

Bloomsday and Arthur's Day – Secular Sacraments as Symbolic and Cultural Capital

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Select a clean, dry branded glass. Grab hold of the glass firmly, put your finger on the harp. Take it at 45 degree angle, grab hold of the tap, and in a nice smooth flow allow the beer to go into the glass. As the liquid goes into the glass, you hear that fantastic hiss. Straighten up the glass bring it up to the top of the harp and in a nice slow smooth stop bring the glass down and allow it to settle. Here's where you get that fantastic cascade and surge with the nitrogen bubbles, lying dormant in the beer now come out of the solution and they try to form a wonderful creamy head. This gives us this wonderful look and we can top up later on and create a dome across the top. Then, once settled, you take the glass back, hold it nice and straight, push the tap away from you and allow the beer to flow in nice and slowly and take the creamy head, proud at the rim, perfect in every way. (<http://www.guinness.com/en-ie/thebeer-draught.html>)

These are the words of one of Guinness Brewery's master brewers, Fergal Murray, as he explains on the Guinness website how to pour the 'perfect pint', and it is a set of instructions which forms Part 1 of what is termed 'The Guinness Experience'. The video explains what is termed the 'double pour', where some three-quarters of the stout is poured first, and it is let 'settle', which means the 'foaming nitrogen moves from created from the "initiation" and "surging" of bubbles of nitrogen and carbon dioxide gas as the beer is poured'. The video goes on to explain that it is the 'nitrogen that causes the tight white creamy head' (<http://www.guinness.com/en-ie/faqs.html>). There is a ritualistic and almost sacramental aspect to these instructions, with set directions, fixed rituals and actions which will ensure the correct transformation from brown surging liquid to the famous black and white drink that is

known throughout the world. One could almost view it as a form of secular transubstantiation, as there is a clearly-defined change from the frothing swirling motion of the liquid, the Brownian motion caused by the rising of the nitrogen bubbles hitting of particles in the liquid, to the gradual, but almost inevitable, calm and stasis of the final stage of the pint, with a clean line dividing the black body from the creamy head. The time taken for this process is called, 'Guinness Time', and this has been measured at 119.5 seconds (http://www.guinness-storehouse.com/en/pdfs/factsheets/factsheet_pdf_11.pdf).

Sacraments are a significant way in religion to connect the immanent with the transcendent – they are a way of infusing holiness into the material (Fastiggi 2010, p.31). What is being set out here are the correct conditions for the sacramental transformation to take place, what one might call 'the liturgical conditions, namely, the set of prescriptions which govern the form of the public manifestation of authority, like ceremonial etiquette, the code of gestures and officially prescribed rites' (Bourdieu 1991, p.113). So putting the finger on the harp is sacramental in that it makes no difference to the material process of pouring but it makes a significant difference to the symbolic apart of the process. It differentiates Guinness from other beers, in a manner that is paralleled by the Guinness Cloud advertisement, which sees the cloud as different from other clouds because it is 'made of more'. At the end of this advertisement, at which point the miraculous cloud seems to have agency and direction, by moving around the cityscape, and miraculously quenching a fire, it then morphs into a pint of Guinness (<http://themill.com/work/guinness/cloud.aspx>).

Guinness has long been associated with Ireland and with Irishness. The harp icon on the Guinness glass is taken from the harp as a significant index and symbol of Irishness, and so there is an iconic parallel between product and nation from the outset. When American presidents arrive in Ireland, drinking a pint of Guinness is the iconic photograph that is flashed all over the world. Guinness has often been seen as a synecdoche of Irishness, and the

