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Answering Joyce's *Portrait*

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Man delights him not nor woman neither . . . He returns after a life of absence to that spot of earth where he was born, where he has always been, man and boy, a silent witness. (*U* 9.1030)¹

1. Silencings

In Seamus Deane's insightful article, "'Masked with Matthew Arnold's Face': Joyce and Liberalism,"² he claims James Joyce adopted the idea of the "pathos of distance" when he postulated Stephen Dedalus as a heroic artist "who, confronted by the mob, must create a distance from it and, in doing so, develop a kind of chivalry of the intellect."³ Joyce does not merely adopt the trope of distancing, as Deane claims, he interrogates its sexual politics. Deane's use of the word "chivalry" indicates the ambivalence I find in Stephen's "quest"; he can only complete it by simplifying the persons around him through gender stereotypes.

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*⁴ implicitly criticizes the distancing gender stereotypes of Stephen Dedalus, and reflexively criticizes the reader's distancing judgments of the novel's protagonist. Stephen's gendered readings of other characters function as distancing tools which allow him to escape their needs which he cannot face, yet their needs are articulated through textural silences. Once readers "hear" these textural silences they are placed in an uncomfortable position because their own distance from the protagonist is implicitly attacked. If I distance myself from, or empathize with, Stephen Dedalus, I avoid paying attention to those discourses which are silenced; I either damn Stephen, or I damn the persons whom Stephen damns. Only through a listening which seeks neither to defend or persecute Stephen Dedalus or the other characters, but rather, to attend to them, can I articulate Joyce's sexual politics. Politics, for the author of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is not a judging of third persons from whom one has distanced one's self, but a listening to second persons from whom one cannot distance one's self.

According to Seamus Deane, Joyce forces readers into recognizing two types of distancing:

Within the work itself, the distance between the hero's consciousness and the world against which it is defined becomes increasingly narrow until, in *Finnegans Wake*, it disappears altogether. In addition, the distance between the work and the reader, articulated by the contractual relationship which had supported the realist tradition, was also broken.⁵

Two distancing activities are attacked by Joyce: the monological discourse of the conventionally unified novel is broken up by conflicting discourses, and the realist contract between the text and the reader is broken down by

frustration of “the possibility of moral decision or of aesthetic satisfaction.”⁶ In the first, the reader can no longer assume that the hero’s consciousness will be presented as an unambiguous overcoming of the world, while in the second, the reader can no longer assume that he or she occupies a privileged position of detached omniscience. The questioning of the protagonist’s distance from society *within* the narrative is echoed by the questioning of the reader’s distance *from* the narrative. Joyce’s *Portrait* is seemingly monodiscursive, yet it is crossed by conflicting discourses that do not allow the reader “the pathos of distance,” but instead force us into the restlessness of proximity.⁷ The restlessness of proximity occurs when we begin to hear the textural silences which undermine the monological narrative’s mastery, and, in turn, begin to question our own sense of mastery.

In *Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Literature: Chronicles of Disorder*, R. B. Kershner makes a compelling argument for the way in which Stephen is subjected to, as well as a subject of, these conflicting discourses, but he identifies the reader’s involvement in such subjugation only implicitly.⁸ Though Kershner identifies the dialogic nature of the novel, he fails to see how Joyce creates dialogic tension not only through the creation of conflicting discourses, but through the framing of conflicted silences. I want to define two types of textural silences at work within the text: unanswered questions and unarticulated phrases.⁹ The first occurs when a character’s question is articulated or implied, yet never gets answered by the character to whom it was addressed. In this inter-character silencing the addressee instance remains open and the implied space for a response is never filled in. The second silencing occurs when the dominant narrative rigorously denies other possible phrases. In this silencing, which is only heard as such by the attentive reader, any counter-discourse is closed down because there is no implied space for it in the text. Each of these types of silencing allow the reader to hear conflicting counter-discourses, which force us to reflexively question our own distance from the novel. The temptation for any reader is to speak for those who are silenced, but only by listening to the silences can we respect them as productive points of agitation.

When Stephen Dedalus treats men as intellectual or bestial subjects, and women as aesthetic or sexual objects, he distances them from himself; they become figures through which he can define himself narcissistically. But the unanswered questions and unarticulated phrases allow the reader to hear Stephen’s sexual politics as one of *fearful* distancing. He attempts to be both a misandrist and a misogynist, retracting from all persons with needs and treating them only as potential characters who *will* need him when he becomes the writer he imagines he will become.¹⁰ But he retracts because he fears particular persons may answer his own unvoiced needs. To be attracted to others is, for Stephen, to be *subject* to them, so he tells himself that attraction is a mere biological need that can be satisfied by anyone (including himself).

When Seamus Deane suggests how the political and the sexual are conjoined in Joyce’s texts he uses an example of textural silencing. In 1904, four months after the death of his mother, Joyce wrote the first sketch for his autobiographical novel, then titled “A Portrait of the Artist,” without the distancing marker of the later novel, “as a Young Man.” It concludes:

To those multitudes not as yet in the wombs of humanity but surely engendurable there, he would give the word. Man and woman, out of you comes the nation that is to come, the lightning of your masses in travail; the competitive order is employed against itself, the aristocracies are supplanted and amid the general paralysis of an insane society, the confederate will issues in action. (P 265-66).

