

## THE TREASURE-HOUSE OF LANGUAGE: MANAGING SYMBOLIC ECONOMIES IN JOYCE'S *PORTRAIT*

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"The regulation of the purse is, in its essence, regulation of the imagination and the heart."<sup>1</sup>

James Joyce eventually evolved a complicated, even paradoxical attitude towards money: he alternately played the roles of miser and spendthrift, and synthesized the two impulses in *Ulysses*, which betrays in its structure and characters both his extravagance and his obsession with control. As a youth, however, Joyce attempted to defy bourgeois conventions by living on loans (which he often disdained to repay), by spending the meager sums he did earn, and generally by acting as though money were a tainted symbol of the "nightmare" of history.<sup>2</sup> Stephen Dedalus embodies many of the young Joyce's economic habits and philosophies. Like his creator, Dedalus attempts to manage the financial and linguistic economies in which he finds himself implicated. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Stephen seeks to discover not only his vocation as an artist, but also the value of words themselves. He passes through a series of stages, which I shall describe as stewardships, in the houses of various Authorities: his father, God and the Church, and language itself. The final stewardship, he believes, endows him with the authority to speak the voice of his community, or what he calls his "race." In other words, Stephen progresses toward possession—of himself, of his destiny, and of his language.

By the end of *Portrait* he indeed appears to have taken possession of what an earlier version of Stephen calls his "spiritual assets": his linguistic and artistic patrimony.<sup>3</sup> As *Ulysses* opens, however, he is again dispossessed, and must discover those assets all over again, albeit by a different route. In *Ulysses* the dissipated Dedalus enacts the profligate side of his author; Stephen's artistic and economic failure can be remedied only through encounters with his oppressors (which would include himself), and finally through his meeting

with Leopold and (vicariously) Molly Bloom. I want to argue, then, that *Portrait* not only exposes the sources of Joyce's and Stephen's economic habits; it also lays the theoretical cornerstones for the economic tropes and philosophies upon which *Ulysses* so fascinatingly builds. At the same time the earlier novel reveals the differences between Joyce and Stephen: while Stephen remains bound to inadequate notions of the linguistic economy and his role in managing it, Joyce's portrayal of Stephen's struggle proves that he has surpassed his character as both artist and economist.<sup>4</sup>

*Portrait* is largely a novel about language, and Stephen's world is primarily a verbal or semiotic one. Although he is aware of his social surroundings, they are muted and filtered through his emphatically self-absorbed consciousness. In this sense, unlike the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*, *Portrait* is not a realist fiction in the way that, say, *The Mill on the Floss* is realistic. Joyce's novel excises connective—and virtually arrests—plot movement, which is replaced by epiphanic, almost static vignettes.<sup>5</sup> In fact, *Portrait* appears during the historical moment when, according to Jean-Joseph Goux, literature began to depart from the “gold standard” of realism, a moment that occurred contemporaneously with a new kind of banking system that replaced industrial capital with monopoly or fiduciary capital. Economics was no longer based upon gold coins, but upon “dematerialized money”—banknotes, fiduciary bills—money as promise or script. The result was a “dematerialization of value.”<sup>6</sup> Likewise, as Modernism replaced realism, art tended towards abstraction from mere things, instead valorizing “reciprocal relationships among signs” (“Banking,” p. 23). If realism offers an allegedly transparent language in which words refer specifically to things or concepts rather than to themselves, the language of Modernism reminds readers that fictions are not simply windows on the world, but prismatic refractions of sign systems. Words are exchanged not for things but for other words. In this new, decentered world, “what circulates is no longer either an ideal measure of value or an object backed by bullion in a treasury, but a pure signifier, a simple token, caught in an indefinite play of give and take.” Lacking an anchor, the linguistic consciousness, like Ulysses himself, wanders homeless (“Banking,” pp. 23, 22).

Stephen awakens to the symbolic economies of money and language concurrently throughout the novel. For example, he is both delighted and dismayed that the same word may have more than one meaning: “That was a belt round his pocket. And belt was also to give a fellow a belt.”<sup>7</sup> Sometimes a word's meaning may echo its sound: at least one meaning of both “suck” and “kiss” is easily discoverable by saying the word aloud. (The social connotations of words still elude him: why is it both unacceptable and acceptable to kiss one's mother? And why “did people do that with their two faces?” [*P*, pp. 11, 15].) Just after the “belt” passage, he is made aware of the financial economy as he leaves for school and his father gives him “two fiveshilling