connection between this drink and Ireland is one that has seldom been called into question. In this essay, the modalities of that connection will be unpacked and explored, as there are a lot of ideological connections at work here, connections which are often oblique and occluded. The product, a globally manufactured, mass-consumption drink, has been marketed and fashioned to be a signifier of Irishness. This has been achieved through a very careful semiotic construction of the product in all of its modalities, from production, to preparation to consumption, to cultural status. This chapter will explore the construction of this sense of Guinness as a commodity fetish, through the use of advertising imagery associated with the sacred, through the association of the product with messianic time and through the attempt to make the production and consumption of the product into a secular sacrament, with its own feast day: Arthur's Day. It will also examine the overtly religious and sacramental associations that have been created around the advertising, manufacture and consumption of this product, a process of sacramentalisation which culminates in Guinness having its own secular Feast Day. Generally feast days are a way of integrating sacred time with secular tie. So the March 17th is another day on the secular calendar, but it is also especially marked as a celebration of the patron saint of Ireland, Saint Patrick; the same is true of February 1st, which in Ireland is known as Saint Bridget's Day, and one thinks of Christmas day and Easter Sunday in the Christian religions, as well as significant religious days and months, such as Ramadan, in other religions. In an Irish context there are two other 'feast' Days which attempt to offer the same holiness or transcendence for their commodities as these do and they are Bloomsday, June 16th, and Arthur's Day, September 27th. The reason for this has been summed up by Frank McCourt who makes the telling point that Bloomsday, and its rituals, demonstrates that '*Ulysses* is more than a book. It's an event' (McCourt 2004, p.xiii), and Bloomsday ratifies this status as being something more than a book; as we will see, Arthur's

Day has a parallel function with respect to Guinness, by suggesting that it is more than just a drink.

The notion of having a Guinness feast day, or Arthur's Day, is an example of sacramental time being interfused into secular time, and this is an ongoing trope in the narrative of Guinness. This is foregrounded by the clock advertisement, set in Český Krumlov, in the Czech Republic in 1890, features a clock which changes time, and which refuses to be bound by time; it intervenes in secular, ordinary time in a manner similar to that of Arthur's Day. This idea segues with Walter Benjamin's idea of messianic time, a conception of the present as the 'time of the now', which is shot through with chips of messianic time (Benjamin 1968, p.263). For Benjamin, whenever the present is separated from 'the continuous flow of events and objects through time, there occurs the messianic arrest in which history is brought to a standstill' (Ferris 2008, p.132); it is a moment in time wherein we can reflect on time, and the Guinness clock enacts this slowing down of diurnal process so that the essentials can be grasped all the more fully. Accordingly, messianic time establishes 'a concept of the present as the now-time in which splinters of messianic time are interspersed' (Jennings 1997-2003, p.397), and of course there is a religious context to the term, given the use of the signifier 'messianic'. Both Bloomsday and Arthur's Day access this notion of messianic time, by pausing normal time in order to achieve an altered perception.

The first Bloomsday took place in 1954, on the 50th anniversary of the events in the novel, when John Ryan and Brian O'Nolan (Flann O'Brien) organised what was to be a daylong pilgrimage along the *Ulysses* route. They were joined by Patrick Kavanagh, Anthony Cronin and A. J. Leventhal, Registrar at Trinity College. This day is now celebrated worldwide and has its own sacramental rites, practices and aura attached to it, as different parts of the novel are read, acted and different food and drink from the novel is served and consumed, including, of course, plentiful supplies of Guinness. Guinness, as a product, is

mentioned ten times in *Ulysses* as well as the two brothers of the Guinness family who became peers: Arthur Guinness, 1st Baron Ardilaun, is mentioned three times, including one where his name is used as a substitute for a pint of Guinness: 'Two Ardilauns' (Joyce 1989, p.319), while Edward Cecil Guinness, 1st Earl of Iveagh, is also mentioned three times. There are a number of paronomasic references to them, such as 'peer from barrel' (Joyce 1989, p.394), which refers to how Lords Iveagh and Ardilaun have parlayed barrels of Guinness into peerages (Gifford & Seidman 1988, p.517), as well as this quite lyrical passage on the making and brewing of Guinness:

Terence O'Ryan heard him and straightway brought him a crystal cup full of the foamy ebon ale which the noble twin brothers Bungiveagh and Bungardilaun brew ever in their divine alevats, cunning as the sons of deathless Leda. For they garner the succulent berries of the hop and mass and sift and bruise and brew them and they mix therewith sour juices and bring the must to the sacred fire and cease not night or day from their toil, those cunning brothers, lords of the vat. (Joyce 1989, p.224)

So there is a sense of Guinness as a signifier of Irishness already running through *Ulysses*, and it begs the question if Bloomsday is the precursor of Arthur's Day – the interesting chiasmus of one day using the forename and the other using the second name of the person in question further connects the two days. And like Guinness, *Ulysses* and Bloomsday have become global experiences, having been established in America by 'very American James Joyce Foundation' in '1967' (Derrida & Attridge 1992, p.184). Jean Michel Rabaté asks why it is that it can be 'easier to recreate the atmosphere of Joyce's Dublin in places such as Zurich, Paris, Philadelphia?' He goes on to say that it cannot just be that there are 'more James Joyce pubs in these cities than in Dublin or that the Bloomsday celebrations have turned into mass-produced tourist attractions' (Rabaté 2001, p.153).

The answer of course is that Bloomsday is very much an international experience, and the book has acquired a significant amount of cultural and symbolic capital around the world.

In his use of the term 'capital', Bourdieu is drawing attention to the fact that capital, of any kind, is to some degree dependent 'upon social recognition', and thus it 'confers both spending power and status' (Grenfell 2008, p.88). For Bourdieu, cultural capital referred to a 'form of value associated with culturally authorised tastes, consumption patterns, attributes, skills and awards' (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher 2002, p.x). It covers a wide range of resources, such as 'verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, scientific knowledge, and educational credentials' (Swartz 1997, p.41). Symbolic capital is 'any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value' (Bourdieu 1984, p.47). It is a form of 'denied capital' as it is a form of power that is not perceived as power but as legitimate demands for recognition' (Swartz 1997, p.43). It is important to note that these categories are neither fixed nor constant, as the symbolic capital of an individual is 'not only open to transformation, but is continuously fluctuating in response to changing field position and changing field structures' (Grenfell 2008, p.132). A good summary of the relationship, and difference, between capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital has been set out as follows:

Economic capital, say one hundred dollars, can be exchanged for a night at an expensive hotel. Cultural capital, such as a university degree, can be exchanged for a desired job. And if you have symbolic capital as an expert on Bourdieu, you may be able to cash in on this by agreeing to help your fellow students with an essay using his ideas only if they grant you certain favours in return. (Webb et al. 2002, p.110)

Both of these function by what Bourdieu terms 'the club effect', a sense of shared interests and tastes among a group of people 'which are different from the vast majority and have in common the fact that they are not common, that is, the fact that they exclude everyone who does not present all the desired attributes (Bourdieu & Accardo 1999, p.129).