Deane quotes the last three phrases of this conclusion. "These phrases," he writes, "in which a socialist vision and a medical definition of the terminal stage of severe syphilitic infection are combined, reveal, behind Joyce's radical pose of the young artist, his preoccupation with the linkages between forms of political and forms of sexual convention."¹¹ This observation indicates how intertwined political and sexual discourses are for Joyce, though I have quoted a larger section of the text to show the other linkages that the passage displays.

The isolated artist figure adopts and subverts the language of the institution of the Church to affect social change, to the unborn he "would give the word." The linkages displayed in this passage are manifold — religion, the lone artist's subversion of religion, the subjugation of women, a future socialist inversion of society, and the syphilitic condition of the present— though the relation between them remains unclear. Joyce is layering multiple discourses, but they are not productively opposed, merely superimposed. At this early stage Joyce's writing is overblown without ironizing its hyperbole.

But there is a social praxis being announced even in this overblown declaration, as we can see from the transformation of the passage in *Portrait*. In the rewritten scene Stephen broods over the ability of the artist to affect change, he asks, "How could he hit their conscience or how cast his shadow over the imaginations of their daughters, before their squires begat upon them, that they might breed a race less ignoble than their own?" (P 238). Stephen never answers his own question, though the unarticulated phrases suggested by his rhetoric undermine his project. The chivalric language indicates the heroic nature of the quest, prideful as well as political, and the women, through which "conscience" seems to descend, are placed in a mediated position. It is the daughters whose imaginations are shadowed by the artist, and it is the squires who "begat upon them," literally pushing them down in what used to be termed an act of seduction. The word "squire" also links to the colonizing of Ireland by England, since it refers to English landowners as well as those who serve a knight or a court-lady. In the passage from *Portrait* the discourses have been simplified and the archaic language itself reveals the domineering way in which Stephen the artist pictures his transformation of society in terms of a sexual conquering. The sexual politics of domination and subjugation undercut the validity of Stephen's project.

Deane writes that the articulation of separate discourses is political, and that the division between spoken words and thoughts is the space of political change. "Stephen and Bloom are both caught in this silent struggle, dreaming the discourse of freedom, speaking the discourse of repression. As in so many cases in modern literature, the tension between the two is dramatized by Joyce as sexual tension, a traumatizing of deep energies, a frustration of life itself."¹² To limit the discussion to two discourses, however, simplifies Joyce's project drastically, and categorizes it as a mere freeing up of latent energies, when, in fact, it is the creation of energies and the resistance to violent silencing that I find in Joyce's work.

Joyce does not reduce cultural politics to gender stereotypes, but exposes gender stereotypes as Stephen's distancing strategies of silencing. The evolution of the portrait of Stephen Dedalus is towards a narrative that is crossed by multiple conflicting discourses,¹³ manifested by unarticulated phrases; and characters in conflict, whose differences are manifested by the unanswered questions they ask. I will first examine the way Stephen characterizes males as driven by needs he will endeavor to escape, and then turn to his characterization of females as ceaselessly reminding him that he

cannot escape such needs. Exposing the inherent contradiction in his binary logic forces us to postulate an alternative to Stephen's distancing strategies.

2. Mishearing Misandry

The intersecting discourses of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* expose the *differend* repeatedly, the violence that is done when heterogeneous discourses grab the same subject and subject him or her to their totalizing regime. Jean-Francois Lyotard defines the *differend* as the brutalization that takes place when a dominant discourse is used to settle a dispute. Stephen's monological point of view, which is often conflated with the narrative itself, seems to settle all potential disputes in the novel. Yet this monological voice is at once too distant from what it discusses, too unconcerned with persons; and not distant enough, too concerned with one person. Once the reader begins to recognize these discrepancies the novel ceases to encourage distancing judgments, and thereby exposes the *differend*. I want to examine two instances in which males are characterized by Stephen Dedalus to illustrate how textual silencings undermine his stereotyping: in the first he discusses his aesthetic theories with Lynch, while in the second he parts from Cranly.

In *Portrait*, Stephen's treatment of men and his aestheticizing of women during the discussion about his aesthetic theory show both his distancing strategies, and their failure. What was staged for us by the narrative in *Hero*, so that we could see the irony of both Stephen's pretensions and his companions' and family's limitations in numerous scenes, is now presented in a single conversation between two school friends in *Portrait*. The staging occurs between discourses which produce both the narrative and the characters, rather than between characters who are subsumed under a monological narrative. The narrative is imbued with Stephen's perceptions and moves easily from his thoughts to descriptions of external events without explicitly satirizing his behavior. It seems to fulfill Stephen's requirement at the end of the dialogue that "[t]he personality of the artist passes into the narration itself, flowing round and round the persons and the action like a vital sea" (*P* 215), yet disturbing silencings prevent this aesthetic portrait from cohering. *Portrait* stages discourses in conflict, and portrays the removed aesthetic of Stephen as the mono-discursive master of the other discourses, so that Ibsen's dramas of ideology are now inscribed in the working of the text itself⁴. The realist mode of stepping back from the actions of the plot and feigning objectivity, which dominated *Stephen Hero*, is now subverted, and the ethics of this stance is itself brought into question.