pieces for pocket money" (*P*, p. 9). This gesture dramatizes the economic condition of the Dedalus family at the beginning of the novel—they are affluent enough to be able to give a small child half a pound for pocket money—while its proximity to Stephen's consideration of words suggests the homologous relationship between the two symbolic economies. In both economies he at first seeks to arrest proliferation and exchange in order to determine and stabilize his identity and thereby find a stable home. Thus, attempting to locate and moor himself in the material world, he names himself and his surroundings by compiling orderly lists of increasingly wider spaces, as if to name is to fix meaning, identity, and material exchanges (*P*, p. 15). Likewise, because the fiveshilling coins are called crowns, his father's gift inadvertently identifies Stephen: *stephanos* means "crown." Later in the novel Stephen recognizes the pun on his name as a form of destiny that leads him to his artistic vocation, and he puns on it in *Ulysses* when he looks at his hat and thinks "Stephanos, my crown" (*U*, 9.947).

But he can better discover the true meaning of his name by enacting its heroic history. Defying Fr. Dolan's authority and protesting to the rector about his unjust pandying, Stephen repeats that his punishment was "unfair and cruel." In fact, he is referring both to his own punishment and to the injustice done to his hero, Parnell. The very words "unfair and cruel" seem to free him, and his rehabilitation encompasses both crimes and propels him to try to replace Parnell (*P*, pp. 52-53). Just as his father's eyes fill with tears for Parnell during the Christmas dinner scene (*P*, p. 39), so tears "rise to" Stephen's eyes as he enters Conmee's study and the rector asks, "Your name is Dedalus isn't it?" (*P*, p. 57). His name drives him to become what he believes it means: Stephen has rectified the fall of Ireland's "uncrowned king" (cf. *P*, p. 39) and won himself a metaphoric crown. At the same time, his heroism yokes him to history: "the great men in the history had names like that and nobody made fun of them"; indeed, "a thing like that had been done before by somebody in history" (*P*, pp. 55, 53). Stephen becomes his name, authorizing himself by living out its imaginary history of fall and redemption. His name anchors him both materially and symbolically by forging a gold standard of moral heroism, a value that measures all others according to itself and determines his self-worth for the rest of the novel. He thus becomes both rector and king.

Now possessed of his name, he struggles to understand and overcome his family's material dispossession. As the Dedaluses decline, the world is reshaped for him into "a vision of squalor and insincerity" (*P*, p. 67). His father's voice urges him "to be a gentleman above all things" (*P*, p. 83), but the material resources necessary for such status are rapidly evaporating, despite Uncle Charles's prayers that "God might send him back a part of the big fortune he had squandered in Cork" (*P*, p. 62). Accompanying his father there, Stephen listens to him tell family legends, but "in the manner of his own dispossession he felt the world give the lie rudely to his phantasy" of wealth

and power (*P*, p. 87); indeed, the goal of their visit is to sell off Simon's patrimony.<sup>8</sup> Throughout this scene Stephen and Simon engage in a power struggle that becomes overt near the end of the visit, when Simon proclaims that he is "a better man than [Stephen] is any day of the week" (*P*, p. 95). In the constant encounter with his father's past, Stephen feels dispossessed of his own identity, oppressed and wearied by his father's voice. This dispossession is thrust upon him when he visits the anatomy theatre where Simon attended class, and is startled by the word "Foetus" carved into a desk where he had sought his father's (and his own) identifying initials. In a stimulating essay to which I shall return below, Maud Ellmann argues that this word both opens a gap between Stephen and the past and "resurrect[s] the dead" as his father's words could not.<sup>9</sup> He seems "to feel the absent students of the college about him and to shrink from their company" (*P*, p. 89): the word appears to mock Stephen's impotence and strip him of authority. Accompanying the loss of property, then, is the threat of the loss of self. Once again Stephen quells his sense of powerlessness by invoking his own name: "I am Stephen Dedalus. I am walking beside my father whose name is Simon Dedalus . . . Names" (*P*, p. 92). The name that impelled his earlier triumph again comes to his aid, now shoring up his embattled consciousness by anchoring him in the present.

The struggle for mastery culminates after Stephen wins an essay prize of £33 (*P*, p. 96). He rushes to exchange the currency for material goods, buying theatre tickets, presents for the family, and "great parcels of groceries" (*P*, p. 97). Stephen is torn between his impulse to manage the flow of money and his familial history, which dictates that he allow the tides of exchange to sweep him away. He compiles

resolutions . . . pore[s] upon all kinds of price lists, [draws] up a form of commonwealth for the household by which every member of it held some office, open[s] a loan bank for his family and presse[s] loans on willing borrowers so that he might have the pleasure of making out receipts and reckoning the interests on the sums lent. (*P*, p. 98)

As moneylender and manager of domestic finances, Stephen temporarily assumes the position of household steward, of *oikonomos* or economist: he sets the rules (*nomoi*) for the management of the household (*oikos*).<sup>10</sup> It is perhaps not surprising that Stephen's evolution is figured as movement from one symbolic "house" to another; this upward movement imaginatively reinscribes the Dedaluses' (and the Joyces') downward movement to increasingly shabby and inadequate dwellings. But Stephen's stewardship fails. "He had tried to build a breakwater of order and elegance against the sordid tide of life without him and to dam up, by rules of conduct and active interests and new filial relations, the powerful recurrence of the tides within him. Useless. From without as from within the water had flowed over his barriers" (*P*, p. 98).