The aesthetic is clearly one index of such a club effect, and the symbolic and cultural capital associated with *Ulysses* has been reified in global celebrations of the day on which the events of the novel are set. An example of Rabaté's point about the global nature of Bloomsday can be seen in a recent New York Bloomsday where Le Chantilly restaurant 'served kidneys and other inner organs of beasts and fowl' while actors associated with the Daedalus Theatre Company read from the book or played different characters. In addition, 'singers and musicians entertained the restaurant's patrons with songs that were featured in *Ulysses*'. The proceedings were opened by 'the General Consul of Ireland', while in another part of New York, Symphony Space staged its annual reading of portions of *Ulysses*, a twelve-hour event which was also broadcast on radio (McKenna 2002, p.12). And of course pints of Guinness were drunk, symbolising the significance of pubs in *Ulysses*. As the narrator Bloom puts it: a 'good puzzle would be cross Dublin without passing a pub' (Joyce 1989, p.43), and indeed, there are quite a large numbers of pubs mentioned in *Ulysses*: O'Loughlin's of Blackpitts; Conway's; Davy Byrne's; The Arch; Meagher's; The Oval; J. and T. Davy's; The Empire; Barney Kiernan's; The Ormond; Larry O'Rourke's; The Dublin Bar; Cassidy's; Andrew's; Brian Boroimhe House; Mooney's; The Scotch House; Bolton's Westmoreland House; Doran's; Daniel Bergin's; Delahunt's; Crimmins'; James and Charles Kennedy's; The Bodega; Kavanagh's; Tunney's; Mooney's *en ville*; Mooney's *sur mer*; Acky Nagle's; Jacob Halliday's; Slattery's; Donohoe's; Cormack's Corner; Mullett's; The Signal House; William Gilbey's; Findlater's; The Horse & Tram; The Three Jolly Topers; The Bleeding Horse; Rowe's; Manning's; The Empire; The Burton Hotel; John Long's; Keogh's; Slattery's; Donohoe's; Burke's; The Moira; Larchet's and The Old Ireland Tavern.

I would suggest that this litany of public houses is no accident as the Irish pub, and its main commodity, Guinness, has long had cultural and symbolic capital associated with it. Indeed, in *Ulysses*, barmen are called curates: 'coming up redheaded curates from the county

Leitrim, rinsing empties' (Joyce 1989, p.43), creating an association with the priesthood and the power to change the immanent bread and wine into the transcendent body and blood of Christ. This sense of an aura (a term to which we will return) about Guinness is one which was clear in the sacramental opening quotation from the Guinness website, where the action of pouring the Guinness is very like that of a curate, obeying and enacting prescribed and unchanging ritual in the sacrament of the mass. This parallel is strengthened in the sacramental opening of *Ulysses* itself: 'For this, O dearly beloved, is the genuine Christine: body and soul and blood and ouns. Slow music, please' (Joyce 1989, p.3). This idea of the priest as a transformer of commodities is an ongoing trope in Joyce, with the famous lines from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* telling of Stephen's wish to become 'a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life' (Joyce 1993, pp.248-249). The symbolic capital associated with religion permeates *Ulysses*, and a parallel symbolic and cultural capital has long been associated with Guinness. As well as the sacramental double-pour, advertising has long associated Guinness with values that transcend its mere alcoholic material content.

Catherine Belsey remembers as a young girl, that stout was held 'to be full of nutritional value, and was often treated as a health drink, especially by middle-aged women', but in her *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*, she goes on to ponder whether this was 'the whole story', as she remembers the Guinness posters which showed:

comic cartoon animals in bright colours. Weren't these visual signifiers associating the drink with pleasure, laughter, the exchange of jokes? Weren't the adverts indicating that enjoying yourself was 'good for you', taking you out of yourself, as we might once have said? And was it the sociability of the pub, or the alcohol, that would make you see the world in the bright primary colours of the posters themselves? Either way, the claim of the images, or the words and the images taken together, was that Guinness was 'good for' your world picture, brightening the way things looked. (Belsey 2002, p.22)

Belsey here is gesturing towards the cultural and symbolic capital that has long been associated with Guinness, and the sacramental ritualistic aspect is not confined to the pouring of the pint. The second part of the Guinness experience is related to how the product should be consumed: 'The Savour'. Once again, it is the master brewer Fergal Murray who is explaining the ritual:

First of all you never look down at a pint of Guinness, you always look to the horizon, bring that elbow up bring the glass to your lips and not you to the glass, and then break the seal as I call it, get that cream on your lips. Allow enough liquid to flow under the head to energise those taste buds, get the sweetness of the malt to the front of the tongue, the roastiness to the side and then the bitterness at the back of the throat. Get that ... savour that Guinness ... unbelievable. Hold on [*while he takes another drink*] Enjoy!! (<http://www.guinness.com/en-ie/thebeer-draught.html>)

