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# *OUT OF HER OAK FRAME*

Freebies, Gifts, and Throwaways in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

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## INTRODUCTION

When a reader of James Joyce's *Ulysses* first encounters Leopold Bloom, after three episodes of anxious anticipation of his textual entrance, he is about to leave his home and set out on a little adventure. This adventure is not the daylong epic on which he will embark later; he's simply going out to pick up some breakfast. He returns quickly, fries up a kidney, and gathers his energy for the day to come. During this respite, as he brings his wife Molly a cup of tea in bed, Bloom's prioritization of (re)circulation makes itself clear, and the recirculatory economy of Joyce's text begins to build itself up. When he brings the tea, Molly asks Bloom to explain a word which she has come across in a pulp fiction novel (62)): 'metempsychosis'. Bloom's first response is "It's Greek: from the Greek" (62). The word as it appears in Molly's novel and in conversation between the Blooms is not literally Greek; the fastidious Bloom draws attention to this distinction. 'Metempsychosis' is not Greek, but it is rather *from* the Greek. This qualification, equally applicable to *Ulysses* itself, comes to Bloom's mind before the actual meaning of the word does. For Bloom the question of origins, specifically, the idealized origin of Western thinking from which the sign 'metempsychosis' springs, is more important than the meaning of a word itself. His mind drifts to Greece as the matrix of civilization: "we all lived before on the earth thousands of years ago," he explains (62). Bloom underscores the idea of reincarnation as he positions himself along the Greeks with a telling 'we', indicating his own personal concept of descent from and lineage back to the Greeks. This is also a metatextual moment that positions *Ulysses* as a latecomer, a derivative of Hellenic culture. Happily for Bloom and for Joyce, the from-the-Greek status of an object—the word *metempsychosis*, the book *Ulysses*—lends it authority.

As Bloom searches for an example to clarify the word's meaning, his gaze settles on the image that hangs above his bed:

The *Bath of the Nymph* over the bed. Given away with the Easter number of *Photo Bits*: Splendid masterpiece in art colours. Tea before you put milk in. Not unlike her with her hair down: slimmer. Three and six I gave for the frame. She said it would look nice over the bed. Naked nymphs: Greece: and for instance all the people that lived there. (62-63)

Bloom explains to Molly, “They used to believe you could be changed into an animal or a tree, for instance. What they called nymphs, for example” (63). Here, Bloom is mistaken. Nymphs are nature sprites or sylphs, not reincarnated creatures. But nymphs do operate in a liminal space between the human world and the natural one, so it's possible that Bloom's erroneous thinking comes from an exposure to figures like Daphne, whose father turned her into a tree so that she could avoid Apollo's advances. The *Bath of the Nymph* itself—the physical object—actually provides a much more complicated and compelling example of reincarnation than its nymph subject. Let's work from the inside out and consider the process by which such an image would have been ‘made’. First, the image in question is originally a painted recreation of a Greek subject, a modernized version of a mythical creature. The nymph is *en déshabillé* with loose flowing hair, a classical figure modernized and eroticized, perhaps in the manner of the pre-Raphaelites. Next, a photograph was taken of the painting, creating another reincarnation and removal from the original Greek object. This photograph was then mass-produced and circulated with issues of *Photo Bits*. Finally, Bloom has wrapped this classical subject up in a modern frame. The frame, later revealed to be oak, factors into and adds to the *Bath*'s reincarnate status by bringing the picture's liminally human subject closer to the natural world.

Post-finally, above and beyond the final, the *Bath of the Nymph* is reproduced in its representation in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. If this representative reproduction is considered as a level of incarnation, it must be framed along the knowledge that the *Bath* is not reproduced but in fact produced for the first time, anew and again, every time a reader casts their eyes over the words that make up its description. The *Bath of the Nymph* is emblematic of the anxious intersection between Joyce's world and Homer's. With all its levels of reincarnation and reproduction taken into account, the *Bath of the Nymph* becomes a metatextual figure for the big blue book itself. It depicts the iconic modernist struggle between high culture and commodity fetishism. Bloom elevates the *Bath* from a commodified, fetishized object into an elevated work of art—he is only able to do so because of (a) his own decision to access the picture in this way and (b) its classical subject, which lends it an air of authenticity and power. As any reader interacts with a book like *Ulysses*, similar classificatory decisions must be made (although of course they have already *been* made by the cultural attitude towards the book that surrounds and informs this hypothetical reader). Joyce has worked very hard to align his work with the highness of autonomous art as opposed to with the lowliness of the commodity. He has used some of the same tactics as the *Bath* does to accomplish this—his work, too, is a reincarnation of a classical subject. Acknowledging reincarnation/recirculation expands the focus from the high art/commodity struggle and into the parallel struggle between textual recycling and originality (a struggle in which the *Bath* is likewise implicated).

As any reader can attest, the Homeric correspondences meticulously outlined in James Joyce's schemata are belied by the intricacies of *Ulysses* itself. Joyce's diversion from Homer's narrative structure occurs unostentatiously as soon as Leopold Bloom enters the

book's folds. Throughout the *Telemachia*, Joyce follows Homer; Stephen is cannily twinned with Telemachus in both persona ("thoughtful Telemachus") and narrative movement. In the instant that *Ulysses* alights upon Bloom, the Homeric pattern is upended. Even as his qualitative and factual differences from Odysseus become apparent (he is not Stephen's father, he is not a war hero), narrative logistics block Bloom from taking on Odysseus's role. As I've already alluded to, Bloom's journey is indecisive at its outset where Odysseus' is necessarily not. Homer's story is a vicus of recirculation; its hero moves always, unstoppably forward along his circle. Odysseus leaves home and, once he decides to return, completes his circle without ever moving backwards; although he is slowed by obstacles, he never reverses course. In *Calypso*, Bloom begins a journey when he first leaves his home, but he does not have any intention of staying away for long. He in fact leaves his front door propped open, knowing that he will walk back through it in short order. Bloom's epic, circular journey is therefore anticipated by a smaller first, closed circle; as he goes to pick up his breakfast at Dlugacz's, he tentatively explores the outside world, returns to his own island, and only later embarks on his daylong adventure.

