongst the Irish Peasantry* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1811), 3. Though Leadbeater's writings have not previously been discussed in the context of the relationship between gender and "animal advocacy" in the modern period, they can—at least in part—be understood in this context. For an overview of this tradition (and its contradictions), see Moira Ferguson, *Animal Advocacy and Englishwomen, 1780–1900* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

to borrow a cap as her "nasty pig" has made a "rag" of hers. When Rose inquires how the pig was able to destroy her cap, Nancy explains that she went out without fastening the door and, "sure enough, the pig went into the cabin as usual, and because the pot stood in the same place it does when she comes to feed in it, and the water was grown cold, she pops in her ugly nose." The problem for Rose is not just that the pig eats the clothes in the cabin, but that its routine presence in the house pollutes domestic space in both real and symbolic terms:

> Nancy, it would have been cheaper for you to have built a separate place for your pig . . . and not to have given it the way of going into the cabin to be fed. Indeed I wonder you can bear to have it eat out of the same vessel that boils food for your husband and children.[25]

Rose is appalled by the notion of animals sharing domestic space in this way and—worse—sharing those very cooking pots, which should mark human superiority to animals. For Leadbeater, such a relationship with an animal pollutes the idea of what it is to be human and dehumanizes the entire environment. In the anthopologist Mary Douglas's terms, the pig eating from "the same vessel" as Nancy and her family is figured as "matter out of place," a disordering of fundamental categories.[26] Domestic space needs to be organized in such a way that distinctions between humans and animals are fastened in place. Human space must be secured against material or conceptual pollution by dirty, scavenging animals, but also against the very worrying possibility of being stripped of its humaneness so readily (or, as Leadbeater would have it, "sure enough") by these routine human-animal encounters.

For Rose, the solution for effective domestic and farm management—and emotional stability—is to keep the pig separate from the family in its own defined space, signifying a stabilizing of categories. Rose explains that her husband Jem will be doing precisely this for their pigs by making "an addition to their little place" in such a way that

> the walls of the new part will be high enough to hinder them [the pigs] from getting out, so that they can have light and air, and move about, without doing mischief to ourselves, or others; and their food can be put in over the wall.[27]

In Rose's mind, putting the food over the wall, rather than giving it directly to the pigs in person maintains a proper distance between human and beast. The walls materially and symbolically distinguish between human and animal space, limiting the frequency of unmediated encounters with beasts. Notably,

25. Leadbeater, *Cottage Dialogues*, 135–36.

26. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, (1966; London: Routledge, 1979), 40.

27. Leadbeater, *Cottage Dialogues*, 136.

this kind of distance, and the distinction thereby implied, is also supposed to be humane precisely because it is mediated by walls and by layers of meanings. The diminished visibility of animals suggests an intensified humanness as well as compassion. Rose presents her use of a pig sty as the more progressive approach to the keeping of pigs. Although Bernard Mandeville remarked that it is difficult for people to consume "any creatures they have daily seen and been acquainted with," the rural poor in Ireland did not appear to have any qualms over the eventual consumption of the pigs that wandered in and out of their cabins. [28] However, Leadbeater is striving to make them aware of the kinds of practical and symbolic difficulties generated by such proximity. She claims that the pig secured in its own sty as opposed to one reared inside and right outside a cabin becomes infused with a progressiveness to the point where its flesh is tenderized, not at all tasting tough on account of the farmers' cruelty or a more generalized despotism. When Nancy asks what pigs "want with light and air," Rose—sounding like any number of contemporary advocates of organic and free range production—replies that

> all animals intended for food, are wholesomer, and sweeter to eat, for not being debarred from them [light and air]. Besides, I hate to shut up any living creature, day and night, in a dark hole. The almighty has given us the beasts for our service, but has forbidden us to torment them; and I think we should do all we can to save them from unnecessary pain. Indeed this is generally our interest, as well as our duty.[29]

The effects of Rose's more humane approach to the welfare of animals extends right through to the food produced within her compassionate system, which apparently tastes better, and is, indeed, "wholesomer." At an obvious level, it would appear that cruelty to animals has no place in an industrializing agriculture: well-treated animals will supposedly yield better food (also a familiar claim in contemporary food discourses). Even more, however, the consumption and digestion of such meat will humanize those who consume it, ensuring a social order fully divested of oppression.[30]