A number of conflicting discourses are given expression during Stephen's exposition: his examples and language reflect the discourses he is eliding, Lynch undercuts his aestheticizing, Donovan's fat features contrast with their poverty, and even the physical environment—natural, industrial, and commercial—disrupt his aesthetic aims. Though these elements emphasize the heroic nature of Stephen's struggle, they also expose Stephen's thoughts as "defense-works" thrown up while "he was busy constructing the enigma of a manner" (*SH* 27), as the narrative says of *Hero's* Stephen. These distancing strategies coincide with Stephen's worsening economic circumstances, but he rejects his own and other's needs as base, and attempts to distance himself from them.

Though Stephen's descriptions of his friends emphasize their bestial maleness, their discourses reveal more disturbing indications of why Stephen wants to belittle them. He cannot admit their need for affection and

understanding, just as he cannot admit his own needs. Lynch's materialistic basis contrasts with Stephen's high-blown diction. Whereas Stephen is rarefied, concerned with the atemporal stasis of ideal apprehension, Lynch is grounded, concerned with cigarettes, food, and "a job of five hundred a year" (P 207). Like Bloom, Lynch refuses to allow art its hallowed ground, he says: "I wrote my name in pencil on the backside of the Venus of Praxiteles in the museum. Was that not desire?" (P 205). In his retort Stephen berates Lynch for being abnormal without answering his question. Bloom also investigates a statue in *Ulysses* to determine if its organs are complete, and it is Lynch's bodied, art-in-life perspective, that may have been a model for the subsequent character. Stephen links Lynch and Cranly together; "You" he says to Lynch after repeating his definition of beauty which he first gave while they talked of Wicklow bacon, "remember the pigs and forget that. You are a distressing pair, you and Cranly" (P 207). As long as Stephen can pair them, subsume them under a gendered reading as materialistic males against whom he can measure himself, their questions cannot interrupt his project of self-creation.

But Lynch's comments do not just highlight Stephen's struggle to fashion an autonomous art, they undermine it. Lynch is associated with cows, which play a significant role throughout *Portrait* as symbols of Ireland. The moocow of the opening sentence is associated with the mother, the mother's milk, and mother Ireland. Lynch ate dried cowdung, and when Stephen reminds him of this action he "broke again into a whinny of laughter and again rubbed his hands over his groins" (P 205). Though Cranly listens to Stephen's prattle he reminds him constantly of the material restrictions that surround them. When Stephen asks, "—If a man hacking in fury at a block of wood . . . make there an image of a cow, is that image a work of art? If not, why not?" Lynch cries "That's a lovely one . . . That has the true scholastic stink" (P 214). Lynch responds to Stephen's example with an olfactory exclamation, and throughout the talk he undercuts the intellectual severings that Stephen is performing with reminders of bodily needs and desires. The unarticulated phrases suggested by Lynch's discourse are those Stephen most wants to silence: talk of one's mother, one's country, and of one's need for others. When Stephen reprimands Lynch, "But we are just now in a mental world" (P 206), the context ironizes his claim. Lynch is given the last word in the discussion and insightfully indicts Stephen's self-defensive strategy in eliding art from the kinetic; "What do you mean . . . by prating about beauty and the imagination in this miserable Godforsaken country? No wonder the artist retired within or behind his handiwork after having perpetuated this country" (P 215). Lynch's question is never answered in the text, though his second comment implies that distancing is the action which God and Stephen share, an abnegation of responsibility to answer for what they do.

If Lynch is associated with cows, then Cranly's discourse is that of pigs. Cranly plans to open a butcher shop in Dublin, and in *Hero* he tests "everything by its food value" (SH 124). Stephen's example of the aesthetized butcher boy whose labor, and the living boy himself, are excised, is linked to Cranly who was remembered two pages earlier for his interest in Wicklow bacon and "them flaming fat devils of pigs" (P 207). At the end of the novel it is Cranly who is the last to be cut out of Stephen's life.

Stephen's separation from Cranly begins when he catches sight of him raising his hat to E. C.; "He also? Was there not a slight flush on Cranly's cheek? . . . The light had waned. He could not see" (P 232). Stephen uses what he imagines as a significant sign of attachment to begin detaching himself from Cranly. "Did that explain his friend's listless silence, his harsh

comments, the sudden intrusions of rude speech? . . . Stephen had forgiven freely for he had found this rudeness also in himself towards himself" (P 232), but he does not forgive Cranly now. After questioning Stephen's refusal to play along with the church's rituals for his mother's benefit Cranly asserts "— Whatever else is unsure in this stinking dunghill of a world a mother's love is not. Your mother brings you into the world, carries you first in her body. What do you know about what she feels?" Stephen claims to be "listening to the unspoken speech behind the words," in which he imagines that Cranly is validating his attraction to women, particularly E. C., but what Cranly may be expressing is the *necessity* of attraction for those who are born into another's care, and the impossibility of ever understanding or overcoming another's caring. Stephen's oblique response refers to Pascal not kissing his mother for fear of contact with her sex, and through it Stephen reminds himself that he must be careful *not* to care for any particular person.