Bloom's morning jaunt to the butcher and quick return home emblemize the manner in which *Ulysses*' textual machinations mirror and alter those of the *Odyssey*. The textual economy of Joyce's book is one of retention. The big blue book holds onto everything, including but not limited to things that ought to be thrown away. *Ulysses* is itself a recirculation, a reincarnation, of Homer's *Odyssey*. This recirculation is a self-conscious mimicry: an 'almost-the-same-but-not-quite,' as Homi K. Bhabha describes the belated postcolonial copy. This uneasy imitation can be found even in the structure of the worlds depicted by the two works. In the *Odyssey*, pagan gods whose interference never involves

moral judgments have set up a system of rules for order's sake, where 'incorrect' behavior is wrong only because it goes against the gods' own wishes. In its system of rules, the world of the *Odyssey* finds a direct parallel in Joyce's world of 1904 Dublin. Instead of interfering and mediating gods, *Ulysses* is populated with head teachers, cemetery caretakers, and mannish madams. Instead of the constant exchange of hospitable gifts that permeates the elevated world of the *Odyssey*, *Ulysses* more often presents a constant exchange of commodities within market capitalism. Joyce's characters participate in a world that is an anxious recycling and reincarnation of the *Odyssey*'s. *Ulysses* is a recreation of the *Odyssey* with something *new* added in the process.

Although both objects are a recycling and recirculation of a classical subject, there are several important differences between *Ulysses* and the *Bath of the Nymph*. The first is that *Ulysses* exemplifies the autonomous artwork—that is to say, it has no practical use. Whereas the *Bath* functions as a promotional freebie and is therefore closer to an advertisement than a gift, *Ulysses* promotes nothing. Joyce's book is an aesthetic object, not a useful one. Second and relatedly, the *Bath*'s hybrid status as a commodified artwork is complicated by the fact that it is purportedly free. It therefore raises a myriad of questions that *Ulysses* on its own does not. What is the difference between a freebie and a gift, and do either come for free? What does a freebie indicate about the nature of the market economy in which it is created? Despite their differences, I do not intend to treat the *Bath* and *Ulysses* as independent objects. Neither exists without the other, and the manner in which the textual economy of *Ulysses* treats objects like the *Bath* is indicative of the manner in which Joyce's text ties together all the theoretical strings of this thesis. *Ulysses* is a retentive, recirculatory, reincarnated work. It places itself (and is placed) within high autonomous art, but this category is troubled by and

reliant upon the pressing presence of those freebies and throwaways that populate the text.

Freebies like the *Bath* indicate the very (textual and market) economy that *Ulysses* seeks to escape, and without which it could not exist.



## GREAT GIFT PICTURES: (ADVERTISING) FREEBIES

Although the *Bath* itself is a fictional photograph, *Photo Bits* was an actual pennyweekly “cherished by the lower strata of the late Victorian middle class” (d’Erme 40). The ‘real’ *Photo Bits* did offer, between 1898 and 1909, a promotion wherein “Great Gift Pictures” were given away with editions of the magazine (d’Erme 40). An exemplary advertisement (fig. 1) for the promotion in January of 1902 announces, “Beautiful Coloured Supplements will now be presented free gratis by the proprietors of *Photo Bits*.” It goes on to elaborate, “At regular intervals, without extra charge. In the issue of February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1902, we shall begin. ORDER EARLY!”



Figure 1

The *Photo Bits* pennyweekly was, in fact, bursting at the seams with offers of gifts and giveaways. These mostly came from independent advertisers instead of the magazine itself, but taken as whole they create an economy in which superfluity and generosity are twinned.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

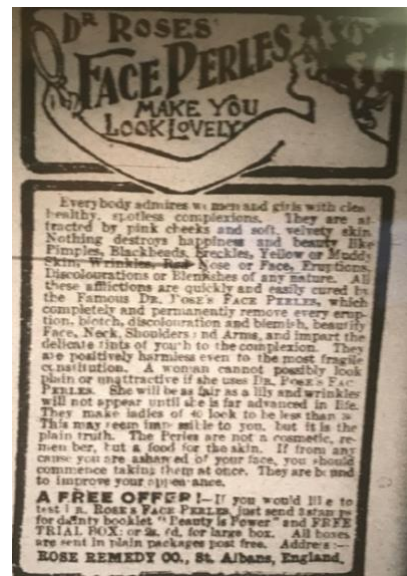


Figure 6

These small squares of printed text resist easy labelling. They are obviously advertisements, but what exactly are they advertising? What grabs the reader's attention is not the incubator and the watch and the face perles themselves. More important is the fact that these commodities are being given away. The texts advertise generosity, not the products themselves. This tactic, which is not present in more straightforward advertisements (giveaway-free, like the ones Bloom creates), creates a relationship of necessarily reciprocated generosity between the company placing the ad and the *Photo Bits* reader. While these freebie-ads seem only to offer free commodities, they attempt to disguise the transactional nature of the offers they contain. However, the giveaways are 'free' only in name, and in fact come with hefty strings attached. If a consumer receives a free 40-egg incubator, they are expected to participate in recommending the product: "We have sold 12,000 incubators through recommendation by our system of free distribution" (fig. 5). This sentence is not the simplest way to recommend the product; it functions, rather, to reference the expected payment—a glowing testimonial recommendation in return. In order to acquire a free gold plated watch, for which "YOU SEND NO MONEY," the receiver must first sell six pieces of jewelry on behalf of the West End Jewellers Company (fig. 4). The offer of a "FREE TRIAL BOX" of Dr. Roses' Face Perles (fig. 6) is more familiar than any of the others to our modern sensibilities; cosmetic companies today give out free samples constantly to encourage purchase of their products. All of *Photo Bits* freebie ads work first to create a relationship between company and buyer and second to solicit the consumer as a salesperson/promoter for the product. The price of the gift is the receiver's work in generating interest, sales, and circulation so that the gift is worthwhile from the company. The cost of the gift on the part of the company, therefore, is deducted from the creation of

surplus value that promotion and sales will create, both from the initial consumers/gift recipients themselves and then from the interest that such consumers can generate.

These freebie-ads employ some variation of four rhetorical moves, the first three of which are variously employed by all kinds of non-freebie advertisements as well. First, the ad must signal the product's quality, always using a single catchy descriptor like "unique," "splendid," or "beautiful." Second, the ad must certify its authenticity, either through a statement of experience and expertise or of customer satisfaction. An offer of a free incubator claims the company is on its "Fifth Annual Distribution," proving that this is no one-off sham. An advertisement which claims it will send out "12 more beautiful cabinets" to anyone who sends in a cabinet photograph of themselves claims that there are "Hundreds of Testimonials"—what or to what these testify, exactly, is unclear. Third, the ad promises that the product will lend the consumer social distinction. The free watch that is "not a cheap German or Swiss watch, but a very superior and high-class timekeeper" will distinguish the discerning taste of the wearer. This move encourages the audience of the watch advertisement to link their class identity to their consumption of the freebie, just as the freebie-ad for the "Beautiful Coloured Supplements" promises to supply objects of good taste to its consumers.