Nancy is not cruel to animals, but she is made cross by their behavior and inclined to extremism in her responses to them. Those very kinds of feelings—indeed, that entire level of emotional being—would be eliminated if Nancy and her compatriots observed a reformed code of animal welfare, which put ani-

28. Quoted in Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 115.

29. Leadbeater, *Cottage Dialogues*, 137–38.

30. In this period, animal welfare discourse gave rise to increased anxiety surrounding the slaughter of animals for human consumption; on this topic in the Romantic period, see Timothy Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), and Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 288–300.

mals (and themselves) in their place. If animals were to understand their correct place in the scheme of things, Nancy would herself occupy satisfactorily her own designated position. One could argue that Nancy has never made any claims for the welfare of animals, as she has not maintained strict spatial or perhaps even conceptual distinctions between herself and them. Because she has not viewed these farm animals as being entirely Other to her—categorically separated off—she has not been inclined to think of their welfare. It might be that animal welfare can be articulated only in conditions in which animals have come to be perceived as entirely distinct. Perhaps, too, animal welfare requires a related reformist need, fueled by political conditions, to assert an idea of humanity as nonpolitical, moderate, and practical in opposition to an animality, which is political and excessive, even theoretical. Keith Thomas has claimed that the development of animal welfare discourse "was closely linked to the growth of towns and the emergence of an industrial order in which animals became increasingly marginal to the processes of production." [31] Although marginalized by industrialization, animals were becoming discursively central to those organizing distinctions deemed necessary in a modernizing and urbanizing environment, including that of prefamine Ireland. From Leadbeater's perspective, Nancy, and the rural poor she represents, had not yet come to inhabit social conditions in which such distinctions would be instilled.

Anxiety regarding cruelty to animals is thus implicit in the more general claims regarding distinctions between humans and animals. The existence of cruelty might suggest that differences are not so pronounced, or even that, in odd ways, cruelty expresses a certain leveling of relations between human and beast, an undomesticated wildness shared by both "man" and animal. But kindness toward animals is supposed to enforce the sense that a hierarchy really does exist: humans and animals do not exist on the same level even though communication between them is possible. Likewise, humane landlord and tenant relations should work to enforce those social, and class, distinctions that ran the risk of being made to appear indistinct, rendered arbitrary—or even up for grabs—in the seemingly disordered context of post-Union Ireland.

In *Hints to the Small Farmers of Ireland* (1830), Martin Doyle discourages small farmers from keeping horses for reasons of efficient economic management as well as animal welfare. Doyle could not separate economic efficiency from animal welfare. He complains that small farmers think they need a horse when most of them do no, emphasizing that horses are too expensive to maintain properly and humanely on the small farms of the rural poor, as it is difficult to feed them

31. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 181.

consistently on the nutritious diet they need. Visitors to Ireland in this period also expressed unease at the mistreatment of horses. In *The Intellectuality of Domestic Animals*, Caesar Otway recounts Wordsworth's dismay at the abuse of Irish horses, which he had noted in his travels through Ireland in 1829. When asked by Otway what distinguished the Irish from the English, Wordsworth claimed that what most struck him in his Irish tour "was the ill treatment of . . . horses." Otway recounts that Wordsworth's "soul was often, too often, sick within him, at the way in which he saw these creatures of God abused." Otway finds it shameful that the poet noted Irish backwardness regarding animal welfare, "this great evil" of "the hard usage of horses" (*IDA* 25). Wordsworth's sickened reaction to the mistreated horses of Ireland draws attention to animal cruelty and the deep unpleasantness of such public spectacles of oppression that could be witnessed routinely all over the heavily populated countryside. These sights, which generate visceral dismay in the traveler, indicate of course the existence of more entrenched forms of oppression in Ireland. The Irish animal welfare movement is notable for its attempt to have public displays and manifestations of cruelty fully eliminated. In the writings of the reformers explored here, the high visibility of such cruel spectacles were another factor in establishing Irish difference from a supposedly civil and normalized Britishness—a civility in part constituted by a higher level of compassion toward animals. This civility was itself rooted in supposedly longstanding, indeed intrinsic, British traditions of liberty. In the reformers' eyes, these traditions had not been internalized in Ireland where an inconveniently different understanding of liberty appeared to dominate.