He cannot block his impulse to spend, the same instinct that inundates his father; the "economy of flows" sweeps him up.<sup>11</sup>

Stephen's attempt to replace his father plays itself out in terms of money because, after all, that is what Simon most lacks. Moreover, the money economy dramatizes the economy of ego formation. In the psychic economy, Goux argues, the Father fulfills a role homologous to that of gold in the material economy: each serves as a general equivalent of values.<sup>12</sup> Like gold-money, which measures other commodities by being set off from them as a super-commodity, the Father is perceived not as merely a person but as a universal equivalent, an idealized token set off from all others, and the one by whom all other persons are evaluated. That is, the Father is to other persons as gold is to other commodities. Stephen thus usurps Simon's place in the home by putting himself in the father's economic role as financial assessor and comptroller. He makes himself into his father, his own universal equivalent. In a single gesture he rejects economic stewardship, his actual father, and the symbolic paternal role, at once abdicating authority and gaining a new awareness of his own autonomy and power. No longer related to the family by blood, he stands to them "in the mystical kinship of fosterage" (*P*, p. 98). He must therefore look elsewhere for his *oikos* and his authority.

He turns to the house of God. This house is also figured by both the linguistic and monetary economies. Earlier in the novel, Stephen tries to understand Protestant ridicule of the litany of the Blessed Virgin: "Tower of Ivory, they used to say, House of Gold! How could a woman be a tower of ivory or a house of gold?" (*P*, p. 35). He later comes to understand the metaphors through their physical resemblance to the body of the girl Eileen, whose hands are "like ivory; only soft," and whose hair "streamed out behind her like gold in the sun. Tower of Ivory. House of Gold. By thinking of things you could understand them" (*P*, pp. 42-43). Stephen has learned to comprehend the nature of metaphor, a word that is itself derived metaphorically from a term indicating exchange or transfer.<sup>13</sup> Words proliferate and undergo exchanges over time. However, both symbolic economies are founded upon stable standards of gold, or consistent meaning. Likewise, the House of God relies for stability upon the belief in the Father and the Blessed Virgin, gold standards that secure and give sense to the metaphors in the litany and ceremonies. Moreover, these metaphors are economic: Stephen thinks about two students accused of stealing communion wine, and wonders how they could break into the "flashing gold thing into which God was put" (*P*, p. 46). Reflecting both their devotion to the Divine and the church's own economic power, priests are repeatedly described as wearing "gold" garments (*P*, pp. 93, 159). God is gold, and the house of God is the House of Gold.

Stephen now attempts to enter and manage this house. After his retreat and painful repentance, he desperately desires to confess, to purge himself of his accumulated evils, and does so by literally vomiting them up (*P*, p. 138).<sup>14</sup>

Once purged, he hopes that extreme piety will block the flow of sinful desires as financial prudence temporarily deterred material decay. He manages salvation as he did his money, storing up remittances for souls and imagining “his soul in devotion pressing like fingers the keyboard of a giant cash register and . . . the amount of his purchase start forth immediately in heaven” (*P*, p. 148). Hugh Kenner has noted that the cash register is a counterpart of the loan bank he opened for the family, and that “both projects are parodies of the economy of grace; both are attempts, corrupted by motivating self-interest, to make peace with Dublin on Dublin’s own terms; and both are short-lived.”<sup>15</sup> But the cash register image is less a parody than a literalization of Church doctrine. Stephen’s management of redemption obeys the dicta of the Church fathers. In Peter’s first epistle, for example, Christian ministers are urged to become “good stewards [*oikonomoi*] of the manifold grace of God” (I Peter 4:10).<sup>16</sup> Replacing the house of his father with the house of God, Stephen has become the *oikonomos*—steward—of the economy of grace.