Fourth, the freebie-ad seeks to erase the transactional nature of the exchange and create a relationship of trust (bordering, perhaps, on affection) between company and customer. This is the primary element of the freebie-ad that separates it from more conventional advertisements. The freebie-ads attempt to create a type of brand loyalty that is fashioned not from a repeated use of a product or brand that the consumer likes, or even from the repeated use of a product or brand that is considered superior to others because of

excellent marketing. A simple transaction in which money is exchanged for services has no hope of creating the kind of link that someone who received a ‘free’ golden watch would feel to the West End Jewellers Company. Between the receiver of the watch and the jewelry company there is an illusion of risk undertaken on the side of the company and therefore a strong link created between consumer and company. One freebie-ad (fig. 3) announces that twelve photograph reproductions will be produced and mailed to the customer for free, with the caveat that payment must be sent upon receipt. This is almost identical to a traditional, transactional exchange of money for goods, but the freebie-ad nonetheless seeks to capitalize upon the false free-ness of the photographs: “WE TRUST YOU,” it announces. The advertisement for a ‘free’ watch (fig. 4) reads, “We firmly believe that the great majority of the public are honest ... **We trust you unreservedly**” (emphasis original). This declaration of trust separates the act of exchanging money for goods from the act of exchanging services and/or money for a freebie. The freely given product becomes a token of a freely bestowed faith in the potential consumer. By taking the gift, the buyer buys in, as it were, to a relationship with the seller that displaces the transactional nature of their exchange. The consumer pays the buyer back in kind with his gratitude—that is, his continued consumption of the buyer’s products and his free advertising.

With the fictional *Bath of the Nymph* as it appears in *Ulysses*, the *Photo Bits* pennyweekly itself is making a similar move as all the freebie-advertisers. *Photo Bits* have advertised their freebie in their magazine (fig. 1) and Bloom has taken them up on their gift offer, materially represented by the *Bath*. He has purchased the Easter number of *Photo Bits* with a clear understanding that he will receive, and perhaps even with the intention of receiving, the freebie that comes along with it. Bloom’s very first thought upon regarding the

*Bath* in *Calpyso* is to note that it is “over the bed” (62)—the marriage bed, that is, that he shares with Molly every night. As long as the *Bath of the Nymph* hangs on Bloom’s wall, he will be reminded of *Photo Bits* and their generous ‘gift’ to him whenever he sees it. By hanging the *Bath of the Nymph* on his bedroom wall, Bloom accepts the pennyweekly’s generosity and the relationship it creates between himself and the magazine. Importantly, he advertises the magazine as well. The picture becomes a figurative extension of *Photo Bits* itself that will adorn the Bloom home indefinitely, advertising not only to Bloom and Molly in their most vulnerable and private moments, but also to any potential consumer who happens to enter the Blooms’ bedroom.

Of course, Bloom does not simply hang the picture on his wall. Our wanderer goes so far as to contribute financially to the image on his wall in framing it, thereby making the object as a whole a material combination of *Photo Bits* and Bloom himself. This is to say, Bloom becomes part-author of the object. As he regards the picture in *Calypso*, he thinks, “Three and six I *gave* for the frame” (63, emphasis mine). When the nymph comes to life during the delirium of *Circe*, she “descends ... [o]ut of her oak frame” (509). She reminds Bloom that he “found” her “hidden in cheap pink paper ... You bore me away, framed me in oak and tinsel, set me above your marriage couch” (510). In Bloom’s fantasy, he fancies himself the nymph’s rescuer; he saved her from her den of cheap iniquity, invested some money in her, and restored her to her rightful place. The nymph’s remarks indicate Bloom’s own shame at enjoying the low-brow softcore pornography of the pennyweekly, but also create a fantasy world in which the classical nymph herself is separate and above such indelicacies. She becomes a pure symbol of tasteful art to which Bloom has contributed.

In *Circe*, the nymph goes on to “[s]adly” repeat text from the advertisements among which Bloom found her: “I cure fits or money refunded. Unsolicited testimonials for Professor Waldmann’s wonderful chest exuber. My bust developed four inches in three weeks, reports Mrs Gus Rublin with photo” (510). The nymph’s words privilege *Photo Bits*’ advertisements—they become just as important in expressing the worth of the magazine as the ‘content’ within it. Both the advertisements and the content are moments of poor taste from which Bloom managed to save the nymph. However, this anxious denigration of *Photo Bits* itself cannot be taken to mean that Bloom feels no personal link the *Photo Bits* company. We must remember the material truth of the matter at hand: the nymph was not actually captured by *Photo Bits* and then rescued from it, but rather *created* and then sold/given away by it. Bloom’s savior persona is therefore a point of tension. Bloom further solidifies his (anxious) financial and emotional relationship with the nymph and *Photo Bits* itself as he admits to “pray[ing]” to the freebie that the pennyweekly gave him (510). He has attempted to remove the nymph from her association with *Photo Bits* by framing the photograph, placing it above his bed, and ritualizing it. In her personification in *Circe*, then, all aspects of the nymph’s ‘identity’ are solidified: she is a damsel in distress to be saved from a den of iniquities, and a ritualistic symbol of high classical art, and a literal, material commodified freebie.

Although the *Bath* comes to Bloom’s mind as an example through which to explain the meaning of ‘metempsychosis’, his second thought upon considering the picture sets up the economical anxieties that are elaborated in *Circe*. Just after he recognizes the picture’s geographical location above his bed, Bloom’s material and commercial ‘mind’ accesses the *Bath* as the advertised freebie that it is—his next ‘thought’ it is that it was “[g]iven away with

the Easter number of *Photo Bits*” (63). The *Bath* is a freely circulated mass reproduction, but Bloom admires it as a “[s]plendid masterpiece in art colours.” Here he parrots the kind of commercialized language that would have accompanied such a freebie’s promotion in *Photo Bits*. Even within this heightened language, however, Bloom acknowledges that the painting is “*in art colours*” (emphasis mine), not “*of*” or “*with*” art colours. The *Bath* is wearing its art colors; its status as an artistic masterpiece is more costume than essence. Although it is marketed as a masterpiece, the material reality of the *Bath* is that it is a “gift” and therefore an advertisement. Unlike a commercial reproduction of a masterpiece, such as one you might buy in a poster or print shop, the *Bath* is a promotion for *Photo Bits* itself. But it would be a mistake to see the *Bath* as simply analogous to free products like the incubators and jewelry that advertisers purport to give away within the pages of the pennyweekly. These objects have a lot in common: they are all freebies disguising in some way their promotional value, or the strings that come attached to the gift, as it were. However, only the *Bath* is close enough to an elevated artistic object (because of its classical subject and its general alignment with the visual arts) that it can almost be treated like one. Once acquired, the *Bath of the Nymph* freebie may, in fact, be treated as a precious object freely given. Bloom certainly sees it this way.