When Stephen announces his credo: "I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning" (P 247), he is refusing not only armed aggression, but the arms of friends and lovers. Cranly immediately seizes his arm, and Stephen, "thrilled by his touch," counteracts the feeling by announcing his willingness to be alone. "— Alone, quite alone" Cranly repeats Stephen's word, "And you know what that word means? Not only to be separate from all others but to have not even one friend" (P 247). Stephen is surprised at the sincerity of his friend's question which he fails to answer. He cannot answer him, because what Cranly questions is not only Stephen's distancing from all totalizing institutions, but his insistence on distancing himself from all persons—this "one friend" in particular.

Though the male characters in *Portrait*, seem to be subsumed merely as figures in Stephen's development, they disrupt his phrasing and make him confront those unlike himself through textural silences. The novel does not reside solely with Stephen, but dramatizes discourses in conflict, and the cost of acceding to a dominant discourse. Stephen attempts to exclude that which threatens his constructions; he *must* rely on generalities to ward off his own and others' needs. This activity is not only what Stephen engages in, but what we engage in when we read *Portrait* without hearing its silencings. As Yeats writes, Joyce said to him, "Generalizations aren't made by poets; they are made by men of letters. They are of no use" (JJII 103). Stephen's generalizations are useful because they keep him distant from those whom he might care about, he remains interested in *characters* rather than *persons*, but they must be used less if he is going to become the artist he imagines he will become.

3. Mishearing Misogyny

If Stephen fears males because they remind him of his own needs for companionship and understanding, he fears females because they remind him that such needs can have ramifications beyond his ability to control them. Stephen wants to control the result of each of his actions, yet as soon as those actions effect persons he cannot exert such control. Women threaten Stephen's project because they cannot be known through examining himself, and because his desire for a sexual encounter may produce a child for whom his responsibility would extend indefinitely. To control his need for knowledge without consequences he relegates women to a subordinate position, but their unanswered phrases and unarticulated phrases suggest

that his project is always in need of ratification; they must be insistently kept at a distance.

My reading of Stephen's distancing sexual politics in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, reveals my own sexual politics because I must accede to or reject the silencings of the text; I cannot remain neutral. I either distance myself from Stephen by asserting my superiority as an omniscient reader, or recognize my complicity with him by conceding involvement in the silencings of the novel. In the first I replicate the distancing for which I would criticize him, while in the second I admit involvement in the textual silencings. Listening to such silencings, rather than speaking *for* them, is how I can bear witness to that which the mono-discursive master genre of Stephen elides. This is a political act because, as Jean-Francois Lyotard writes; "Politics is not at all a genre, it bears witness to the nothingness which opens up with each occurring phrase."¹⁵ I cannot *not* link onto the phrases of the mono-discursive genre, but *how* I link determines my respect for, or suppression of, the counter discourses which the silent phrases suggest. The particularity of these silent phrases questions the generalities of Stephen's gendered readings of female characters, and, in turn, my own distancing activities as a critical male reader.

I hear a warning issued on the second page of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This warning demands that I articulate the silenced discourse of the feminine, but it also insists that I question the figure of the feminine as that which is silenced. If I mishear the warning as being merely against misogyny, then I miss the larger implication that mishearing is what my distanced judging of Stephen Dedalus permits. Just as Stephen must come to understand that distancing himself from totalizing institutions must be coupled with a proximity to particular person before he can write the novel which he feels destined to write, so I must distance myself from the totalizing narrative and listen to the characters and discourses it silences before I can hear the sexual politics of the novel.

At the end of the book's first section two women demand that Stephen apologize; the action that provoked these responses is not marked in the text, but when the reader recognizes this narrative gap it becomes a silent phrase. This narrative gap is never filled in, despite critics attempts to suture it.

The Vances lived in number seven. They had a different father and mother. They were Eileen's father and mother. When they were grown up he was going to marry Eileen. He hid under the table. His mother said:

—O, Stephen will apologise.

Dante said:

—O, if not, the eagles will come pull out his eyes.

Pull out his eyes,
Apologise,
Apologise,
Pull out his eyes.

Apologise,
Pull out his eyes,
Pull out his eyes,
Apologise. (P 8)

The scene, which is adapted from one of Joyce's epiphanies, has been read in contradictory ways: as a primal scene of sexual assault or experimentation, as Stephen's retribution for watching the neighbor girl urinate, as an allegory for Nationalist politics, as a scene in which the

innocent Stephen is martyred like Parnell or Christ, as Stephen's first epiphany or creative act, etc.¹⁶ I do not want to dispute these theories, which are often bolstered by credible arguments, but to argue that they *all* focus on some sort of sexual experience and its effect on Stephen Dedalus. Eileen Vance is only viewed as a vehicle for the artist's evolution, and even her initials, E. V., suggest that she is an Eve-like tempter who motivates Stephen's unvoiced action, thereby relieving him of any responsibility. But the sheer number of interpretations of this scene support reading it as a warning to the readers *not* to suture this gap, but to listen to the silent phrase it suggests.