So not only is there a ritualised way to pour the Guinness; there is also a ritualised and almost sacramental way to drink it. The holding up of the glass parallels the raising of the host at the consecration of the Roman Catholic mass, and the parody of this at the start of *Ulysses*: 'He held the bowl aloft and intoned: INTROIBO AD ALTARE DEI [*capitals original*] (Joyce 1989, p.3). This is more than just consumption – this is consumption as part of that 'club effect' of which Bourdieu spoke, where knowledge of the ritual and awareness of the processes grants cultural and symbolic capital to the act of consumption. This is because 'the realm of sacred semblances and their ascribed meanings' which still maintain 'a (veiled) hold over our cultural representations' (Dickinson 2011, p.134) has been channelled by Guinness in order to add symbolic and cultural capital to their product, hence the idea of breaking the seal, an act which has strong religious overtones.

This may seem a large claim to make for what is, after all, a brand of beer, but a brief discussion of how cultural codes develop and change will provide the theoretical framework for an exploration of Guinness as a sacramental product, which attempts to fetishize itself as a

commodity which has transcendental and quasi-religious powers in a manner similar to aspects of religion. As Karl Marx has written 'the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own' (Marx 1990, p.165), and it will become clear that Guinness, as a product, attempts to locate itself as just such an autonomous figure with life of its own. For Marx, the commodity fetish worked as a form of quasi-religious experience. In the famous table example from the first volume of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, he makes this point trenchantly:

The form of wood, for instance, is altered if a table is made out of it. Nevertheless the table continues to be wood, an ordinary, sensuous thing, but as soon as it emerges as a commodity, it changes into a thing which transcends sensuousness. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will. (Marx 1990, pp.163-164)

The points for Marx is that the use value of the table, a four-legged raised platform at which people can sit, work and eat, has been surpassed by what he calls its exchange value. A table is not just a table, it can become a classic piece of furniture, it can become an antique, it can be exchanged for far more money than it took to purchase and manufacture because it has now attained some extra form of value.

Giorgio Agamben has made the point that Marx was in London during the first Universal Exhibition in 1851, and here he would have seen how various commodities of the Industrial Revolution were set out in Joseph Paxton's all-glass Crystal palace, a structure which was meant to add an aura to the commodities displayed therein:

In the galleries and the pavilions of its mystical Crystal Palace, in which from the outset a place was also reserved for works of art, the commodity is displayed to be enjoyed only through the glance at the *enchanted scene*. Thus at the Universal Exposition was celebrated, for the first time, the mystery that has now become familiar

to anyone who has entered a supermarket or been exposed to the manipulation of an advertisement: the epiphany of the unattainable. (Agamben 1993, p.38)

In capitalist culture, there needs to be more than just a value placed on the material and labour of any commodity, as otherwise the levels of profit will not be huge. Companies like Apple are classic examples of this. Apple not only met a market-demand with their iPad; they actually created the demand by making a beautiful, sleek product and then suggesting ways in which people could use it. So people bought the iPad, not to meet a challenge, solve a problem or complete a task more efficiently. They bought it because they wanted to buy this sleek and desirable object: 'the transfiguration of the commodity into *enchanted object* is the sign that the exchange value is already beginning to eclipse the use-value of the commodity' (Agamben 1993, p.38). When it was first produced, the use-value of the iPad was non-existent: it was its exchange value that caused people to pay a large amount of money for its purchase. What was being sold was not a cutting edge technological problem-solver, but a lifestyle accessory. There is an aura (and this term is being used in a very specific context, as will become clear later in the chapter) to owning an iPad, and this same aura is at the core of the narrative of Guinness that has created an exchange value that is now world-wide. As we will see, the same process of exchange value outstripping use value is to be found in the marketing of Guinness: 'under the influence of Guinness, the sign of postmodern Dublin, we experienced the dissolution of the bonds of modernity' (Slattery 2003, p.150).

