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READING FLOTSAM AND JETSAM: THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF WASTE IN 'PROTEUS'

Joyce's *Ulysses* is a novel full of waste objects, a work that constantly uses these objects to reflect upon the materiality of the text. This relationship between represented waste objects and the objects of representation centre upon the function of language and the activity of literary production. Tony Thwaites has argued that Joyce's contribution to these fields is distinctive, not only does "Joyce [treat] language itself as [an] object"¹ but he treats the sum of this language, the text, as an object too. Literary texts are a complex series of layers that are made up by the objects of the story, the linguistic objects that tell the story, and the material forms that these take. At each level of analysis one can point towards a waste content that informs how we read and construct meaning through these things. *Ulysses* is full of waste objects; rusty boots, scraps of paper, discarded clothing, corpses and bodily excreta that regularly punctuate and motivate the events described in the novel. *Ulysses* is full of waste words; Joyce frequently manipulates his writing to suggest the absences and contortions that constitute his work. Equally, the various editions, drafts, and manuscripts that impose themselves upon our reading of the novel encourage us to read their absence; these discarded versions ghost the 'final' text in order to compromise the security of our interpretations. The uncertain limits or borders of the work render it materially inexact; we struggle to differentiate the waste from the want. By not designating waste objects as meaningless we can approach the role that waste takes in structuring how we experience Joyce's text. In assessing the waste content of Joyce in this manner we can suggest a new way of reading his work.

'Proteus' gives witness to a complex and disjointed meditation upon the materiality of words, the contingent history of narrative objects and the

¹ Tony Thwaites, *Joycean Temporalities: Debts, Promises, and Countersignatures* (Gainesville: U P of Florida, 2001), 85–86. Italics removed.

temporality of language. These connections and relations, so important to the idea of waste, pulse throughout Joyce's work and find particular intensity in this episode. Despite Stephen's phenomenological experiments, Joyce is careful to remind his readers that the ineluctable modality of the senses is understood through the ineluctable modality of language. This has important repercussions for how we view the subject of waste and how it enters into and reverberates within the novel. Throughout *Ulysses*, we see how the subject of waste is formed in productive negotiation with the language that composes and decomposes its presence.

Stephen draws an explicit comparison between the nature of language and his immediate physical environment by noticing how the beach appears heavy with linguistic deposits. We follow his exploration of the beach and are simultaneously introduced to time's materiality, mediated by language: "These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here" (*U* 3.288–289). By characterising the development of language as a project under continuous change, a change that sees words subtly shift their forms, textures, and meanings over time, Stephen might be understood to entertain a certain form of linguistic Romanticism.² Language is a natural object, a material worked upon by processes that are inevitable, continuous, elemental, and thus inherently temporal. Whilst providing a way of realising the nebulous relationship between material and linguistic matter, this Romantic view of language loses sight of two important factors. The first concerns the sort of linguistic beach Stephen encounters. The beach is not represented as a space of *pure* flux. It is, instead, a silted, articulated and differentiated field, heavy with objects that no longer function. The second factor arises from the status of Joyce's work and the genesis of a particular textual formation: "These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here." The textual archaeology that can be performed on this passage reveals that, whilst the beach might be heavy with language, Joyce's text has passed through its own process of waste management. If we take these factors together, Joyce demonstrates what might be considered the textual space reserved for waste matter. 'Proteus' suggests a material and textual space full of temporal objects, accounting for the composition of both narrative things and the text that realises and represents those things. Having assessed both of these factors,

² This position is taken by Robert Spoo, *James Joyce and the Language of History: Dedalus's Nightmare* (Oxford: OUP, 1994), 108, and follows a particular reading of the *Portrait* which takes Stephen's intellectual development literally, i.e. the aesthetic ideas he takes up reflect his beliefs.

we will be in a better position to analyse how Joyce represents waste as a problem of figuration, of representation, and of the temporality of writing.

It is not just sand that gives the beach its density, its weight. Rather than being a place of constant and dynamic flux, Sandymount Strand is a place that is heavy and getting heavier, a place of unequivocal deposition. In describing a space heavy with waste Stephen is also able to contemplate the weight of the past:

A bloated carcass of a dog lay lolled on bladderwrack. Before him the gunwale of a boat, sunk in sand. *Un coche ensablé*, Louis Veuillot called Gautier's prose. These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here. And there, the stoneheaps of dead builders, a warren of weasel rats. Hide gold there. Try it. You have some. Sands and stones. Heavy of the past (*U* 3.286–291).