According to Doyle, horses are by no means as useful to a tenant farmer as a cow—a creature that was to his mind worryingly absent from too many of the small farms of Ireland. Most irritating for Doyle, horse ownership was justified first and foremost by many small farmers by their perceived need of continual attendance at fairs and funerals, rather than for the animal's economic and laboring potential. In Irish popular culture, the horse appeared to be an adjunct to "down time," indeed idleness, and not to productivity. Doyle sternly instructed farmers that attendance at fairs is not at all necessary "unless you have more business at them than merely buying a step for a spade and other such trifles"; for that matter, nor is being present at funerals if you "have neither relationships nor intimacy" with the people concerned.[32] If the small farmers of Ireland stopped keeping horses, this would lessen animal cruelty while also having the related benefit of reduced attendance at fairs and funerals, occasions deemed to be hotbeds of excessive sociability, idleness and drunkenness. Doyle claims that horses suffer greatly from the rural Irish attachment to these rowdy, crowded

32. Martin Doyle, *Hints to the Small Farmers of Ireland*, (Dublin: William Curry, 1830), 32; hereafter cited parenthetically, thus: (*HSFI* 32).

and heavily collective events, which lacked the humanist refinement he was hoping to instill:

> And as far as your horses are concerned in these expeditions I have but too often occasion to pity their sufferings, when I witness the abuse they undergo at funerals and fairs. How often do we see a drunken, unfeeling fellow, cruelly spurring, and at the same time, reining in, the ill used animal, which has been for hours patiently starving at the door of a public house, while his brutal owner, insensible to his fatigue and hunger, has been guzzling punch or raw spirits, until he is hardly able to mount again. Now everyone knows that working horses ought to be treated carefully and worked slowly, and that they should not be even trotted at their work; for one day's over driving is worse than a week's regular field work with suitable keeping—but as if this were mere nonsense, the working horse, besides being shamefully abused, as I have above stated, is often, when unyoked from the plough or car, either rode home, or to a scanty pasture, at full gallop, by some untrained or unthinking imp. (*HSFI* 32)

For Doyle, many smallholders—the "untrained or unthinking imps"—were themselves effectively brutalized even more by their casual and routine mistreatment of horses.[33] In Doyle's thinking, greater "humanity" toward animals would be intrinsic to a more regulated and accurately calculated working culture, whose development would be unimpeded by the noisy and drunken activities of the generally savage rural poor. But, according to Doyle, as matters stood, what he calls "horse madness" often takes precedence in the "miscalculating" and backward minds of small farmers (*HSFI* 33). Once again, advocates for animal welfare articulated a close relationship between "humanity" to animals and economic advancement.[34] Working humanely with animals is more profitable and would ensure that the full economic potential of beasts is properly exploited. As matters stood, the small farmers of Ireland were exploiting animals and, indeed, nature, on a wrong, because non-rationalized, level.

If the well-treated working horse functions as a metaphor for reformed post-Union labor relations, then the shameful abuse of many Irish horses must have

33. Though Doyle clearly makes reference to Lawrence's work, his position is also a modification of Lawrence's approach. Lawrence went so far as to claim that the horse "possesses, in common with the human race, the reasoning faculty, the difference consisting only in degree, or quantity" (vol. 1, 79). Doyle would certainly not have shared that view of the horse.

34. In *Humanity to Animals*, Young had also pointed out the economic advantages, indeed, necessity of animal welfare: "It ought not to be omitted, that it is for our interest, our pecuniary interest, I mean, to treat the animals which are our property with gentleness and care. Every one knows that they will be both more able and more willing to serve us, and to contribute to our advantage, if they be not overlaboured or forced to too violent exertions; if they be not defrauded with respect to their food and drink, or the care and attention which are due to them. . . ." Thomas Young, *An Essay on Humanity to Animals* (London: T. Cadell, Jr. and W. Davies, 1798), 11.