He has moved from the material economy to a religious one. But he soon understands the limitations of this stewardship, as well. Crossing a bridge that is at once literal and symbolic, he encounters a group of Christian brothers and recognizes the nature of their priesthood as well as the shallowness of his own devotion: “it was idle for him to tell himself that their humble and contrite hearts . . . paid a far richer tribute of devotion than his had ever been, a gift tenfold more acceptable than his elaborate adoration” (*P*, p. 166). At this moment some friends call his name in mock-Greek—“Bous Stephanoumenous! Bous Stephanephoros!”—and “now, as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy” (*P*, p. 168). These names, meaning “ox garlanded or crowned” for the sacrifice, represent Stephen’s (and the youthful Joyce’s) conviction that the artist must sacrifice his material life for his artistic one.<sup>17</sup> By relinquishing that life, Stephen means to transform it: he will again become both king and steward, transmuted “the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life” (*P*, p. 221). As “priest of eternal imagination,” the artist is the medium for the exchange of flesh for words. Stephen’s new labor must be that of “the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being” (*P*, p. 169). To generate value by artistic labor, the artist must logically be a smith, forging gold out of worthless ore. Just as a priest is a steward who mediates and manages the transformations in the Eucharist, so Stephen’s priesthood will mediate the transformations and exchanges between materiality and language. Stephen’s new stewardship in the house of art will thus involve both mediation and manufacturing, and he turns raw material into gold.

But it is not only his own name that spurs Stephen’s epiphany; it is the very nature of language. Thus he recognizes his literary vocation at the precise moment that he draws forth a “phrase from his treasure” and comprehends that

words themselves call him by offering greater symbolic wealth than the priesthood (*P*, pp. 166-67). Stephen's rediscovered verbal riches are to be generated from this "garner" (storehouse) of words and phrases (*SH*, p. 26). This wealth, in turn, derives from his social existence: as stated in *Stephen Hero*, he seeks words for his linguistic "treasure-house" not only in Skeat's etymological dictionary, but also in shops, and even in advertisements (*SH*, p. 30).<sup>18</sup> He stores them, repeating them from time to time until they lose their "instantaneous meaning" and become "wonderful vocables" (*SH*, p. 30). For Stephen, as Ferruccio Rossi-Landi has remarked in another context, language lies "in the memory rather like money in a coffer. Linguistic money . . . subsist[s] precisely in this permanence of the wealth of the language outside actual communicative transactions."<sup>19</sup> Stephen has become a kind of linguistic banker and heir who, like every other speaker, has at his disposal an "immediately accessible patrimony," a fund, or constant capital, of previously coined words and phrases (*LE*, p. 48). But he also deposits words in his "treasure-house" like a bank depositor, holding them there and drawing them out when he needs them. Stephen not only thereby preserves one form of asset immune from the decline that has plagued his family, but also finds in this countinghouse an "anchoring point that moors the floating chain of signifiers in the *treasury* or thesaurus of metonymies and metaphors" (*SE*, p. 103; emphasis in original). That is, the currency in his linguistic purse gives him a fixed standard by which he may measure and even arrest the transformations in his Eucharistic art. In this economy Stephen is richer than most, not only because his word-hoard is larger, but because he is better read and more talented. His verbal treasure-house fulfills both the Imaginary function of money (it acts as a measure of value) and its Real function (it operates as an actual material store).<sup>20</sup> Stephen's verbal countinghouse removes words from exchanges rather than submitting them to circulation. But such preservation of deposits is only part of the artist's banking operation: words, like money, also collect interest and must be placed back into circulation in order to acquire enhanced value. This latter role is homologous to the Symbolic function of money—its role as circulating medium—and it is here that Stephen's management is deficient. He compiles a treasure-house as a means of resisting the threat of inundation by the exchanges in the linguistic economy; but it is a defensive and retentive process that actually blocks such exchanges and inhibits his mediation of them.

In his discussion with the dean of studies Stephen articulates his attitude toward this symbolic economy. The stimulus for the discussion is the word "lamp," and the difference between its utility as an object and its operation as a metaphor. His distinction is homologous with the distinction between use-value and exchange-value, although of course a transaction between signifier and signified must occur in each case. The word "lamp" may act simply as a relatively transparent referent when it directly designates a useful

object. Thus a speaker might refer to a lamp that he or she wishes to be lit or turned on in order to satisfy a need for light. In the discussion about Epictetus, however, “lamp” is a metaphor for enlightenment or knowledge; here it has value in terms of its exchangeability for a concept. In this operation a second order function has taken place: a transfer of the meaning of “lamp” from an object to an abstraction. That is, the signifier “lamp” is to be exchanged for the signified concept of “illumination,” which has already undergone a metonymic transfer from “lamp” to “light.”<sup>21</sup> Like two commodities in barter, the first meaning depends upon a simple equivalence between object and word; the second, however, involves a two-stage mediation, with the idea of “light” functioning as the medium, in a fashion homologous with the way that money mediates exchanges between commodities in a money economy (C - M - C’). Meanings thus proliferate and undergo exchanges through metaphorization. The “literary” value of “lamp,” then, lies in its metaphoric value—its exchange value.<sup>22</sup>