#### HOSPITALITY AND EXCESS: THE COMMODIOUS VICUS OF (GIFT) CIRCULATION

As Bloom participates in the ‘gift’- or ‘freebie’-exchange with *Photo Bits* that results in his possession of the *Bath*, he is once more a recirculation and revision of the classical world and Homer’s hero. The *Bath* hearkens back to Ancient Greece not only in its classical subject but also in its status as a gift, for gift-giving is an important part of the classical



world, especially as it is expressed in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus both gives and receives gifts of hospitality that link his nation-state to others'; he both gives and receives gifts of love that link him to the individuals he cares for or who care for him. Bloom does the same, and these moments of gift exchange reveal the metempsychotic similarities between the economies of *Ulysses* and the *Odyssey*. No gifts—be they freebies or throwaways as in *Ulysses* or precious objects of hospitality as in the *Odyssey*—come for free in either text.

Using the gift theories of Marcel Mauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Georges Bataille, I will investigate the significance of the *Odyssey*'s gift economy and how it is reincarnated in *Ulysses*. Mauss's systems of total prestation allow for the universalization of giving and receiving. Rather than linking two individuals, total prestation links societies. This linking action can be an immoral one, either poisonous or unwanted or both, but is not necessarily analogous to exchange—that is to say, it is not an early precursor to market capitalism. Conversely, for Barthes, gifts are expressions of love and desire, conjoining a loving subject and a loved object into a shared 'sack of skin' (Barthes 128). As romantic as it might sound, Barthes' concept of loving relationships is predicated upon a power imbalance. The subject is disempowered by a stronger desire for the object than the object feels for them. One expression of this asymmetrical relationship occurs in gift-giving; the lover gives the beloved a gift, which becomes a personification of the subject himself. The loving gift becomes, therefore, a cloying link between these two parties. For Derrida, such a gift, one which takes from a donor but creates (gratitude) in the donee, is not a gift at all. Derrida's conception of gift-giving centers on the impossibility of giving without taking, or of giving without incurring debt. Conversely, Bataille would have us remember that all economies produce excesses. Instead of an inherently negative and debt-creating act, Bataille sees gift-

giving as a destruction of an economic excess that is unavoidably created by all economies. This excess “must be spent, willingly or not, gloriously or catastrophically” (21). In Bataille as in Mauss, the possibly glorious gift-destruction can serve to link societies together. It is not purposeless or necessary. Gifts are not merely, as Derrida would argue, an act of negative removal.

In their various ways, all four of these thinkers demonstrate that gifts are not free and therefore cannot be generous (or not generous, and therefore not free). Whether the ‘free gift’ is a set of silver bowls passed from Menelaus to Telemachus in the *Odyssey* or a gold plated watch from the West End Jewellers Company (fig. 4), it comes with strings attached. In retaining a ‘gift’, the receiver of that gift retains more than just the gift itself. The donee also retains the strings that are attached to the gift, and must return that gift in kind (sometimes with interest) in order to get rid of the obligation that a gift creates. Although Bataille’s gifts seem to create an exception because they come from an excess instead of creating a loss, they still perform the non-gifting function of creating links between societies and people. Thought about in Bataille’s sense, though, freebies are significant less so because of the relationship they create between donor/donee (although this relationship is still interesting) and more so because they indicate something about the machinations of the economy in which they are handed out. The freebie is emblematic of Bataille’s concept of prodigal gift-giving. The very existence of the *Bath of the Nymph* proves Bataille’s theory that economies must create and then destroy excess. Thought about meta-textually, the freebies (and throwaways, not quite freebies but linked to them in their free-ness) that populate *Ulysses* are indicative of the excesses of Joyce’s *textual* economy. Freebies and throwaways are therefore: (a) the material objects that create obligatory relationships between two parties, (b) measures of the

effervescence of a particular economy, and (c) indicative of Joyce's meta-textual economic excesses.

Thought about in strict terms, however, the *Bath of the Nymph* freebie does not indicate an economic excess. Bataille notes that any economy produces an excess of expenditure, and that the destruction of that excess in the form of a gift is behind rituals such as the potlatch—the competitive burning and gifting of possessions between groups of indigenous American peoples. Bataille writes: “If a part of wealth (subject to any rough estimate) is doomed to destruction or at least to unproductive use without any possible profit, it is logical, even *inescapable*, to surrender commodities without return” (35). In other words, if prodigal expenditure is produced by an economy, such that it *cannot* be reincorporated in order to produce profit, Bataille envisions the possibility of a system of ‘giving’ which gives to the donee without harming the donor. This sidesteps Mauss’ and Barthes’ constructions; Bataille’s concept of gift as pure expenditure does not link two parties together because of the obligation to repay the costs of the gift (Mauss) or because of a loving sacrifice on the part of the donor (Barthes). The *Bath*’s ‘freebie’ status falls into Bataille’s system; the freebie-pictures are paid for out of the excessive profit that selling an edition of *Photo Bits* creates. If this were not so, the pictures would not be free. *Photo Bits* has decided that a small loss in (excessive) profits is worth the gain provided by their promotions’ placement within the donees’ homes. *Photo Bits* is, therefore, re-absorbing its excesses in order to promote growth. This precludes the *Bath*’s status as a gift in Bataille’s sense, where the destruction of excess is necessarily profitless.

From the first pages of the *Odyssey*, the Maussian gift (not-free, not-generous, obligatory) gift asserts itself at almost every turn. In the classical Greek world, gifts of

hospitality exist under the concept of *xenia*: this Greek word means both ‘hospitality’ and ‘friendship’, and it is created when “elite men who have entered one another’s homes and have been entertained appropriately are understood to have created a bond of ‘guest-friendship’ (*xenia*) between their households that will continue into future generations” (Wilson 23). As Telemachus journeys in the first books of the *Odyssey*, he is the constant recipient of clothing and fine goods from the lords and rulers in whose houses he stays. We then see the same hospitality at work as the story’s focus shifts to Odysseus. Within Homer’s world, the giving of the hospitable gift operates in a liminal position between generosity and violence. Refusing a gift is impolite and impossible, but accepting a gift opens the recipient up to a dangerous xenic link. While the clothing, food, and wines given to Telemachus and Odysseus exist on the side of generosity, gifts like the Trojan horse occupy the pole of violence. (Although the Trojan horse does not make up part of the action of the *Odyssey*, its story is recounted in the *Odyssey*’s eighth book, when Odysseus is at the court of Alcinous, king of Phaeacia. Of course, the story is only told after all thirteen lords of Phaeacia have already given Odysseus gifts, “as hosts should do / to guests in friendship” (8.389-90).) As the poet Demodocus tells it, the Trojans know that they must accept the Greeks’ gift in order to avoid the wrath of the gods. The wooden horse is a generous, linking gift. It literally personifies the Greeks themselves, as they reside within it, and so the Greeks are giving not only a gift but their whole selves to the Trojans. However, in accepting the gift, the Trojans are *too* indebted to the Greeks; the personified gift is too large to be repaid, and the Greeks take their repayment in the form of the riches, women, and slaves of Troy. As different as it may seem, the hospitable gift of clothing and wine exists along the same spectrum as the gift

of the Trojan horse. Both these aspects of gift-giving create a connection between two societies through *indebtedness*, leaving open the possibility of violence in repayment.