reflected the experience of numerous agricultural laborers throughout rural Ireland. Indeed, the horses of Ireland starkly, if metonymically, exhibit the true state of the country. However, for Doyle, animals might nonetheless be able to demonstrate the means by which social and political stability could be achieved in Ireland. In his otherwise entirely practical advice on beekeeping, for example, Doyle claims that bees provide a metaphorical model of stability and order. His bees supposedly "afford unvarying examples of diligence and labour—of frugality and order—not to be found among *men* who have *reason* to guide, and *religion* to influence their ways." Not only do hardworking, orderly, and frugal bees provide an example of how best to conduct oneself individually; they also function as an "exhibit" for society in general: "as a *people* living in communities of 15 to 20 thousand each, *all working for the public good, without any selfish consideration*, and affectionately attached to their sovereign" (*HSFI* 100). Drawing on Levi-Strauss's terms, Doyle's bees could perhaps be understood as "metaphorical human beings" whose ceaseless productivity forms a sharp contrast with the indolence of the backward and less than fully human small farmer.[35] In bee society, Doyle saw critical distinctions between individual and community, ruler and ruled, order and disorder. As such, might the bees be intended as a metaphor for the possibilities for both "unbounded productivity" and stability in the context of Union?

In contrast, the Irish horse or pig could signify neither productivity nor stability, as they were adjuncts to entrenched and debased modes in traditional Irish agriculture and popular culture. Bees appeared to have the ability to maintain social and political order, to keep their heads down and respect without questioning the existence of authority. The bees could thus exemplify the possibilities of a quiet and calm, yet productive and rational, Unionist state and the kind of "supra-national" attachment to the United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Ireland) apparently much missing in the country as a whole. Clearly, in their exemplification of a kind of universal humanity, Doyle's bees embodied everything the seemingly backward Irish smallholder was not: if "men" are supposed to possess reason and be directed by the moral guidance of religion, then the majority of the poor in Ireland are, it would seem, insufficiently human, if not in fact inhuman.[36]

The project to eliminate all vestiges of inhumanity is to the fore in Hamilton Drummond's *Humanity to Animals: The Christian's Duty: A Discourse* of 1830

35. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (1966; London: Weideneld and Nicolson, 1989), 207.

36. Doyle also comments on how the sound of the bees reverberates with the "loudness of their humanity" (*HSFI* 101).

and in his later *The Rights of Animals and Man's Obligation to Treat them with Humanity* (1838). By the time Drummond wrote these tracts, Martin's Act to Prevent the Cruelty and Improper Treatment of Cattle Bill had been passed into law in 1822 and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals established in London since 1824. [37] But Drummond, a veteran of the republican culture of the 1790s, claimed that society still remained insufficiently humanized and would remain so until "rights" were extended to animals. Writing just one year after Catholic Emancipation, Drummond's animal rights discourse reflects the particular context of the immediate post-Emancipation moment:

> There are many men of true benevolence and humanity to their fellowmen who yet seem unconscious that these virtues should be extended to the animal creation. Their compassionate feelings, which are sensibly touched by a tale of human woe, are never excited for the sufferings and labours of animals whose strength is wasted and life sacrificed in the service of man.[38]

Animal welfare provided a common ground for those from diverse religious backgrounds, because animal welfare was in part a secularizing discourse, despite the religious claims frequently attached to it.[39] Regardless of the theological differences between the Unitarian Drummond (still partly rooted in the republican moment of the 1790s) and the evangelical Otway (arguably a product of the polemical failures of that decade), they nonetheless share a particular project. Indeed, they also share that project with the more avowedly practical and rural-focused Leadbeater and Doyle. For many of these writers, animal welfare provided a means to eradicate disturbing levels of oppression in Ireland. In ways, animal welfare allowed these writers to state in stark terms the oppressiveness of post-Union life while also allowing them to avoid the full rhetorical and political implications of confronting such oppression. With Drummond and Otway, writing soon after the passing of Catholic Emancipation, all the political excesses of previous decades can be subsumed by the milder kindness of an ever-reforming and ever-secularizing post-Emancipation world.