Guinness was founded in 1759, and the stout was initially a local beer, due to distribution problems. Now the company is owned by Diageo and is a world brand with a huge distribution network. Guinness is a popular Irish dry stout that originated in the brewery of Arthur Guinness (1725–1803) at St. James's Gate, Dublin. Guinness is one of the most successful beer brands worldwide. It is brewed in almost 60 countries and is available in over 100. 850 million litres (1.5 billion imperial or 1.8 billion US pints) are sold annually

(<http://www.guinness.com/en-ie/thebeer-draught.html>). Diageo is a multinational corporation which manufactures its products at industrial scale, and Guinness, by any definition, is a mass-produced product wherein the full benefits of mechanization, globalization and digitization and are used in order to minimize costs and maximize profit. In short, the production is well-attuned to mass-market consumer capitalism, as it is a leisure product whose use value is enjoyment and intoxication. In summary, Guinness, as alcohol, is a legal drug which is sold for the purpose of intoxication, be that to a mild or dangerous degree, and as an intoxicant, its use is governed by laws which restrict its intake on the grounds of age and also on the grounds of set times when it can be sold and consumed in public. However, this is not the way in which the product strives to be seen in the marketplace. Rather than being marketed as an intoxicant, it is instead marketed as an object of desire.

Of course to sell it as an intoxicant would be to define it in terms of its use-value and, as Marx has noted, this would seem to be a better option, and certainly one which he favoured. However, there is a large body of research which would argue that use-value and exchange value have long been inextricably connected. Objects *qua* their material construction, have long been connected with different values. The anthropologist Marcel Mauss has discovered that complicated rituals and procedures around the giving and receiving of objects have been observed in archaic societies. He has spoken of the 'potlatch', a gathering where issues of hierarchy and position were settled through a complex form of prestation, or reciprocal and expected gift-giving and receipt. At potlatch gatherings, a family or hereditary leader hosts guests in their family's house and holds a feast for their guests. The main purpose of the potlatch is the redistribution and reciprocity of wealth. The potlatch also provided an opportunity for families to mark life occasions formally. Births, deaths, adoptions, weddings, and other major events were and are formally witnessed, so it is very much a social occasion or indeed a sacramental one, to use more Western terminology. Just

as in Victorian fiction, three 'sacramental' moments were drawn on to bring down the curtain: birth, marriage and death (Sutherland 2011, p.70). Moreover, two elements of the potlatch have in fact been attested to: 'the honour, prestige or *mana* which wealth confers; and the absolute obligation to make return gifts under the penalty of losing the *mana*, authority and wealth' (Mauss 1996, p.6). In these social and sacramental rituals which marked the significant milestones of life – birth, death, marriage, coming to adulthood and special feasts at harvest and at various solstices, objects given as gifts had additional qualities to those of their material construction – they had exchange value which was partially created by the context of the potlatch. The material worth of the commodity was of less value than its place as a carrier of *mana*, which refers to 'the magical power of the person', and also their honour and 'one of the best translations of the word is "authority" or "wealth"' (Mauss 1996, p.36). In a ritualistic potlatch, *mana* is associated with objects as they become gifts, and in a similar manner, the ritual of pouring the Guinness attempts to add this sense of authority to the drink as a commodity for consumption. Rather than just drinking it from the can or bottle, as is the case with most other beers, Guinness needs to be carefully treated in order to preserve its *mana*, its aura of individuality.