The silent phrase does not declare something that contradicts the mono-discursive narrative, which critics could then discover and articulate, it declares, rather, that there is something which *cannot* be articulated. This silent phrase marks a *differend*, to use Jean-Francois Lyotard's term, because a "*differend* is the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be. This state includes silence, which is a negative phrase."¹⁷ To suture this gap is to eliminate its status as a *differend*, to reduce it to another phrase which is in competition with the dominant narrative, rather than to question the dominant narrative's status.

What I call a gap is not even typographically presented as a gap in the printed text, though its logical position would come between his notion that "he was going to marry Eileen," and his hiding "under the table." The narrative is thus complicitous in the hiding of this gap in favor of the artistic production, which is italicized and indented like the songs of the previous page. Stephen's aesthetic gesture which follows distances him from the unarticulated wrong he has committed, and the narrative which allows space for his song is therefore complicit with his turning away from, and turning against, the feminine. The mouths of the two women are evoked by the "O's" with which their phrases begin; empty markers which indicate the absent action to which they refer. Their separate speech acts are made parallel in Stephen's transformation of them into a chiasmic song, whose form emphasizes their interchangeableness even though the meaning of each phrase is different: "Pull *out* his *eyes*, / *A-pol-o-gise*" (emphasis added). Three females are presented in this scene: Eileen Vance, who engaged in the initial sexual transgression about which the women are speaking; Stephen's mother, who demands that he apologise for that action; and Dante, who threatens Stephen with violence if he does not make the required amends. But these three women are displaced when the internal rhymes of the language are played with by Stephen, acceded to by the narrative which gives this play space, and taken on by the reader who delights in the seemingly self-sustaining chiasmic inversions. The aesthetic silences the ethical, which I define as the reduction of wrongs which silence others,¹⁸ that it must articulate. If I acquiesce to the monological voice of the narrative and Stephen I am implicated in the unethical aestheticizing of the feminine voices.

This silencing of the feminine is emphasized by the transformation of the original epiphany, which included a male who not only verbally threatened Stephen, but carried a stick. No longer is it a male who issues physical and verbal threats in *Portrait*, but a female whose threat is hyperbolic and unlikely to be enforced. The colloquial speech patterns of Mr. Vance's threat, "Or else—if he doesn't—the eagles'll come and pull out his eyes,"¹⁹ is changed to Dante's more lyrical, "—O, if not, the eagles will come and pull out his eyes" (*P* 8). Joyce's transformation of the epiphany into a more distanced aesthetic scene replicates, therefore, Stephen's transformation of the threat into a distancing chiasmic song.

Dante's warning, which indicates that the supposed offense may be one of forbidden sight, is a Dantesque image of eagles pulling out Stephen's eyes. The sexual overtones of the threat to "pull out his eyes" hint that Stephen's action was perceived as having violated Eileen Vance. Whatever did take place, the social conditioning which followed the initial encounter "read" this scene as a traumatic moment, and it is this "reading" which critics replicate in ascribing their own meanings. The next section opens with an older Stephen playing on the fringes of a football game in which "[h]e felt his body small and weak amid the throng of players and his eyes were weak and watery" (P 8). Stephen is literally distanced from the action, and he has begun to have trouble with his sight. Throughout the rest of the book Stephen's eyesight problems remind me of Dante's threat, and gives me a lever with which to criticize Stephen's blind-sided actions, as well as—retrospectively—my own blind-sided judgments.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man tempts us to gloss over what I have termed a warning without heeding it, letting ourselves be seduced by the text's aesthetic play as the only viable discourse. The text enacts the progressive formation of an artist who defines himself by his autonomy from all totalizing institutions: church, state, family, and sexual mores, yet *it* totalizes in turn. The narrative is complicit with this movement because its language seems imbued with Stephen's progression, yet the contrary discourse of the feminine continually undermines the self-reflexive gesture of the text.

I want to examine another instance in which an epiphany was reworked for inclusion in *Portrait*, and show how Stephen's aesthetic production again silences the ethical function. In Joyce's epiphanies there is supposed to be a lyrical wholeness which the reader comprehends immediately. Supposedly, the state in which "the object is epiphanised" (SH 211) is beyond the temporal and physical, but the only way we receive this theory is through the narrative of *Stephen Hero*, and the context ironizes such a claim. The discussion of epiphanies in *Hero* follows Stephen's attack on Emma Clery as "the most deceptive and cowardly or marsupials" (SH 210). The narrative asserts that "He toyed also with a theory of dualism which would symbolize the twin eternities of spirit and nature in the twin eternities of male and female and even thought of explaining the audacities of his verse as symbolical allusions" (SH 210). The last comment shows how theories had already begun to serve as masking functions, evasive maneuvers, and self-defenses for the artist. Though the epiphanies may unite in a state of "quidditas," they are most often about difference and separation; between male and female, observer and observed, child and adult, physical threat and linguistic retreat. As Joyce re-contextualizes them their divisions are manifested and their conflicting discourses implicated.