The violence of the Trojan Horse takes Derrida's conception of dangerous gift-giving to its logical extreme. Bloom's gift-giving world in *Ulysses* operates on a smaller scale than the *Odyssey* does—fewer people die, at least, as a direct result of the gifts they are given in *Ulysses*. But even in the manner in which it treats gifts, Joyce's novel is again a recirculation and reincarnation of Homer's work. The gifts of *Ulysses* are given in the Homeric, xenic style, with the hopes of connecting societies or familial lines. For example, when Bloom invites Stephen to his home in *Ithaca*, he shows the younger man “supererogatory marks of special hospitality” (629) as he prepares hot cocoa for the two of them. The significance of Bloom's hospitality is that it is beneficial to Stephen, but also that it inconveniences Bloom himself: he must make sacrifices in order to be gracious to his guest. Bloom does not use his favorite mug (itself a gift from Milly) so that he can use a cup identical to Stephen's, and he serves the cream “ordinarily reserved for the breakfast of his wife” to Stephen “extraordinarily,” whereas he gives it to himself “in reduced measure” (629). In a home of finite resources—there is no prodigal excess here—Bloom cannot give without losing. Bloom performs these acts of generosity with the hope of linking himself to Stephen. This impulse to intertwine his existence with Stephen's occurs out of Bloom's desire to turn Stephen into his own son, but the linking of their familial institutions has an economic function that operates just as importantly alongside this longing for filial connection: Bloom wants the link between Dedalus and Bloom families to help both parties in business. He wishes that Stephen would move into Rudy's old room, receive voice lessons from Molly, and in return give Molly Italian lessons to improve her pronunciation while singing (648). By

the time *Ithaca* comes around, Bloom has been nursing these “Utopian plans” (612) for a while, and the gift of cocoa is one attempt to bring out the desired relationship and link Bloom and Stephen’s lives to both their emotional and their economic benefit.

So the various kings and lords of the *Odyssey* give hospitable gifts to Odysseus, and the Greeks give the Trojans a wooden horse, and Bloom gives Stephen generously creamed hot cocoa in a cup identical to his own. All three of these moments are slightly differing instances of what Mauss would call *total prestation*. In this system, contracts are made between societies through the exchange of gifts; this system is totalizing in that it involves all members of a society. Importantly, total prestation involves, just as I outlined in the *Odyssey*’s gift-giving, a threat of violence: receiving a gift “is dangerous ... because it comes morally, physically and spiritually from a person ... The thing given is not inert. It is alive and often personified, and strives to bring its original clan and homeland some equivalent to take its place” (Mauss 10). That is to say, a gift is an extension of its donor, and it cries out to be repaid in turn. This repayment must include not only the value of the original gift itself, but also an added value—what would be called an ‘interest’ in a market economy. This is not because the gift is a *loan*, but because what must be repaid alongside the gift itself is the originary act of giving. In this way, gift-giving is always an escalation with coercion behind it. Sometimes, this coercion comes with the threat of violence, as with the Trojan Horse. In *Ulysses*, it is not violence so much as subsumption that is threatened in the giving of gifts. Bloom’s own totemic presence exists in his gifts to such an extent that, upon accepting them, Stephen will become a part of the family whether he wants to or not. As cited above, Bloom sacrifices the use of his favorite mug in order to use a mug identical to Stephen’s. With this gift-of-loss, Bloom seeks to create a new kind of relationship between himself and Stephen—

one of similarity, unity, and paternity. When he gives Stephen Molly's milk, this act is redoubled. Bloom feeds Stephen the milk of his would-be mother, giving Stephen a gift that subliminally ties him into Bloom's own family line. The 'equivalent' that the Bloom 'clan' strives for in return for these gifts is Stephen himself. Bloom's gifts are attempts to put himself and his wife so deeply into Stephen that Stephen will become their own.

Unlike the gifts of mug and milk and cocoa, the *Bath of the Nymph* is not precisely a gift in the Maussian sense. It is not an object given from one person to another which incurs an obligation on the part of the donee. It is a freebie given from producer to consumer, and more closely linked to Bataille's concepts of prodigality and excess than Homer's *xenia*. The *Bath's* non-specificity (it is both mass-produced and mass-given) degrades its conjoining power. However, just as I demonstrated above in discussing the *Bath's* liminal high art/commodity status, it is not the 'reality' of the *Bath* but rather Bloom's attitude towards it that reveals its joining significance. The *Bath of the Nymph* manages to fall into Mauss's systems of total prestation in that it becomes, as it hangs on Bloom's wall, a 'personification' of that which has no personhood to begin with; that is, *Photo Bits* itself. For Bloom, the freebie has become closer to a gift; as Bloom regards the photo on his wall, one of his first associations is that it was "[g]iven away with the Easter number of *Photo Bits*." It was 'given away with' a purchased issue. With this turn of phrase, Bloom demonstrates that he accesses the picture as a gift rather than as something he purchased, thereby placing the *Bath* in a realm that is separate from the economic transaction that occurred when he purchased the "Easter number" in the first place.

Bloom's gesture in framing the *Bath* and hanging it on his bedroom wall indicates that he treats the picture as a treasured gift and elevated artistic object rather than as a

disposable throwaway. Thus Bloom creates a continued association between himself and the pennyweekly—*Photo Bits* is one of the first things he thinks of when he looks at the image in his bedroom, which he himself has permanently framed and figured as a gift. Bloom elevates the artistic merits of the *Bath* and bestows upon it a use value that is tied up in its exhibition. For Bloom, this image and its recirculated classicism bestow prestige upon his bedroom and his home. The picture is, after all, a “[s]plendid masterpiece in art colours” (63), and importantly has Molly’s coveted approval, for “[s]he said it would look nice over the bed” (63). In ‘looking nice’, the picture decorates the room. This ornamental function could just as well be performed by any other picture, but despite the intensely exchangeable nature of the picture itself (and its freebie-ness), the *Bath of the Nymph* is an object in which Bloom takes pride and by which he is transfixed.