Before ever a drop of Guinness touches the lips of the consumer, the ritualistic pouring and the need to wait for the drink to settle, during the 119.5 seconds of 'Guinness Time', the commodity has already been made magical or special through the chip of messianic time that is created by this process. In this manner, it is similar to how, in the Exhibition in Paris in 1889, the Eifel Tower 'by offering a reference point visible every-where', transformed the whole city into a 'commodity that could be consumed at a single glance' (Agamben 1993, p.40). Here Agamben has a clearer view of the duality of the commodity than Marx; Marx felt that use-value was the most significant aspect of a commodity and that exchange value was somehow a deviant quality, which allowed for the abuse of the labourer. While many

would agree that capitalism does abuse labour, and that it is inherently unjust as a socio-economic system - one only has to cite the socialisation of private debt in the Irish banking and financial crisis to prove this. Nevertheless, he displays a flawed misunderstanding of the semiotic value of a commodity in his analysis. As Agamben notes, while Marx alluded to the 'fetishistic character', the 'metaphysical subtleties' and 'theological witticisms, of the commodity (Agamben 1993, p.42), he seemed to be suggesting that this came after the idea of use value (just as his own critique came 12 years after his initial one), but this belatedness is more to be found in Marx than in the semiotics of the commodity. I would argue that from the beginning of time, going back to the archaic societies of Mauss, that metaphysical or magical qualities were an important factor in the creation of any commodity.

Derrida has made the telling point that the two are in fact conjoined; he speaks of the place where 'the values of value (between use-value and exchange-value), secret, mystique, enigma, fetish, and the ideological form a chain in Marx's text', and he goes on to analyse 'the spectral movement of this chain' (Derrida 1994, p.148). He sees use-value and exchange value are not clearly separated but 'haunted', by culture and by each other. Derrida takes this as a classic example, which has very general application, and reasserts his plea for 'hauntology' rather than the usually carefully separated and compartmentalised ontology. Exchange value haunts use-value, for example, by expressing repetition, exchange ability, and the loss of singularity (Derrida 1994, p.161). Use-value haunts exchange value, because exchange is only possible if the commodity might be useful for others. In this sense, use value and exchange value are temporally connected: we buy a product to fill a future need – so, if I purchase a pint of Guinness, it is with a view to drinking it afterwards. We purchase products in terms of satisfying a future desire, a desire, Derrida suggests, that is predicated on a better, more sated, version of ourselves in the future. Of course it is also due to a desire to be part of a club effect, to display my cultural capital and my symbolic capital. So I am not just

drinking a liquid that is poured out in 3 seconds and plonked on the bar counter; instead, I am participating in a ritual with its own special glass, its own special double pour, its own special necessary time, Guinness Time, which is needed for it to assume its proper appearance. I am becoming part of a special group, I am demonstrating cultural and symbolic capital, as well as discernment, by choosing this product. It is less about consumption per se, and more about symbolic consumption, as I am communing with the aura of Guinness as a commodity.

The term 'aura' was first used in this sense by Walter Benjamin, when he spoke of how a religious or magical context is often what gives the work of art its aura, and by this he means that 'the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual-first the magical, then the religious kind', and he goes on to add that the 'existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function' (Benjamin 1968, pp.223-224). Benjamin has spoken at length of how mechanised reproductive techniques have meant that this aura is gradually lost, but Giorgio Agamben has made the interesting observation that this aura does not just apply to works of art but to any commodity once, the criterion of use value has been satisfied. This means that the distinction, the borderline 'that artists from the Renaissance forward had indefatigably worked to establish, by basing the supremacy of artistic creation on the "making" of the artisan and the labourer became extremely tenuous' (Agamben 1993, p.42). Agamben noted that the decay of the traditional idea of the aura in the work of art just meant the 'reconstitution of a new "aura" through which the object . . . became charged with a new value, perfectly analogous to the exchange value, whose object is doubled by the commodity' (Agamben 1993, p.44). The Guinness website aims to develop this aura in terms of the product, and Arthur's Day is a reification of this aura in just the same way as Bloomsday is a reification of the Joycean aura of *Ulysses*.