The original epiphany contrasts two scenes. In the first half a "quick light shower" has just ended and "the girls . . . are leaving shelter, with many a doubting glance, with the prattle of trim boots and the pretty rescue of petticoats, under umbrellas, a light armoury, upheld at cunning angles" (P 270). Though they are described in coquettish terms, rescuing their petticoats prettily, and warding off the rain cunningly, the only male is "the fair promise of Spring, that well-graced ambassador . . ." (P 270). This scene is contrasted in the next paragraph with "a high plain building" where "Three hundred boys, noisy and hungry, sit at long tables eating beef fringed with green fat and vegetables that are still rank of the earth" (P 270). The scenes are tied together by their references to the earth, from which the girls receive a "fair promise" and the boys receive food. Yet what animates the epiphany is the contrast in the discourses that are used: the girls are described in delicate gestures, the raindrops and sunlight create "a cluster

of diamonds," and Spring becomes a hackneyed personification; while the boys are noisy and hungry, the light obscure, and the beef they eat unappetizingly and realistically "fringed with green fat." The narrative contrasts the romantic and realistic discourses yet establishes the predominance of neither.

In *Stephen Hero* this epiphany is recast as a contrast between two different worlds of Stephen Daedalus. He leans against a pillar in the remake of the first scene and watches Emma Clery. "He chose to contemplate the spectacle which she and her companions offered him . . . a <sudden sympathy arose out of a sudden reminiscence, a reminiscent sympathy toward a . . . protected seminarist life the very virtues of which seemed to be set provokingly before the wild gaze of the world, so provokingly that only the strength of walls and watchdogs held them in a little circle of modish and timid ways>" (SH 183). Emma, with whom Stephen was angry, is now transformed, and Stephen equates her position with his. In his internal story each harbors wild instincts which are kept in check by the rigorous strictures of their respective societies.

In the same paragraph he remembers a scene from his childhood: "Three hundred boys . . . eating beef fringed with green fat like blubber and chunks of white damp bread." He is the "One young boy" who, "leaning upon his elbows, opened and closed the flaps of his ears while the noise of the diners reached him rhythmically as the wild gabble of animals" (SH 184). This scene appears in the first chapter of *Portrait*, and we can surmise that it also appeared in the early pages of *Hero* to which this quote was meant to refer. The realistic details have been heightened, and the two central characters are perceived by Stephen as sharing mundane surroundings which they must transform through their actions. Stephen's discourse now unites him to Emma, yet his sense of sympathy is undercut by the narrative which portrays her as separated from him "in a ring of her companions, laughing and talking with them" (SH 183).

A few pages later Stephen's misguided belief that they share a hatred for the falsity of social conventions is further emphasized. He attempts to escape the economic bondage of marriage and prostitution by propositioning Emma. "Just to live one night together, Emma . . . There is no such thing as love in the world: only people are young . . ." (SH 198). She recoils at his inability to comprehend her constraints, at the chasm that divides their situations, and hides her tears as she walks away. The narrative informs us that Stephen, "surprised to see them and wondering at their cause, forgot to say the goodbye that was on his lips" (SH 199). We understand her tears, though Stephen stubbornly defends his actions, both to himself and Lynch, without interrogating her situation. His sympathy is only a selfish by-product which insists that she must be like him, he does not recognize her as a particular person who cannot be subsumed into his project of producing an artistic self. His defense of his proposition as a way out of the oppressive institutions of prostitution and marriage elicits little sympathy in its narrative portrayal; it is an escape not only from their totalizing discourses, but from responsibility for his actions²⁰. If Stephen can reduce sexual attraction to a mere biological need, then he can satisfy them on his own. But if he needs others *because* they are different from him, then sexual attraction indicates a vulnerability that he cannot allow, because he will become implicated with others, and lose the distance which he feels is the necessary stance of the artist. In *Stephen Hero* the epiphany's transformation is used to mock Stephen's pretensions, and the reader is distanced from the protagonist's distancing actions.

In *Portrait*, however, Stephen's attitude towards E. C. (the use of the initials may indicate that she is "easy"; Stephen can use her without feeling

responsible for his actions)²¹ is presented as *necessarily* distant because she is only useful inasmuch as she affirms the artist's aims. The sexual attraction which kinetically animated Stephen in *Hero* is transformed in *Portrait* into a safer aesthetic apprehension which produces stasis. The epiphany's two contrasting discourses, which were unified in *Stephen Hero*, are now gone. Stephen watches E. C., and the sympathy between them is expressed through the narrative; "She too stood silently among her companions" (P 215). The description of the girls "holding their umbrellas at cunning angles" (P 216) is again used to evoke Stephen's supposed understanding of E. C. "And if he had judged her harshly? If her life were a simple rosary of hours, her life simple and strange as a bird's life, gay in the morning, restless all day, tired at sundown? Her heart simple and wilful as a bird's heart?" (P 216). This condescending portrait transforms E. C. into a caricature through terms that recall the bird-girl imagery which ended the previous chapter, yet it also indicates that she may be someone whom Stephen misjudged.²²

Stephen's thoughts of E. C. produce sex without contact, in the form of a wet dream, and an aesthetic object, a poem. The poem recalls the epiphany I first examined, because Stephen's villanelle is again chiasmic. The form itself suggests a suspension of temporality; an escape from the corporeal realm of being responsible for the consequences of the things he does. Like the earlier scene, Stephen's attraction to another person is again met with a warning, though this time it is self-imposed. By treating E. C. as an object that he uses, rather than a person who challenges him, Stephen reminds himself to keep his distance from her. The narrative accedes to Stephen's view of E. C. and condones his use of her as a necessary transformation for the sake of art, but contrary discourses question this aestheticizing.