#### TIME: THROWN AND GIVEN AWAY

I’ve addressed how the *Bath of the Nymph* fits variously into the gift constructions employed by Barthes and Bataille. Finally, I will address the way this object is affected by Derrida’s thinking and how this reflects back onto the retentive nature of Joyce’s text. The *Bath* differs from promotional giveaways and throwaways which I discussed above in one important aspect, and that is *time*. Unexpectedly, the *Bath* actually fits in with Derrida’s theory, which is one of the most stringent when it comes to what it will call a gift. Bloom must actively purchase the “Easter number” of *Photo Bits* in order to receive the *Bath* itself. The strings attached to the freebie, that is, are already inherent to the object. This creates a perversion of the notion of the ‘return’ of the gift. Has Bloom already fulfilled the requirements of a ‘gift return’ when he purchases the magazine in order to receive the freebie? Derrida points out that the ideality of the gift is destroyed the moment that a donee



receives a gift and begins to feel indebted to the donor for it. You need only perceive “the *intentional meaning* of the gift, in order for this simple *recognition* of the gift *as gift, as such*, to annul the gift as gift even before *recognition* becomes *gratitude*” (14). In order for a true event of giving to occur, everyone involved in the event

must also forget it right away ... and moreover this forgetting must be so radical that it exceeds even the psychoanalytic category of forgetting. ... For there to be a gift event (we say event and not act), something must come about or happen, in an instant, in an instant that no one doubts does not belong to the economy of time, in a time without time. (*Given Time*, 16-17)

Of course, Bloom has not actually forgotten the fact that it was the *Photo Bits* magazine who gave away the *Bath* (and if he had, the point of giving away the picture in the first place would have been lost). But it is significant that the so-called gift of the *Bath* was in some sense acquired in the exact moment that Bloom paid *Photo Bits* back for their generosity in buying the Easter number itself. In an impersonal sense that perverts Derrida’s conception of recognition and gratitude, the gift of the *Bath* has been given away in a moment that “does not belong to the economy of time” and therefore, in its instantaneity, fulfills Derrida’s idea of the impossible gift.

### CLASSICAL PERMANENCE IN ART

Bloom does not treat every would-be artistic object with the same reverence with which he treats the *Bath*. If the *Bath of the Nymph* has been framed into permanence, Bloom’s interaction with another pennyweekly—the edition of *Titbits* that he reads while on the toilet in *Calpyso*—is predicated upon disposability. When Bloom first reads from *Titbits*, it is only because he wants a distraction while he defecates. “It d[oes] not move or touch him but it [is] something quick and neat” (66) and thus is a perfect *secondary* activity while

Bloom rendered immobile by the primary action of relieving himself. He reads a story, *Matcham's Masterstroke* by Philip Beaufoy, which has won the prize competition for the week. *Titbits*, a real pennyweekly containing excerpts from existing publications but also plenty of reader contributions, ran a number of different competitions for readers to send in stories to the periodical; the winners of these competitions would see their stories printed and receive compensation (d'Erme 29). Bloom reads without much interest in the prizewinning story itself; in terms of its content, he only remarks that it “[b]egins and ends morally” (66), implying at once an ideological bent and an uninteresting stasis. What intrigues Bloom’s imagination is Beaufoy himself and the money he was paid for his story: the periodical announces Beaufoy received “[p]ayment at the rate of one guinea a column” (66). Finishing the story in the exact moment that he finishes defecating, Bloom reflects not on the story itself but again on “Mr Beaufoy who had written it and received payment of three pounds thirteen and six” (67). He then pictures inventing a story “for some proverb” (67) and sending it into *Titbits*. Bloom’s authorial fantasy plays into his fantasy of a united and productive marriage, as he imagines sharing the story’s byline with Molly. Bloom then tears “the prize story sharply” in two and “wipe[s] himself with it” (67). *Matcham's Masterstroke*, then, functions hardly at all as an artistic or literary object and is completely impermanent. The only thing it ‘moves’ in Bloom is his bowels, and its most important function is first distraction and then disposal. In discussing *Nausicca*, Thomas Richards points out that, in Gerty Macdowell’s “transitory consumption of the written word, the sense of having is whittled down to a moment of possession followed by instant obsolescence” (222). The same is true of Bloom with *Matcham's Masterstroke*: the story’s edifying spiritual sense goes in

one ear and out the other, as readily disposed of as its more useful material function: to wipe Bloom's arse.

Again, this "moment of possession followed by instant obsolescence" is not at all present in Bloom's interactions with the *Bath of the Nymph*. Beyond Bloom's treatment of the *Bath* as an elevated artistic object, the nymph of the *Bath* herself presses obtrusively and unavoidably into Bloom's distracted reality and his subconscious. When he personifies the *Bath*'s nymph subject in *Circe*, Bloom reads his own life into the nymph so that their narratives combine inextricably. Bloom's paranoid dream makes clear that he perceives the nymph as a spectator of his life. He also indicates that he fears her judgment, giving her control over one of Bloom's most pressing emotions: his shame. Bloom first attempts to access the nymph as a classical, elevated artistic object, just as he has accessed her picture on his wall: "Your classic curves, beautiful immortal. I was glad to look on you, to praise you, a thing of beauty, almost to pray" (510). Bloom strains to return the artistic object to its initial ritual purpose. The nymph will not allow him to mischaracterize the art/viewer relationship in such a way. "During dark nights I heard your praise," she accuses. "What have I not seen in that chamber? What must my eyes look down on?" (511). The nymph becomes a surveilling, voyeuristic figure, not only seeing but also judging the "soiled personal linen" (511) and the sex acts that she witnesses. The nymph's glib remark about Bloom's 'praise' implicates her as a participant in the Blooms' lovemaking; in making love to Molly, Bloom is performing a perverted ritual of prayer to the nymph.

Beyond his sex with Molly, the nymph is almost literally a sexual object of Bloom's. She recalls: "Unseen, one summer eve, you kissed me in four places. And with loving pencil you shaded my eyes, my bosom and my shame" (510). The nymph's turn of phrase hints at

an existence beyond the boundaries of her oaken frame: kissed in four places on the body, or kissed while in four different physical locations? The language further aligns with Joyce's own concept of the four points of the female body, expressed in a letter to Frank Budgen:

[Penelope] turns like the huge earth ball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning, its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and cunt expressed by the words *because*, *bottom* (in all senses bottom button, bottom of the class, bottom of the sea, bottom of his heart), *woman*, *yes*. (Ellmann 285)

In Bloom's elevation of the nymph, then, she becomes an originary, reincarnated female figure, the idea of the 'classical form' taken to its logical conclusion. In this construction, the nymph still does not escape her pornographic origins. Bloom interacts with her as emblematic of women everywhere. This ends up meaning that the nymph is literal sexual object who cannot escape her pornographic purpose. This intersection of classical purity and extreme sexuality is exemplified in one of the Nymph's later lines of dialogue: "We immortals, as you saw today have not such a place and no hair there either. We are stonecold and pure. We eat electric light. (*She arches her body in lascivious crispation, placing her forefinger in her mouth.*)" (514). Bloom's fantasy world is one in which the classical nymph exemplifies all women everywhere, but only as she molds herself to his own interaction and classification. Bloom is the one who divides her body into four cardinal, genital points. He pictures her as a hairless, vagina-less goddess and also as a 'lascivious' woman sucking on her finger. This interaction with the personified nymph implies that Bloom's interactions with the *Bath* object create and reinforce his own beliefs about womanhood and sexual intimacy: he views the nymph as classical, originary, and emblematic, but only because he can read his own beliefs into her. Just as Bloom's reverent treatment of the *Bath* changes it from a freebie (such as the watch, the incubator) into a gift, it is the *Bath's* pretensions to

classicism and masterpiece status that turn it into an object at odds with the impermanent *Titbits*.