In *The Intellectuality of Domestic Animals*, Otway—taking his cue from Drummond—claims that "intellectuality in animals is a kind of animalistic reason"' and that what he describes as animal intellectuality is "akin to reason." It was necessary for humans to be kind to animals as these creatures possess "in-

37. The Dublin Zoological Society was also established in 1830 and has been understood by Juliana Adelman as typifying the particular context of the immediate aftermath of the passing into law of Catholic Emancipation.

38. William Hamilton Drummond, *Humanity to Animals, The Christian's Duty, A Discourse* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1830), 2

39. The secularism of animal welfare in the English context is also noted by Thomas in *Man and the Natural World*, 180.

dividual capability, beyond that of mere instinct" (*IDA* 6). In Otway's account—writing as he is after many decades of animal welfare campaigns—animals have become so thoroughly humanized that cruelty should be impossible:

> what I want is, to excite in my hearers a greater attention to, and therefore a greater respect for, the animals that are domesticated around them. . . . I am quite sure that it will induce us more and more to use our influence in future to protect them from abuse; and that as it is very true that the master's eye makes the beast fat, so also the master and mistress's respect will make the beast happy. (*IDA* 25)

A harmonious co-existence between human and beast in an environment of mutual understanding is presented as a solution to a presumed post-lapsarian beastliness and decadence. But Otway suggests it might also be understood as a model for religious and class cooperation in Ireland where distinctions between Catholic and Protestant, landlord and tenant—or landlord's agent and tenant—were akin to those between animal and human:

> Surely, I who have seen bull-baiting and cock-fighting, and many other cruel and ferocious games discountenanced, and in a great measure disused, may anticipate a brighter day, when education, based upon the religion of our merciful Redeemer, will teach us to use and not abuse, when true knowledge may teach us to treat kindly, considerately, inferior animals . . . that happy millennial period will come when the inferior animals may stand in the same relation to man as they did to Adam before the fall, when the Sovereign of heaven pronounced *all* to be very good; and the figurative language of the prophet be almost realised, when he foretold that the most ferocious animals would be so tame and domesticated, that 'a little child shall lead them'; and 'they shall not hurt nor destroy any more in my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.' (*IDA* 44–45)

The achievement of that kind of earthly paradise required the domestication of animals, the need to assimilate entirely the Otherness of the animal. A corollary is that perhaps the backward Catholic population—as well as the lower classes generally—could be similarly, if ironically, rehabilitated by means of a secularizing discourse of animal welfare. Once such difference—as manifest in the ferociousness of some animals, their abusers, and indeed in the very existence of figurative language—be fully surmounted, a kind of prelapsarian utopia would once again be possible. This would put an end to any Romantic or mediated condition, as pertains in Ireland's animalistic, Catholic state, prior to the cultural demystification of domestication and secularism. It would even appear that for Otway, as for other religious writers in this period, religion itself would function better in a more rational social order.

Biblical discourse and analogies may indeed be integral to Otway's writings

on animals (as they are to most writers on this topic), but animal welfare in part depended upon a demystified state of being.[40] Animal welfare—as articulated by Leadbeater, Doyle, Drummond, and Otway, for example—contributed to the attainment of such demystification and to the ever-modernizing nineteenth century itself by being practical, materialist, and commonsensical. It pursued these rational ends while for the most part retaining powerful connections to a strongly Christian tradition, though a specifically non-Catholic one. Irrespective of religious and political differences, reformers in Ireland agreed that the de-animalizing of the post-Union Irish poor, as well as the animals in their care, would be necessary to create a modern, practical culture that could effectively displace an overly politicized society.

In their vision, that older society—loud, political, communal, and sociable—was to give way to a quiet, private, and individualist order that would be reinforced by distinctions of class and gender. In part, this would be achieved by means of the segregation and kind treatment of animals. A calmer society was eventually achieved, though not by the means envisaged within animal welfare discourse; it was instead attained by means of the Famine of 1845 to 1852. Indeed, the irony of post-Union animal welfare discourse is that it called for an Ireland in which animals, and the culture they represented metonymically, had effectively disappeared. The animal welfare writings of the immediate post-Union years curiously anticipate the disastrous emptying out of rural Ireland that was to occur in the 1840s and early 1850s.

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40. On the relationship between secularism and animal welfare discourse, see Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*.