The carcass of the dog, the fragment of the boat, even the piles of stones unwanted by dead builders are objects of waste that have found their way to the shore. Although literary waste objects are figured as non-functioning, they do function in the text as signifying objects, by and through their non-functionality; they no longer figure in the time of human activity. So whilst these objects have found a form of obsolescence in the novel, their power to signify continues unabated. If language is to be compared to Sandymount Strand, indeed if language *is* this environment as Stephen seems to suggest, then it is important to note that it is a language full of redundancies, leftovers, or remainders. Words and things share a potential to be washed up, broken down and discarded into a space that signals their persisting obsolescence. What is striking about the passage above is that the sands of the Strand are composed of a multitude of waste objects, by untimely things that once performed a function and perform that function no longer. Joyce represents the seashore as a collagic waste space full of flotsam and jetsam. The important point to be drawn from Stephen's encounter with the language of the seaside is that Sandymount is described as a space of intentional and unintentional disposal; a material and linguistic waste both purposively and incidentally achieved. The Strand becomes a space inextricably associated with the deposition of matter, a contingent space of disposal and systematic pollution.

Unwholesome sandflats waited to suck his treading soles, breathing upward sewage breath, a pocket of seaweed smouldered in seafire under a midden of man's ashes. He coasted them, walking warily. A porter-bottle stood up,

stogged to its waist, in the cakey sand dough. A sentinel: isle of dreadful thirst. Broken hoops on the shore at the land a maze of dark cunning nets; farther away chalkscrawled backdoors and on the higher beach a dryingline with two crucified shirts. Ringsend: wigwams of brown steersmen and master mariners. Human shells (*U* 3.150–50).

The rubbish-laden appearance of the Strand invites us to reconsider the place of waste, to give a narrative determination of an object's possible origin and terminus, its time of use and time of waste. This invitation is brought about, in part, by the tangled concoction of organic and inorganic matter found on the beach. Stephen perceives a confused assemblage of things that does not cohere into a particular whole but rests in fragments. The beach is a collagic place of rats and gold, cadavers and crustaceans, objects that have spread, travelled and migrated from a diverse range of spatial and temporal locations. Netting, bottles, clothing, and doors are “human shells”, related to the time and place of their human use whilst signifying their divorce from former times and places. Stephen thinks the sandflats “unwholesome” (*U* 3.150); they lack sanitary and spatial completion. The beach, for all its associations with leisure, light industry, and the natural elements, is also an incoherent place that amasses the detritus of a variety of places, times, activities, or events. “Never know what you might find”, summarises Bloom during the ‘Nausicaa’ episode, “Bottle with story of a treasure thrown from a wreck” (*U* 13.1249–1250). Perhaps all this articulated chaos points towards the peculiar sort of waste space that beaches offer, a space that could just as well hold buried treasure as it could the corpse of a dead dog. It might be easier to ask what is *improper* to the beach, what, if anything, would one be surprised to find there? This distinctive symptom of the beach may offer an avenue through which to assess language as a spatial problem.

“Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawreck, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs” (*U* 3.2–4), ‘Proteus’ shows how Stephen’s instinct to read is intimately bound to an instinct to write. Most obviously, Stephen’s reading of material signatures soon prompts his writing, as he “scribble[s] words” on a piece of paper torn from Deasy’s letter (*U* 3.406–407). Reading and writing are kinetically separate activities here, but the act of narrative projection as a necessary component of interpreting material things is integral to how Stephen understands the world. The episode displays how objects arrive on the sand, demonstrating how the material traffic at Sandymount offers a rich mixture of physical and imaginative objects. If, for instance, we are to interpret the