Beyond Bloom's fantasy in *Circe*, which brings the nymph herself out into his own 'real' life, both Bloom and Molly read the 'real' life that surrounds them back *into* the image of the *Bath*. They do this using Molly herself as a metempsychotic figure. When Bloom first considers the *Bath*, among his first thoughts is: "Not unlike her with her hair down : slimmer" (63). His conflation of Molly with the image of the *Bath* goes beyond simple comparison: in *Penelope*, Molly recalls, "he said I could pose for a picture naked to some rich fellow when he lost that job ... would I be like that bath of the nymph with my hair down yes only shes younger" (704). Bloom uses a sexual fantasy to read Molly into the *Bath*: he compares his wife to an already sexualized figure. However, he also wishes to commodify Molly by turning her into a photograph just like the *Bath of the Nymph*, ready for reproduction and subsequent sale to an eager public. Not everyone in *Ulysses* is as reverent towards the *Bath* as Bloom is, and so it would be a mistake to conflate Bloom's treatment with the text's treatment. In recalling how Bloom encouraged her to pose for semi-pornographic photographs, Molly links herself economically rather than ritually or lovingly to the *Bath*. Unlike Bloom, who thinks of the *Bath* as an elevated, freely given artistic object, Molly thinks of money first and the *Bath* after. She accesses the *Bath* not as a freebie, but as something which consciously makes money and as something she herself could emulate to do the same.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF IMPERMANENCE: THROWAWAYS RETAINED

So far, I have placed the *Bath of the Nymph*, elevated by Bloom into permanence, at odds with less permanent objects like the *Titbits* story with which Bloom interacts. The text of *Ulysses*, however, does not allow for true impermanence. The *Tit-bits* page that Bloom disposes of in *Calypso* remains in the back of his mind throughout the rest of the book, and it does so so frequently that it manages to reveal something about Bloom's aspirations and attitudes towards artistic creation. Bloom's frequently recurring fixation on Philip Beaufoy and *Matcham's Masterstroke* contains his own authorial fantasy: he dreams of being able to gain money and status by having a story printed in a pennyweekly like *Tit-bits*. In *Eumaeus*, he considers whether he will ever have "the same luck as Mr Philip Beaufoy ... to pen something ... at the rate of one guinea per column" (601); in *Ithaca* he considers possibilities for future success that include "following the precedent of Philip Beaufoy" in contributing "to a publication of certified circulation and *solvency*" (638, emphasis mine). These fantasies on Bloom's part reveal not only the increasingly commercialized world of literature to which *Tit-bits* belongs, but also an anxious relationship between artist, art, and audience. Bloom passes through *Matcham's Masterstroke* itself, retaining almost nothing from the story, and projects himself in the role of the author. Referring to the journalistic changes that took place at the turn of the twentieth century, Walter Benjamin writes: "The distinction between writer and readership is thus in the process of losing its fundamental character. ... The reader is constantly ready to become a writer" (22-23). Bloom is ready to become a writer, but his primary motivation is not creative. *Tit-bits* is deeply entrenched within the economic realm because of the clear, promotional description of the prizes to be won by contributing to the magazine. Bloom does not dream of writing a fantastic story for *Tit-bits*, but rather of

winning such a prize—his authorial fantasy is primarily fiscal. Although Bloom himself moves quickly through *Matcham's Masterstroke*, treats one of its pages with no reverence as he cleans himself with it, and then throws it away, Joyce and the text of *Ulysses* create meaning and importance out of *Titbits* through retention, repetition, and elaboration.

Just as it prevents Philip Beaufooy and *Matcham's Masterstroke* from entering obsolescence, the text of *Ulysses* hangs onto many other free objects that are 'meant' to be thrown away. One of the first instances that links Bloom to the theme of 'throwaways' (a connection which has already been explored by various critics) is the page of an advertisement that he picks up "from a pile of cut sheets" that are being used to wrap meat while at Dlugacz's in *Calypso*. Bloom reads about an offer to buy land and create a farm in Israel "on the lakeshore of Tiberias," or the sea of Galilee (57). Bloom at first regards this offer seriously, with "his soft subject gaze at rest" (57) and considers the possibilities of owning and farming his own land with Agendath Neitam (Hebrew for 'a company of planters', as Bloom knows). "Your name entered for life as owner in the book of the union," he thinks (58). The idea of returning to the motherland of Israel, making money, and achieving some kind of historical permanence and respect appeals to Bloom. However, his thoughts soon turn sour: "No, not like that. A barren land, bare waste. . . . It bore the oldest, the first race. . . . Dead: an old woman's: the grey sunken cunt of the world" (59). This line of thinking figures Israel and the East as a generative origin that is not privileged and fertile (like Greece is, as we see with the *Bath*) but barren, old, and frightening. Although Israel "bore . . . the first race," it has now been bred out of fertility and into death, greyness, and desolation. These thoughts are frightening enough to warrant a quasi-removal of their cause. Bloom quickly puts the paper out of his mind—not by throwing it away, as was always

meant, but by “[f]olding the page into his pocket” (59). In doing so, Bloom retains the free throwaway paper and the promise of return to his own origin, but also removes it from his immediate view. Bloom will never escape his link to Israel—even as his mythic origin crops up in throwaways, he will retain it.

Bloom is given another throwaway in *Lestrygonians*:

A somber Y. M. C. A. young man, watchful among the warm sweet fumes of Graham Lemon’s, placed a throwaway in the hand of Mr Bloom.  
 Heart to heart talks.  
 Bloo... Me? No.  
 Blood of the lamb.  
 His slow feet walked him riverward, reading. Are you saved? All are washed in the blood of the lab. God wants blood victim. Birth, hymen, martyr, war, foundation of a building, sacrifice, kidney burnt offering, druids’ altars. Elijah is coming. (144)

Having read the text, Bloom crumples it up and throws it off the O’Connell bridge. The “ball bob[s] unheeded on the wake of swells” (145). The “crumpled throwaway” reappears three times in different interpolations in *Wandering Rocks* (218, 230, 239), each time with some textual allusion to Elijah’s second coming attached to it. In Jewish tradition, as Jeri Johnson points out in her notes to the text, the second coming of Elijah must precede the coming of a Messiah (819). Paralleling the throwaway that Bloom reads in Dlugacz’s, the textually retained blood of the lamb throwaway is a locus for Joyce to reelaborate Bloom’s anxiety about the intersection between Judaism and Christianity and between Jews and Christians. (Further, the blood of the lamb throwaway mirrors the would-be thrown-away *Titbits*, which is a locus for Joyce to elaborate Bloom’s authorial fantasy.) Bloom himself is aligned with the throwaway itself when he reads himself into the text on the paper (much in the same way that he reads Molly into the *Bath of the Nymph*)—“Bloo ... Me? No.”