Stephen distinguishes between two uses of words, reminding the dean that “[o]ne difficulty . . . in esthetic discussion is to know whether words are being used according to the literary tradition or according to the tradition of the marketplace” (*P*, p. 188). He compares “detain” as used by Cardinal Newman to describe the Virgin Mary with the everyday usage of the word. When Newman writes that Mary was “detained” in the company of the saints, he employs the etymological sense of the original Latin, meaning that she abided with them, not that they arrested her (“Explanatory Notes”: *P*, p. 527). The “marketplace,” on the other hand, uses it as Stephen does when he says “*I hope I am not detaining you,*” which the dean mistakes for a genuine concern rather than an example (*P*, p. 188; italics in original). Stephen elaborates upon his distinction in an earlier version of the scene, and contends that words have “a certain value in the literary tradition and a certain value in the market-place—a debased value. Words are simply receptacles for human thought: in the literary tradition they receive more valuable thoughts than they receive in the market-place” (*SH*, p. 27). This passage again suggests, like the notion of a “treasure-house,” that Stephen wants to remove words from the marketplace altogether in order to preserve their original meanings; he wants to save words as mere fixed capital, without attempting to increase or redetermine their values through exchanges or circulation. Maud Ellmann comments that for Stephen “[l]iterature ‘detains’ language as the miser hoards his money . . . When ‘literature’ intrudes . . . it halts transactions in the marketplace of flow and influence—blocking ‘metaphor’ or the exchange of words for flesh.”<sup>23</sup> Stephen’s formulation is based upon a mistaken notion that words somehow exist outside of the social exchanges that constantly reconstitute their significations. On the contrary, words are not merely receptacles; they increase and multiply, proliferating meanings by their changes and exchanges through history. In presenting words as receptacles, Stephen violates his own sense of



their exchange-value; he views them as solely a Real store, which fulfills only part of their economic function.

The obsession with removing words from the circulation of the marketplace is in fact a form of linguistic fetishism: it turns a process into an object. Without exchanges, "literature" consists solely of "heaps of dead language" no better than the "mean shop legend[s]" Stephen disdains (*P*, pp. 178-79). Removing words from the "economy of flows" will be no more successful than the "breakwater" Stephen erected to contain his family's flow of money; lacking currency, any poetry employing such words and such an aesthetic will be quaint and anachronistic. Stephen's fear also discloses a misconception about the marketplace. As Barbara Herrnstein Smith observes, "the market does not characteristically operate as the site of desecration but, rather, as the arena for the negotiation, transformation, and redistribution of value."<sup>24</sup> Such transformation and redistribution must be precisely what the artist seeks, whether he is a priest or a smith. And yet, restricting words to their marketplace definitions would reduce them to mere use-values by severing them from literary history and by limiting their intertextual and conceptual exchangeability. The linguistic economy is incomplete unless words are subjected to historical circulation and permitted to collect interest. The artist must therefore become a usurer, a steward of linguistic money who allows it to proliferate meaning and thus accrue enhanced value. He or she must deposit words back into the marketplace with their etymological and metaphoric value attached. The artist subjects words to exchange. Hence, the "treasure-house" of language cannot be merely a storehouse; it must instead become a kind of emporium, a site of linguistic commerce. Accordingly the literary tradition must undergo exchanges with the marketplace tradition, and the synthesis of these exchanges allows verbal currency to attain its full value precisely by remaining in circulation. An economist or steward of art must acknowledge and employ both the literal (use-value) and metaphoric (exchange-value) of words; by synthesizing these values, the artist may become a kind of linguistic capitalist who generates surplus value both for himself/herself and for those who succeed him or her.

Precisely because his word-ward is so large, Stephen eventually recognizes that it consists mostly of borrowed currency, of words and phrases coined by previous writers and speakers. He has appropriated them from many sources. Indeed, the name that inspires his early heroism first belonged to someone else, and even the phrase he draws from his "treasure" in that key moment (not to mention the very idea of a linguistic treasure) is borrowed from an earlier writer.<sup>25</sup> In one sense, Stephen's "constant capital" consists of intertextual stock invested by all previous speakers and writers. Now the stock has to be put into circulation: the past and the present must encounter each other to bring forth the future. Stephen's relationship with the word-ward of intertextuality has to become reciprocal. He must recognize that he does not

so much possess language as language possesses him.<sup>26</sup> To acknowledge this fact, he needs to generate capital in artistic discourse that will “retro-act on the constant capital of the linguistic community,” modifying and revivifying both the community and the language (*LE*, p. 157). Using tropes, including metaphors and puns, which some writers call “verbal usury,” the artist becomes a manager of his linguistic capital.<sup>27</sup> In so doing he not only stores words, he restores them, and thereby also restores his linguistic community. Paradoxically, then, Stephen may gain authority and a sense of ownership precisely by apprehending the impossibility of sole ownership.