presence of the dead dog, and enter into the co-creative aspect of Joyce's text, our reading becomes a kind of writing as we participate in the temporal explanation of this object's presence on the beach. We might assume that this sea-bloated, seaweed-covered carcass may have been washed up by the tide. We might even go further and attempt to decipher how the dog may have expired and, by doing so, participate in the speculation that perpetuates and extends the novel's narrative discourse beyond the body of the text. This is precisely the form of interpretative speculation that Stephen enters into, as he suspects Florence MacCabe's bag might contain a "misbirth with a trailing navelcord" (*U* 3.36) that she intends to discard on the beach. Later in the episode, Stephen imagines the Strand as a place where a corpse might be found, "rising saltwhite from the undertow, bobbing a pace a pace a porpoise landward" (*U* 3.472–473). Stephen's style of interpretation, his reading of the "signatures of things" shows the 'writerliness' of his interpretations and his resistance to the ineluctable modality of the visible. Significantly, McCoy excuses himself from Paddy Dignam's funeral because "a drowning case at Sandycove may turn up" (*U* 5.170–171). Stephen's Tiresian premonition of the corpse, which elliptically connects the Telemachiad with later episodes and once again ties the beach with the city, confirms that the beach is a place of waste through a diverse manipulation of narrative projection and explication. Whilst Stephen sees the dog carcass, he suspects a stillborn, and he imagines the "bag of corpsegas sopping foul brine" (*U* 3.176). A comparison can thus be made as to how all three situations require narrative to project the waste material onto the beach, charting the movement of objects from a virtual or implicit source to a textually contingent place of rest. From this point of view, the heavy sands at Sandymount Strand "are language" for two related reasons. Firstly, the sands are heavy with objects that appear as signatures to be read, requiring a labour of reading and interpretation. These are messy, polyvalent objects that seem to be both in and out of place. Secondly, these sands are heavy with a certain kind of waste object that demand narratives to traverse and mould the time of things, shell-like objects severed from a time of human activity but ineluctably reconnected within the activity of human perception.

"*Corpus*: body. Corpse. Good idea the Latin" (*U* 5.350). Whether as a fleeting quip about the Catholic Church's preference for a 'dead' language or as a comment upon the body language of the Catholic sacraments, this short passage from 'Lotus-Eaters' suggests how language has a materiality, in life as in death. Until now we have set aside the object of Joyce's literary corpus, the thingly status of his text. But, in one way or another the mate-

rial status of his work is an issue that rests at the heart of every study of his works. By making a detour through the textual status of the novel we can return to the passage from 'Proteus' that has exercised us thus far, and, by doing so, we will return with a greater sense of how material and linguistic wastes correspond with one another.

Without rehearsing the long and complex textual history of the novel, I follow George Bornstein's observation that a text like *Ulysses* has "no 'the' text, only a series of texts built up like a layered palimpsest over a variety of compositional stages; further, they [the annotated synoptic editions] signal that any text is already a constructed object, and that other constructions would have been (and are) possible."³ The vast number of manuscripts, notebooks, proofs and typescripts, along with the contested existence of 'synoptic' and 'corrected' editions, all attest to the semantic reservoir produced by Joyce's peculiar writing process and the elastic power of the author-function to expand the waistline of his literary corpus.⁴ Every text is selectively assembled, reassembled, disassembled; *Ulysses* simply represents a particularly intense example of how compositional processes reverberate long after an author's ink has dried. The composition of *Ulysses* closely corresponds to the sands that Stephen encounters in 'Proteus', it is an assemblage of language not silted by wind and tide but shored by Joyce, Sylvia Beach's bungling typesetters, Garland Publishing, Hans Walter Gabler, and countless other groups, individuals, and academic institutions. The Strand is a corpus, an archive, that grows heavier and heavier. Just as we saw with Sandymount Strand, the novel presents a textual space full of linguistic objects thought to function with varying degrees of efficiency. In this sense, designating what is or is not useful in the text is the inevitable labour of interpreting the text. It seems entirely appropriate that a text that is so often described as recycling the canonical and counter-canonical works of European literature should be of such problematic provenance. The presence of waste has an immediate relation to the textual stability of Joyce's work, orientating how one chooses to demarcate the novel's boundaries and situate oneself as a consumer of its fiction. Questions of use and waste, what can and cannot be read, become central to how we experience and assign meaning to *Ulysses*.

³ George Bornstein, quoted in Michael Groden, "Genetic Joyce: Textual Studies and the Reader", in *James Joyce Studies*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 238.