Both of these throwaways connect back to the third throwaway, arguably the most recognizable one produced by *Ulysses*: the dark horse Throwaway that ends up winning the



Gold Cup race. Bloom accidentally claims that he is betting on Throwaway to Bantam Lyons when he refers to his morning paper and not the horse (as Lyons thinks) and tells Lyons that he “was just going to throw it away” (82). The horse Throwaway is in many ways aligned with Bloom himself. All of the throwaway imagery in *Ulysses* returns to center and consolidate around Bloom in *Ithaca*, in a remarkable moment of textual retention where Joyce gathers together multiple strings. The episode’s questioning narrator/arranger prompts an enumeration of the various allusions to Throwaway’s victory that Bloom has experienced throughout the day. Among these “previous intimations” of the results of the race is the following:

outside Graham Lemon’s when a dark man had placed in his hand a throwaway (subsequently thrown away), advertising Elijah, restorer of the church in Zion ... when, when Frederick M. (Bantam) Lyons had rapidly and successively requested, perused and restituted the copy of the current issue of the *Freeman’s Journal* and *National Press* which he had been about to throw away (subsequently thrown away), he had proceeded towards the oriental edifice of the Turkish and Warm Baths ... bearing in his arms the secret of the race, graven in the language of prediction. (628-629)

In this short passage, Joyce provides his readers with a cluster of all the throwaway imagery that I’ve discussed as it relates to Bloom, his racial/religious identity, and the possibility of returning to a mythical, Eastern homeland. The Israel/mythical Oriental imagery of the Dlugacz’s throwaway is linked with the Elijah imagery of the blood of the lamb throwaway and through the mention of Elijah as “restorer of the church in Zion” as well as Bloom’s physical movement towards “the oriental edifice of the Turkish and Warm Baths.” Bloom is aligned with the horse itself: the “Goddamned outsider *Throwaway*” (500, emphasis original)—Bloom, too, is an outsider damned by a Christian God. In typical Joycean fashion, all of the throwaway imagery I’ve discussed above joins together in one delicious pun: Bloom is twinned with Elijah himself as religious language surrounds Bloom’s possession of

“the secret of the race”—that is, the secret of the Golden Cup results as well as of the Jewish people.

All these instances of retained throwaways, when considered alongside the constant recurrence of *Matcham's Masterstroke*, reveal that Joyce's textual economy is retentive with a purpose. Just as there can be no such thing as a gift without an ulterior motive, there can be no such thing as a throwaway without a meaning in *Ulysses*. Once all the retained throwaways are lined up in a row, one can see how Joyce has added meaning to them each time they appear and reappear, culminating in a moment of synthesis and conjoining of both narrative and symbolic threads. The throwaways occupy a place of supposed freeness, which makes them disposable but never makes them disposed. In this way, the throwaways serve to create Bloom's subjectivity as a participant in the market economy of 1904 Dublin and as a participant in culture (extending from literature to religion). Joyce uses the supposition and subversion of disposability to clearly demonstrate the way that personal identity is formed when commodification and mass (re)production extends from the economic to the artistic sphere and back again.

## CONCLUSION

I've often thought that I'm particularly drawn to Joyce because when I read, I'm attuned to patterns, leitmotifs, and repetitions. This is true to some extent of all readers, but it's one of my primary modes of accessing a text and trying to understand the way it works and what it's emphasizing. The retentive textual economy of a text like *Ulysses* to which I have referred so much is perfect for this kind of reading. Tracking one word (like 'throwaway') throughout the book will create an amazing reward of meaning and knowledge. Doing so as you read transforms *Ulysses* from an incomprehensible, inaccessible mess of gibberish into a clear, concise, meaningful work of art. I've always thought that Joyce's use of recurrence and leitmotif was simply what made him an interesting writer, or what made him so keyed into the psychological realism that a text like *Ulysses* creates. Objects like the *Bath*, however, and the various throwaways with which Bloom interacts throughout the course of the book, represent more than just these things. These objects are what make *Ulysses* such a compelling recycling and reincarnation of its classical predecessor, rather than a worthless recirculation.

Joyce elevates throwaway and freebie objects with the attention and elaboration that he gives them. As *Ulysses* retains these objects and attaches meaning to them, Joyce is doing the very same thing to his text's throwaways and freebies that Bloom does to the *Bath of the Nymph* when he frames it in oak and hangs it permanently above his bed. For Joyce's book exists on both sides of the delicious conflict between high art or high modernism and low art or commodity fetishism. He wants the energy and the exhilaration of capitalist recirculation, for no one and nothing recirculates more effervescently than capitalism. The capitalist market does not allow for anything but the made anew, the improved upon, the recirculated and the

reincarnated with a simple gloss of newness. This newness is intrinsic to the value which is being sold, and it is enticing. In a way that is completely contrary to the machinations of the capitalist market, however, Joyce also hopes that nothing is ever thrown away. He wants newness without sacrificing the old. This is why the *Bath of the Nymph* is an ultimately unsatisfying artistic 'object' (although of course it is not an object at all), while *Ulysses* is deeply satisfying. Ultimately, the difference between these two works of art does not lie in their freeness or in their method of (re)production. It does not even lie in the way they are received, for all the gilded frames in the world would not turn the *Bath* into an object like *Ulysses*. The difference is that unlike the *Bath*, nothing in *Ulysses* is new, nothing is worthless or unimportant, and nothing is perfunctory. Nothing is given away.

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## Figures

All figures were accessed and obtained by the author at the British Library archives in London on May 25, 2018, from their editions of *Photo Bits*. Below are the details of each figure's location within the magazine.

**Figure 1:** Volume VIII, No. 183, January 4, 1902, p. ii

**Figure 2:** Volume VIII, No. 183, January 4, 1902, p. iii

**Figure 3:** Volume X, No. 290, January 23, 1904, p. 31

**Figure 4:** Volume VIII, No. 183, January 4, 1902, p. iv

**Figure 5:** Volume X, No. 290, January 23, 1904, p. 31

**Figure 6:** Volume VIII, No. 183, January 4, 1902, p. 28