The poem Stephen produces after the encounter with E. C. conflates two discourses, that of the Church, where E. C. is figured as the virgin Mary, and that of the brothel, where she is a flirty prostitute. As long as Stephen can imagine her as substituting for his binary stereotype of the feminine gender he does not have to deal with her as a female with unmet and perhaps unknown needs. He commends himself for having rejected her in an earlier scene, "He had done well to leave her to flirt with her priest, to toy with a church which was the scullerymaid of christendom" (P 220). Yet it is precisely this layering of discourse, this trespassing of borders that he desires *from* her; "To him she would unveil her soul's shy nakedness . . . a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life" (P 221). The narrative reveals Stephen's poses even while it accedes to the poetic flights of fancy, and thereby exposes his sympathy as a construction which allows for aesthetic effacing rather than ethical facing.

4. Listenings

In the later diary entry he plays the same game of attraction, agitation, revision, and distancing, but by admitting his attraction to E. C. as a person he comes as close to admitting his affection for another person as he does in the entire novel. "Yes, I liked her today. A little or much? Don't know. I liked her and it seemed a new feeling to me. Then, in that case, all the rest, all that I thought I thought and all that I felt I felt, all the rest before now, in fact . . . O, give it up, old chap! Sleep it off!" (P 252). To admit that she may be other than a representative of the feminine would disrupt Stephen's distancing systems, so he admonishes himself to "Sleep it off!" In dreams she is his object, as she is in art, but to use her without complication he must

keep her at a distance, not let her physical presence intrude. Stephen's aestheticizing is therefore an aggression, a discourse that silences others without responding to them as persons.

If E. C.'s transformation by Stephen remains unquestioned we participate in the suppression of her voice, just as we do when we accede to the silencing of E. V. For Stephen, E. V. and E. C. are figures for the feminine only if he can deny his attraction to them as particular persons, but the silent phrases of the text attack such distancing maneuvers. If I articulate the silenced discourse of the feminine, I am still treating women as that which resists or contradicts the workings of the dominant discourse, I remain trapped in Stephen's binary notions of gender. Women become a figure with which I pry open Stephen's closed world, reveal how his distancing strategies are attempts to rewrite his attraction to others, yet the feminine remains a figure.

Portrait's narrative is complicitous with Stephen's silencings, but it also indicts totalizing discourses which shut out other possible discourses because it brackets what I have termed silent phrases. My use of the feminine could be similarly limiting if I did not begin to hear the silent phrases that indicate the dominant narrative's suppressions. When a discourse is given precedence there is an annihilation of other possible discourses, there is a political nullifying of other words and other worlds. The feminine cannot simply be the counter discourse of Joyce's *Portrait*, which tempts us to condescendingly cast Stephen as a short-sighted misogynist, instead, the silencing of females must make us listen to conflicting discourses which question *our* totalizing. This process implicates us, just as it implicates Stephen, in the discourses which shape us, and are shaped by us.

Similarly, Stephen's characterization of his male friends as either intellectual or bestial cannot be ours if we "hear" the unanswered questions and unarticulated phrases. When we read Joyce's *Portrait* we are forced to confront our brutalization of others, our shutting out of possible discourses. We are asked to reduce the silencing we do to those nearest us. Before we can critique Stephen's sexual politics of distancing, we must begin to accept our proximity to him, including the person for whom he substitutes, James Joyce, who was born and bore witness to the painfulness of being *with*, and *for* others. We must have our "I's" pulled out. And before James Joyce can write the novel we read, before he can substitute Stephen Dedalus' name for his own, he must begin to accept his proximity to persons, including the character he makes of himself. He must pull out his "I's."

Notes

1. Though Stephen Dedalus is describing Shakespeare in this quotation, I take the first phrase as being applicable to himself, and the second to the person who wrote this character into existence, James Joyce. This paper is concerned with Stephen's misandry and misogyny as binary exclusions of all persons, as well as Joyce's silent witnessing of persons to whom he is literally absent; all those Dubliners he writes into existence that relate more or less directly to persons who were born.

2. Seamus Deane, "'Masked with Matthew Arnold's Face': Joyce and Liberalism," *James Joyce: The Centennial Symposium*.

3. Deane 14-15.

4. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Text, Criticism, and Notes*, ed. Chester Anderson (New York: Viking, 1968); we quote from this edition hereafter.

5. Deane 15.

6. Deane 15; Mikhail Bakhtin makes a similar argument in the essays included in

The Dialogic Imagination when he stresses that the nature of the novel results from the writer's acceptance of the heteroglossia of words and the active understanding of the reader. I find Bakhtin's notion of dialogue limited and limiting, however, because it presupposes an equal access to language by all persons in all societies, whereas it is precisely the inability of certain persons to access language that Joyce explores.