⁴ See Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *The Foucault Reader* ed. Paul Rainbow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 101–120.

In an argument made in connection to *Finnegans Wake*, but which applies equally to *Ulysses*, Jean-Michel Rabaté characterises the maddening task of interpreting Joyce as a constant acknowledgement of the reader's inability to bring the work under control: "we keep misreading, missing meanings, producing forced interpretations, seeing things which are not there."⁵ For Rabaté, the instability of the text brings a new form of reading and a new species of reader, the genetic or 'genreader.' This ideal reader mindfully negotiates the task of failing to read and, by dint of Beckettian repetition, fails to read better. Significantly for us, the genreader progresses "through an excess of intentions and meanings that never adequately match each other [the genreader confronts] literature as a mound of rubbish from which meaning will be extracted".⁶ Although they may appear unlikely points of comparison, Rabaté's characterisation of Joyce's work as a "mound of rubbish" has a lot in common with how Wyndham Lewis dismissed *Ulysses* for its material incoherence, as "incredible bric-à-brac in which a dense mass of dead stuff is collected."⁷ Indeed, Lewis goes so far as suggest that *Ulysses* is "a suffocating, moëtoc expanse of objects, all them lifeless, the sewage of a Past twenty years old, all neatly arranged in a meticulous sequence."⁸ Both Rabaté and Lewis understand the act of reading Joyce as the difficulty of designating what does and does not function in the text. The work of reading is seen as an endeavour to recover or "extract" meaning from linguistic objects that seem obsolete; reading is a form of linguistic resuscitation, an optimistic rummage through a "middenhide hoard of objects" (*FW* 19). The great difference between Rabaté and Lewis is that Lewis feels that Joyce's corpus will remain true to the etymology that Bloom points out ("*Corpus*: body. Corpse"), a disorderly assemblage of undifferentiated matter, without the life of significance or signification. Rabaté, however, sees the value in asking a question that the *Wake's* narrator also asks, "where in the waste is the wisdom?" (*FW* 114). We might take this further by suggesting that the experience of reading Joyce is to comprehend how the waste *is* the wisdom; the activities of literary composition and reception necessarily carry a meaningful waste content, the question is how this waste content might shape our understanding of the work.

⁵ Jean-Michel Rabaté, *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), 207.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Wyndham Lewis, "Wyndham Lewis on Time in Joyce", in *James Joyce: The Critical Heritage*, Vol. 1, 1902 – 1927, ed. Robert H. Deming (London: Routledge, 1970), 359.

⁸ Wyndham Lewis, "Wyndham Lewis on Time in Joyce", 360.

One way that many readers have attempted to transform the excesses of Joyce's narrative and rhetorical technique is to rely on the various systems implied in its construction. The schema authored by Stuart Gilbert and authorised by Joyce details how each chapter carries a Homeric parallel, an emblematic organ, a symbol and a narrative technique. The promise of such a schema is that this complex framework offers a guide by which to organise the novel's diverse material.⁹ Reading *Ulysses* in this context becomes a work of hunting, gathering and matching in order to correspond to Gilbert's taxonomy. For some early readers this implied schematic was what secured the novel's endurance and provided a justification for its literary reputation. For T. S. Eliot, the use of Homeric parallels provides a means "of controlling, ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history."¹⁰ By providing a referential framework based on the myth of antiquity, Eliot believed that the dense mass of stuff, which secured the novel's failure for Lewis, is made to make sense. This is a critical position that relies on analogy or, more importantly, the *promise* of analogy to resolve the novel's numerous mysteries. Whilst Gilbert's schematic offers a paratextual framework, Eliot's reliance on myth operates in a similar fashion; each object or event can be absorbed within a referential web. This is a position that still carries currency among those who seek to elevate *Finnegans Wake* above *Ulysses* for reasons of difficulty or technical sophistication. Ruben Borg has argued that the mythic and symbolic structure of *Ulysses* removes all trace of semantic excess:

The sense that a mythic or symbolic significance necessarily underlies each and every action performed on Bloomsday remains a defining feature of the novel [this] mythic structure always makes it possible to rearrange coincidences, and thus recuperate the singular from meaninglessness by way of retrospective application of a fixed concept or code. It is the grimness of Bloom's situation that the most trivial gestures, or the most quotidian of thoughts, *cannot help having to signify something* – something timeless and communal other than itself.¹¹

⁹ See Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's Ulysses. A Study* (1930; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969). The efficiency of such a system was something Joyce himself doubted, admitting to Samuel Beckett that he "may have oversystematised *Ulysses*". See, Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce: New and Revised Edition* (Oxford: OUP, 1982), 702.