Stephen and the dean discuss another kind of receptacle, which the dean calls a “funnel,” and Stephen terms a “tundish” (*P*, p. 188). The object is itself appropriate to the discussion of linguistic economies. Referring to both the real and the metaphoric lamp, the dean cautions Stephen to “be careful when you pour [oil] in not to overflow it, not to pour in more than the funnel can hold” (*P*, p. 188). He means to admonish Stephen to moderate his revolutionary ideas about language and knowledge. Once again, as Maud Ellmann argues, Joyce presents the forces and desires to which Stephen is subject—money, lust, hunger, words—as an economy of flows.<sup>28</sup> The dean, of course, would never overload his funnel; but Stephen is ambivalent about all flows and tides. Calvin Thomas has shown that Stephen’s anxiety about writing is directly related to his sexual and excretory “anxieties of production”; all are part of a “single productive *flow* which is then feared to be either *inadequate to* or *in excess of* the coercive economies of the ideal receptacles” (emphasis in original).<sup>29</sup> That is, he fears both deficiency and excess: the same ambivalence Joyce himself betrays in the textual economy of *Ulysses*.<sup>30</sup> Thus Stephen is not sure whether his linguistic “tundish” should overflow or be kept virtually empty. The breakthrough occurs as he writes his villanelle, his soul becoming “dewy wet” amid “cool waves” (*P*, p. 217). Now the word is made flesh: he permits the exchanges he has previously resisted. By the end of that morning, “like a cloud of vapour or like waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters of speech . . . flowed forth over his brain” (*P*, p. 223). Unlike the dean, Stephen may now keep his tundish, like the chalice in his poem, “flowing to the brim” (*P*, p. 221). The tropes in the poem demonstrate his recognition of the nature of metaphor and also represent his stewardship of the linguistic economy. No longer will he merely hoard words; he will turn them into currency and keep the flow as near as possible to repletion. He thus enacts his new sense that the artist must be a tundish for the flow of words, a conduit at once shaping and shaped by the economies of language.

By the end of the novel, then, Stephen seems to recognize the flaws in his earlier linguistic theories. No longer does he wish merely to retain past meanings, to stock his intertextual hoard; now he recognizes that “the past is consumed in the present and the present is living only because it brings forth

the future" (*P*, p. 251). But there remains a significant stumbling block, one also outlined in the discussion with the dean, when Stephen thinks:

the language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *Christ*, *ale*, *master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. (*P*, p. 189)

In part Stephen is referring to the burden of intertextuality, the fact that "all speech is always acquired" from previous writers and speakers.<sup>31</sup> But that is only half of the story. More specifically, Stephen's artistic stewardship is necessarily implicated in the political struggle between England and Ireland. This is clear in the particular words that Stephen isolates, all of them politically charged and all referring directly or indirectly to one of the three "masters" (the Church, the British Empire, and Irish nationalism) he sardonically names in the first episode of *Ulysses* (*U*, 1.638-44). *Christ*: the Anglican or the Roman? *Home*: the Irish homeland has been usurped by "strangers in [the] house" (*U*, 12.1151); is the English language truly a home, since that treasure-house has already been colonized? *Master*: how can one create the "uncreated conscience" of his "race" with the very language that symbolizes his race's oppression? How can he own or achieve mastery of language when the English own even its modes of transmission?<sup>32</sup> One might choose to write and speak only in Gaelic, but both Joyce and Stephen reject this route. For Stephen Irish will remain an unacquired speech.

Instead, like Joyce, Stephen chooses exile. This is virtually his only choice: to restock and restore the treasure-house of language, he must free himself from the ownership not only of the English, but also of those who will appropriate it for their own uses—the family, the Church, the Irish State. Along with his "new secondhand clothes" he accepts his new secondhand language "away from home and friends" (*P*, p. 252). He will fly away, to "build ever an unlasting home under the eaves of men's houses"; he will be "ever leaving the homes they had built to wander" (*P*, p. 225). His homelessness becomes a necessary key to a new artistic home: "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church" (*P*, pp. 246-47). He rejects all fathers, all stewardships, all homes except the *oikos* of the Word. But this negative self-definition remains incomplete. Indeed, the difficulties in finding this home become glaringly apparent in *Ulysses*. If *Portrait* traces Stephen's emerging authority and his attempts to repossess his spiritual assets, *Ulysses* finds him again dispossessed, homeless and reduced to servitude. Attempting to fly by the nets of material obligation to history and nation, he squanders his money and wastes his spiritual assets. In so doing, he merely imitates the familial and national histories of dispossession and destitution from which he has tried to flee.