7. Through this phrase I refer to one of the central tenets of Emmanuel Levinas' thought; that the ethical moment takes place when we are faced with second persons from whom we cannot distance ourselves. In "Language and Proximity," Levinas attacks the idea of the one who hears being a passive receptor who chooses whether to respond or not. "The hypothesis that the relationship with an interlocutor would still be a knowing reduces speech to the solitary or impersonal exercise of a thought, whereas already the kerygma which bears its ideality is, in addition, a *proximity* between me and the interlocutor, and not our participation in a transparent universality. Whatever be the message transmitted by speech, the speaking is contact"; see *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingus (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1987) 115. Only if Stephen can create language which does not signify contact can he distance himself from other persons; the language of an author can suggest persons to whom he does not have to answer, but the activity of writing is itself done away from, and in response to, the persons that have touched him.

8. I owe a debt to Kershner's book for my understanding of Stephen as a discourse-crossed character; see *Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Literature: Chronicles of Disorder* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1989).

9. I have invented the terms "unanswered question," and "unarticulated phrase," to specify how Jean-Francois Lyotard's notion of the *differend* could be applied to Joyce's texts. Lyotard writes: "In the *differend*, something 'asks' to be put into phrases, and suffers from the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away. This is when the human beings who thought they could use language as an instrument of communication learn through the feeling of pain which accompanies silence . . . that they are summoned by language . . . to recognize that what remains to be phrased exceeds what they can presently phrase" (see Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* 13). Though Lyotard's rhetoric relies for its force on the image of the silenced human beings, he insists that it is the phrase that constitutes the subjects. Joyce's silences, though they operate within a text which is closed off to further changes, nevertheless require an articulation of that which is silenced, a listening to persons who are *nos* characters in a text.

10. This reading of Stephen as a character who substitutes for a person who was born and might write such a novel is indebted to James McMichael's *Ulysses and Justice* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1991). McMichael writes: "while the character named Stephen Dedalus merely substitutes for a person who was born, his character connects discernibly with [James Joyce] . . . I say that it is a 'discernible' connection because I feel *Ulysses* encourages me to think of Stephen as a character who substitutes for James Joyce at age twenty-two" (7-8). Though he is discussing *Ulysses*, the same argument can be applied to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. I play with the term "characterization" to emphasize the way in which Stephen substitutes for a person who makes a character of other persons every time he begins to construct phrases about them.

11. Deane 16.

12. Deane 18.

13. I am indebted to Hugh Kenner's *Joyce's Voices* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1978) for articulating the importance of criss-crossing narrative styles, though my reading of how multiple discourses work within the novel focuses on political answerability, rather than on narrative displacements.

14. Margot Norris suggests the importance of Ibsen's dramas on James Joyce's fiction in her book *Joyce's Wes*, (Texas: UP of Texas, 1992). See also Henryk Ibsen, *When We Dead Awaken, Ibsen: Plays Four* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980).

15. Lyotard 141.

16. This "gap" filling has a long history; for recent examples see Joseph A. Buttigeig's *A Portrait of the Artist in a Different Perspective* (Ohio: Ohio UP, 1987), and Lorraine Weir's *Writing Joyce* (Indiana: Indiana UP, 1989).

17. Lyotard 11.

18. In *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minnesota: U of Minnesota P, 1988), Jean-Francois Lyotard calls this activity

political. He writes: "Politicians cannot have the good at stake, but they ought to have the lesser evil. Or, if you prefer, the lesser evil ought to be the political good. By evil, I understand, and one can only understand, the incessant interdiction of possible phrases, a defiance of the occurrence, the contempt for Being" (140).

19. See *The Workshop of Daedalus: James Joyce and the Raw Materials for A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain (Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1965) 11.

20. In *Joyce and Feminism* (Indiana: Indiana UP, 1984), Bonnie Scott-Kime writes that "what Stephen proposes is a ritual, not a commitment to an individual, and it is understandably outside of Emma's ken" (146). Though less blatant in the finished novel, the reduction of individuals to actors in a self-serving ritual is still Stephen Dedalus' dominant trait.

21. Peter Costello's recent biography, *James Joyce: The Years of Growth, 1882-1915* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), convincingly argues that E. C. was modeled on Mary Elizabeth Cleary, whom Joyce had known at school. "Joyce, she admitted, 'had been keen on her.' Asked why, if that was the case, they had not married, she said she could not have married James Joyce. Not merely was he vulgar, he also told dirty stories and picked his nose" (189). This quote indicates that the central female character reflected Joyce's interest in a particular person, but it does not explain why he settled on the initials E. C. when he wrote *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Perhaps Joyce's change was an attempt to disguise his model, to distance himself from the person whom he was using, which would double Stephen's aestheticizing gestures within the novel. In the final novel E. C. becomes less clear and more enigmatic; it becomes easier for the evolving artist to use her without indebtedness, though the indebtedness Stephen incurs is a fiction, while the indebtedness Joyce incurs is a fact.

22. James McMichael, in *Ulysses and Justice* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1991), writes that "Emma has unwittingly disrupted Stephen's preconceptions just enough to have taught him something he could not have foreseen but is not sorry to have learned" (119). It is this type of empathy, in which Stephen becomes able to listen to others, that I feel is necessary for him to become a writer. My distinction between the feminine and individual females owes much to McMichael's discussion of Stephen's binary readings of the world. He writes that Stephen's "misogyny . . . shields him from having to distinguish among" women (119).