¹⁰ T. S. Eliot, "T. S. on *Ulysses* and Myth" in *James Joyce: The Critical Heritage*, Vol. 1, 1902 – 1927, ed. Robert H. Deming (London: Routledge, 1970), 270.

¹¹ Ruben Borg, *The Measureless Time of Joyce, Deleuze and Derrida* (London: Continuum, 2007), 82–83. Italics are mine.

Of course, the fixity with which Eliot and Ruben characterise the mythic or symbolic is open to debate. For Ruben this framework constitutes some kind of “fixed concept or code” that stabilises the text for the reader. The diverse range of critical opinion that has gathered around the *Odyssey*, not to mention the genetic problems of transcription, translation, and adaptation that compromise its textual stability, mean that the ‘mythic’ offers little in the way of anchorage to this text or any other. Even from a purely narrative point of view, the *Odyssey* does not offer the security of a ‘primitive narrative’ through which to orientate our readings of other works. As Tzvetan Todorov has observed of the *Odyssey*, “Few contemporary works reveal such an accumulation of ‘perversities’, so many methods and devices which make this work anything and everything but a simple narrative.”¹² The intertextual references in *Ulysses*, Homeric or otherwise, can only be said to stabilise the novel if one retains a simplistic or homogenised view of ‘myth’ or the ‘symbolic’. Nevertheless, even if everything that happens in the novel could be recuperated for the mythic or the symbolic, we could still not account for the ever-expanding corpus of Joycean texts. It would not, for example, help us negotiate the compositional process that allowed Joyce to write, “These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here” or to register the textual evolution of this line within the syntactical arrangement we take from the Rosenbach manuscript. Moreover, part of the problem raised by a novel like *Ulysses* is trying to designate what might constitute a ‘quotidian thought’ when, as the following analysis will demonstrate, Joyce’s text interrupts the quotidian to reveal its textual construction. It is not that *Ulysses* “cannot help to signify something” but that it might be able to signify the waste of its own composition.

Our passage from ‘Proteus’, “These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here”, exemplifies this compositional reflexivity, affirming how Sandymount Strand is a textual environment that silts and is silted by language. The notebooks currently held at the National Library of Ireland contain an early draft of ‘Proteus’ that renders the sentence in the following form,

Heavy on this sand is all language which tide and wind have silted up (MS 36,639. II.ii.1).

¹² Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977), 53. For more on the narrative complexity of Homer’s *Odyssey* see Laura M. Slatkin, “Composition by Theme and the *Métis* of the *Odyssey*”, in Seth L. Schein ed. *Reading the Odyssey: Selected Interpretive Essays* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996), 223–237.

In a later draft held at Buffalo, New York, we find a slightly different version,

The heavy sands are language that tide and wind have silted here.¹³

The differences between these three versions reveal some subtle shifts in meaning. In the NLI draft language sits “on” the sand; the material of the beach and the beach itself are kept separate. In the Buffalo and Rosenbach versions, the sands are more explicitly equated with language; indeed, the sands and language become one and the same object. In addition to this, the NLI version suggests that language has “silted up” whereas later versions maintain a more continual process. As well as describing the condition of language as it slowly accretes meaning over time, an ongoing palimpsest of layering and sedimentation, this image also provides a way of appreciating the slow accretion of meaning that Joyce achieves through his revisions. As Sam Slote eloquently puts it, “Stephen’s description of silting language is thus an apt metaphor for the linguistic changes made between the drafts of a work in progress. Between drafts, a new text comes that silts up and over the language of the preceding, receding draft [...] In other words, and with other words, the epiphany is silted.”¹⁴ For Slote, the analogue between textual beach and compositional revision is one of erasure, the language silts over the previous version. Yet the deliberate erasure of “which” in the NLI draft and “that” in the Buffalo is mutely registered in the awkward syntactic arrangement Joyce’s ‘final’ version achieves: “These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here”. By losing the preposition, the line becomes converted into regular iambs, the reading of which operates in contradiction to the line’s embedded sub-clause. This grammatical and rhythmic tension becomes compounded by the carefully divided sentences that precede and follow this one, encouraging an impulse to read through rather than across/over the clause and resist the line’s fluent rhythm. The effect is to expose a lack, an absence of punctuation or preposition. Joyce adopts this technique in a more emphatic way throughout ‘Penelope’. Molly’s monologue progresses with constant interruption; despite its lack of formal punctuation the reader is aware of the marks and measures inherent in the text and how this reading supplements the