If Stephen still defines himself negatively, Joyce, in contrast, manifests his positive authority by portraying Stephen's inadequacies. In *Portrait*, Joyce demonstrates the mastery Stephen lacks. Moreover, in *Ulysses* Joyce turns exile into return, dispossession into power, by reappropriating and revising English literary history in such episodes as "Scylla and Charybdis" and "Oxen of the Sun." Here he not only accepts the debtorship Stephen finds so oppressive, but generates interest on his intertextual debts through an extravagant Irish verbal economy that reinscribes Stephen's financial spending in textual terms. Whereas Stephen returns home only to undergo further dispossession, Joyce, like Leopold Bloom, circulates, allowing language to proliferate. Joyce marks his mastery of the linguistic treasure-house precisely by depicting Stephen's keylessness. At once steward and master of the linguistic economy, Joyce confirms his ownership of the *oikos* of words, paradoxically, by acknowledging the impossibility of sole ownership, by demonstrating that the linguistic economy is always subject to circulation, collectivity and dissemination through exchange. In that way he both finds a home and multiplies the assets of himself and his readers.

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## NOTES

- 1 John Ruskin, *Unto This Last in Unto This Last and Other Writings*, ed. Clive Wilmer (New York: Penguin, 1985), p. 215.
- 2 James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler, et al (New York: Random House, 1986), p. 28. Hereafter cited in text by *U*, followed by episode number and line number (*U*, 2.377).
- 3 James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, ed. John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon (New York: New Directions, 1944, 1963), p. 202. Hereafter cited in text as *SH*.
- 4 For a detailed examination of the economics of *Ulysses*, see my *The Economy of "Ulysses": Making Both Ends Meet*, forthcoming, Syracuse Univ. Press.
- 5 By eliminating the connecting scenes and descriptive passages characteristic of nineteenth-century realism, *Portrait* does conform to Walter Benn Michaels' definition of the "goal of realism": "to minimize excess." See *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987, p. 38). On the other hand, its depiction of Stephen's consciousness extends the reach of nineteenth-century realism to the sympathetic portrayal of inner states. In that sense, it is more realistic than earlier fictions. In sum, then, *Portrait* is both realistic and anti-realistic.
- 6 Jean-Joseph Goux, "Banking on Signs," *Diacritics* 18 (1988): 17. Hereafter cited in the text as "Banking."

- 7 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Text, Criticism and Notes*, ed. Chester G. Anderson (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 9. Hereafter cited in the text as *P*.
- 8 For a discussion of this section with a slightly different emphasis, see James Naremore, "Consciousness and Society in *A Portrait of the Artist*," *Approaches to Joyce's Portrait: Ten Essays*, eds. Thomas F. Staley and Bernard Benstock (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), pp. 115-18. In "Dominant Ideologies: The Production of Stephen Dedalus," (Bernard Benstock, ed., *James Joyce: The Augmented Ninth* [Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1988], p. 320), Trevor L. Williams argues that "the Dedalus family's problems are directly attributable to Simon's exclusion from the spoils of office now that Parnell has fallen." This is only partly true: although Simon is barred from political appointments, he is himself to blame for his drunkenness and financial fecklessness.
- 9 Maud Ellmann, "Polytropic Man: Paternity, Identity and Naming in *The Odyssey* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," in Colin MacCabe, ed., *James Joyce: New Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 96-97.
- 10 Kurt Singer, "Oikonomia: An Inquiry Into Beginnings of Economic Thought and Language," *Kyklos* 11 (1958): 30.
- 11 Ellmann, p. 87.
- 12 Jean-Joseph Goux, *Symbolic Economies: After Marx and Freud*, trans. Jennifer Curtiss Gage (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 17, 54. Hereafter cited in the text as *SE*.
- 13 Kurt Heinzelman, *The Economics of the Imagination* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1980), p. 10.
- 14 Jeanne McKnight, "Unlocking the Word-Hoard: Madness, Identity and Creativity in James Joyce," *James Joyce Quarterly* 14 (1977): 429-30.
- 15 Hugh Kenner, *Dublin's Joyce* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1956), p. 129.
- 16 I am citing the Douay-Rheims version, the Bible used by Catholics at the time. St. Paul defines the role of the steward similarly (see, for example, I Corinthians 4:1). In *Reauthorizing Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), p. 54, Vicki Mahaffey similarly argues that Stephen's image of the cash register is a literal translation of the priest's earlier admonition, "As long as you commit that sin, my poor child, you will never be worth one farthing to God" (p. 145). For treatments of the term *oikonomos* in the Pauline writings, see Marc Shell, *The Economy of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978), p. 105, and *Money, Language and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1982), p. 25. For a more detailed analysis of Joyce's critique of the priestly stewardship of grace and its economic foundations, see Mark Osteen, "Serving Two Masters: Economics and Figures of Power in Joyce's 'Grace,'" *Twentieth Century Literature* 37 (1991): 84-89.
- 17 For a recent reading that challenges this translation and tries instead to link the word with the meaning of "epiphany," see David Weir, "Epiphanoumenon," *James Joyce Quarterly* 31 (1994): 55-64.
- 18 The idea of a linguistic bank goes back at least to the Anglo-Saxon notion of a word-hoard. However, Stephen's (if not Joyce's) specific source for the notion of a treasure-house or bank for words and phrases may be Percy Shelley, who refers in "A Defence of Poetry" to an "augmented treasure of expressions" resulting from enhanced "social sympathies":

- Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon P. Powers (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 481. Shelley's phrase occurs during a passage that, like Joyce's novel, traces the refinement of imagination from the child to the social man who may be "at once the representation and the medium, the pencil and the picture" (p. 481). This source is plausible, because Stephen cites from memory Shelley's poem, "To the Moon," in the Cork scene, and refers both in *Portrait* and *Ulysses* to the famous phrase in "A Defence" that likens the inspired mind to "a fading coal" (*P*, p. 213; *U*, 9.382).
- 19 Ferruccio Rossi-Landi, *Linguistics and Economics* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), p. 152. Hereafter cited in the text as *LE*.
  - 20 According to Goux, money has three functions: a Real function as a material store of actual wealth; a Symbolic function: as a medium of circulation; and an Imaginary function as a measure of values. See *SE*, pp. 47-48.
  - 21 On exchange-value and use-value in language, see *LE*, p. 159, and Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1988), pp. 57-97.
  - 22 Even to employ "lamp" to refer to a useful object already necessitates an exchange, since all meaning involves exchanges between signifier and signified. Another exchange also occurs: the social exchange between speakers. Thus if communication is a "need," then the metaphoric use of "lamp" satisfies a different register of need than does the literal use. In this sense the distinction between use-value and exchange-value collapses in the linguistic economy, which helps to explain the difficulty Rossi-Landi encounters when he attempts to elaborate upon the homologies between language and money (see *LE*, pp. 138-40). Nevertheless, it is clear that Stephen means to draw a distinction between the two meanings that is based upon the level of abstraction, a distinction that parallels the distinction between two kinds of economic exchange. For a related discussion of homologies between economic exchange and tropic exchanges, see Allan Hoey, "The Name on the Coin: Metaphor, Metonymy and Money," *Diacritics* 18 (1988): 26-37.
  - 23 Ellmann, pp. 92-93.
  - 24 Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988), p. 131.
  - 25 Robert H. Bell, *Jocoserious Joyce: The Fate of Folly in "Ulysses"* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), p. 26. See also the Explanatory Notes, p. 519.
  - 26 R. B. Kershner, *Joyce, Bakhtin and Popular Literature: Chronicles of Disorder* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 154.
  - 27 Shell, *Money*, pp. 22, 50. For a more detailed analysis of the relationship between financial and literary debtorship and usury, see Mark Osteen, "The Intertextual Economy in 'Scylla and Charybdis,'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 28 (1990): 197-208.
  - 28 Ellmann, p. 87.
  - 29 Calvin Thomas, "Stephen in Process/Stephen on Trial: The Anxiety of Production in Joyce's *Portrait*," *Novel* 23 (1990): 284.
  - 30 It is not accidental that Stephen's vision of hell is a scene of constipation. McKnight (p. 433) and Thomas (pp. 291-92) argue that Stephen's anxiety about the production of words is a kind of verbal constipation related to and perhaps derived from anxieties about defecation. He fears that all production is, like defecation, a loss of a part of the body (Thomas, p. 292).

Appropriately, then, in terms of Stephen's desire to detain words, one archaic meaning of "to detain" is "to constipate."

31 Thomas, p. 297.

32 For a general discussion of such linguistic ownership, see *LE*, pp. 190-91. For an analysis of this effect in Ireland, see Trevor L. Williams, "Resistance to Paralysis in *Dubliners*." *Modern Fiction Studies* 35 (1989): 440-42. The ideological control of the Irish press has been thoroughly and persuasively examined by Cheryl Herr in *Joyce's Anatomy of Culture* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986), pp. 33-95.