In other words, once we decide that we need a table, then aesthetic and exchange-value considerations come into play. Thus once I have gone into a pub, and decided that I

want a pint of alcohol, issues of symbolic value and the aura will help to determine my choice. If I wish to be part of the aura of Guinness, if I wish to be part of the sacramental rite of pouring and drinking, then Guinness will be my choice. The whole purpose of the website 'Guinness Experience' is to foreground this symbolic capital attached to the consumption of Guinness. The brewer and the website invariably use the singular number to refer to Guinness – it is always a single pint, a perfect pint, with little to suggest the mass-market, high-volume nature of the product. Indeed, such is the ritual and sacramentality of the pouring and the drinking experience that it would seem more like an artisanal, craft beer, brewed in a micro-brewery, rather than one of the most recognisable brand names in the world.

The sacramental nature of the Guinness experience stresses the aesthetic and the beautiful, with the classic contrast of action and stasis, as the settling process gives way to the clear black and cream solid structure of the pint, a pint which is poured into a 'branded glass', with the finger on the harp icon. The stress on the minute physical actions, and the very precise directions (the first pour brings the liquid up to the harp icon), is part of the sacramental trope of the product, as 'only the physical or material can function sacramentally, and so in the case of the incarnation it must be Christ's 'flesh' that accomplishes such mediation, pointing to the divinity that lies behind the fleshly appearance' (Brown 2008, p.52). This focus on the intricate levels of the material in order to suggest an attendant transcendence is clear in the following quote from the Website:

Swirling clouds tumble as the storm begins to calm. Settle. Breathe in the moment, then break through the smooth, light head to the bittersweet reward. Unmistakeably GUINNESS, from the first velvet sip to the last, lingering drop. And every deep-dark satisfying mouthful in between. Pure beauty. Pure GUINNESS.
(<http://www.guinness.com/en-ie/thebeer-draught.html>)

The reification of this aesthetic process is in Arthur's day, a global celebration of Guinness as a commodity replete with cultural and symbolic capital. By taking a drink and turning it into

a day of celebration, which is almost deliberately not connected with the consumption of the product is a further example of the symbolic and cultural capital that is associated with Guinness. Just as religious events have a feast day, so too does Guinness, and it is interesting that the product name is not foregrounded in the feast day. The day comprises a series of musical events and a general celebration of Guinness. It was first organised in 2009 to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Guinness brewing company, and the events were set in Dublin, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos, New York and Yaoundé. A number of groups participate, and there are surprise gigs organised where some headline artists appear at local clubs and pubs. Guinness drinkers are expected to raise a glass to the memory of Arthur Guinness at 17:59 (5:59 pm), a reference to 1759, the year the Guinness Brewery was established, and once again, the idea of a different type of time is stressed, with the date being transposed onto the time, another way of mimicking how sacral time is morphed onto diurnal time in religious feast days. In the advertisement for the 2012 day, 'Painting the town black', the product scarcely features, as the whole add involves people painting themselves and various items of clothing as well as walls and houses black, in order to replicate the colour of Guinness.

It is another example of the symbolic nature of the consumption – people are being urged, not just to consume Guinness, but in this case, to actually 'be' Guinness, or at least to assume the colour of Guinness. An added factor is the Arthur Guinness Fund, which lends a philanthropic dimension to the day, and some €7 million has been raised to help 'social entrepreneurs deliver measurable, transformational change to communities in Ireland and worldwide' (<http://www.guinness.com/en-ie/arthursgiving/AGF.html>). What is most interesting about this fund is that it strengthens the associations between Guinness and the sacramental aspects of religion. Like so many sacramental and religious institutions, which offer help to the other, so Guinness, through this fund, does the same thing, and in so doing, it transforms itself once again from a commodity to a source of cultural, symbolic and now social capital,

as it brings help to communities in need. Through Arthur's Day, and symbolised by the Cloud and the Clock, Guinness sets out a narrative that sets it out as a secular sacrament and a chip of messianic time. The connection between Guinness and notions of messianic time is one which has been fostered by the company, and Arthur's Day, like Bloomsday, makes the point that, just as 'Ulysses is more than a book. It's an event' (McCourt 2004, p.xiii), so too Guinness is more than a drink – it is made of more.

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