¹³ Quoted in Sam Slote, “Epiphanic ‘Proteus’”, in *Genetic Joyce Studies* 5 (Spring 2005). Web. Accessed 6th July 2009.

¹⁴ Sam Slote, “Epiphanic ‘Proteus’”.

presence of a textual absence.¹⁵ In a similar manner, our genetic analysis of 'Proteus' confirms the peculiar existence and persistence of waste; past versions of the text do not 'disappear' but are retained, held in suspended animation. What remains in the Rosenbach version is a syntactic trace of a textual absence, not an absence as such. In this manner, Joyce draws attention to words and textual marks that have *not* silted there, to an invisible tracery of textual detritus that forms the necessary condition of his work in progress. By signifying absent words, words that no longer function in the text but maintain their ghostly demarcations, *Ulysses* muddies its own boundaries and provides a metalinguistic correspondence to the indeterminate spatial qualities of Sandymount Strand.

There is a grammar of waste in operation here that is intensely aware of the material traces and signatures that mark up a work of fiction. The signatures available for us to read are simultaneously the signatures of innumerable textual absences, absences that might be recovered through a comparative analysis of Joyce's manuscripts, drafts and notebooks or supplemented according to the conventions of written English. This reformulates the idea that the novel requires its reader to convert waste into 'meaning'. It is not a question of managing what can and cannot be read, in short, of reading Joyce's semantic excesses. Instead, the foregoing analysis complicates the fidelity of ideas of semantic waste and want, not simply by dramatising the sheer elasticity of Joyce's literary corpus but also by pointing out how the phantom limbs of this corpus might be reanimated. That which is silted within Joyce's work marks a redundancy that gains signification *because* it has been discarded, to dismiss these redundancies as 'meaningless' or an 'intractable excess' would be to dismiss how meaning is formed through the presence of an intrinsic obsolescence. The erroneous correspondence drawn between semantic excess and difficulty presupposes a *loss* or *absence* of meaning, a false equation that fails to appreciate how meaning is constructed through the subtle accretion of textual waste. The value of *Ulysses* is produced through this duplicitous attitude to what is read, unread and misread. Through the commingling of functioning and non-functioning, present and absent textual elements, we confront a work that places textual waste and want upon an indeterminate footing. If we are to attend to the waste content of literature in this way we must abandon the negativity at-

¹⁵ See Derek Attridge, *Joyce Effects: On Language, Theory, and History* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 93–98.

tached to waste and confront the linguistic vigour utilised by writers like Joyce, an economy of meaning that makes linguistic corpses become active. In this sense, Joyce's language is a language of residues, a language that is formed according to the coagulation of active and obsolete constituents. These residues come to prominence through the activity of reading, a correspondence between the reader's designs and expectations and the grammatical, stylistic, and other compositional traces existent in the text. In 'Proteus' Joyce emphasises how his text is a product of and a participant in a language heavy with waste. The value of this 'silt' is intimately bound to the dynamic process that stores, secretes, and discloses the traces of the past. Since the word 'silt' derives from the Teutonic base 'sult-' or 'salt',¹⁶ we should be particularly mindful of the ways that Joyce insists on what is preserved in linguistic objects, open to the *salarium* that might be gained from a close attention to how his text has been and continues to be formed. What 'Proteus' demonstrates is the thingly status of texts, how the materiality of words formulates meaning in a way that invites us to consider and reconsider the formative importance of waste.

¹⁶ Walter W. Skeat, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1910).

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