

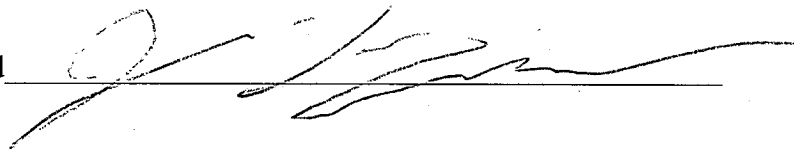
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Daedalus, Dedalus, and Joyce

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2009

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Bachelor of Arts degree with Honors in English

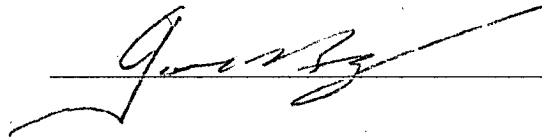
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## ABSTRACT

Daedalus, Dedalus, and Joyce

by

James Robert Kingman

Stephen Dedalus, James Joyce's characterization of himself in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914-15), is often interpreted as a young man who sets out with great artistic ambition but meets with utter failure. The image of Icarus, hubristically flying too close to the sun and drowning as a result, is often used to characterize the aspiring artist. However, the story of Daedalus and his son Icarus is a complicated myth rather than a morality fable. The imagery of the myth also includes the labyrinth, the Minotaur, Ariadne's thread, and other elements that are used subtly by Joyce to relate the story of Stephen's rejection of religion, nationality, and family. Joyce, an author with an encyclopedic grasp of literature, philosophy, history, and art, appropriately structures Stephen's development in a myth centered on the world's first exiled artist. Though it may seem paradoxical that an author consciously rejecting reliance on outworn ideas of the past would use myth—the oldest surviving literary influence—to scaffold his novel, a careful consideration of the entire myth in relation to Joyce's writings reconciles the apparent contradiction. Through an investigation of these themes, this essay deepens our understanding of the relationship between creator and creation.

## I. Introduction: Joyce and Myth

*Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes*  
OVID, *Metamorphoses*, VIII, 18

The epigraph adorning *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* sets the tone of the work that follows. James Joyce chose this epigraph to define his protagonist as an artistic explorer in the Classic model. Ovid was a Roman historian and poet who, in *Metamorphoses*, catalogues the religious and historical traditions of the Greeks. It is hard to overestimate Ovid's contribution to the understanding of Greek Mythology. Joyce implies that he is presenting a hero of the oldest sort, but filtered—like all knowledge and cultural conceptions—through the lens of foreign observers and distant history. This epigraph translates as “And [Daedalus] altered/improved the laws of nature” (Hochman) or “he set his mind to sciences never explored before, and altered the laws of nature” (qtd. in Scholes and Kain, Workshop 267). Critics universally consider Stephen Dedalus, the novel's protagonist, to be an autobiographical representation of James Joyce. By selecting a passage without an antecedent, Joyce leaves the subject of the epigraph indefinite. This construction implies that Stephen or Joyce himself has set his mind to change the laws of nature in the creation of the novel, a bold claim either way. Posterity has demonstrated that Joyce has, in fact, made an impact on the laws of literature, but Joyce makes this claim as the preface to his first novel. Fitting for an adamant classicist, the boldness of such a claim about himself can best be described as hubris.

In James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, layers of nuanced allusion and subtle language combine with Joyce's innovative narrative technique.

Mundane life experiences meld together with epiphanic reflection to explore the development of an artist's mind. To accomplish his literary goal, Joyce wrote a version of himself into the text. Stephen Dedalus is a pseudo-alter-ego of the author, both creation and creator. But Joyce did not merely use his own experiences to create the story that represents a version of his own life. Throughout the novel, Joyce uses outside sources from literature, music, religion, Ireland, and myth to help depict the experiences of his hero/protagonist. Joyce, using his famously encyclopedic intellect, took interest in history, philosophy, language, and religion. The crossroads of these subjects, mythology, provided a rich source of allusion and structure for Joyce. He used myth extensively, primarily Greek myth, drawing heavily from the Daedalus-Icarus myth system.

The nature of myth merits exploration. Primary sources for myth do not exist. The word itself connotes falsehood, but myths are not exactly lies. Rather, they are stories that possess the power of explanation. Some are etiologies that attempt to provide spiritual explanations for natural occurrences, but others are far more complicated and have no single purpose. Regardless of their truth value, it is hard to overstate the impact of mythology on Western culture. Joseph Campbell, authority of myth and author of *The Golden Bough*, used Joyce to articulate his assessment of myth's influence on literature:

Though man's environment greatly varies in the corners of the planet, there is a marvelous monotony about his ritual forms. Local styles of the century, nation, race, or social class obviously differ; yet what James Joyce calls "the grave and constant in human experience" remains truly constant and grave. It arrests the mind, everywhere, in the rituals of birth, adolescence, marriage, death, installation and initiation, uniting it with the mysteries of eternal recurrence and of man's psychosomatic maturation. The individual grows up, not only as a member of a certain social group, but as a human being. (21)

The characters of mythology personify both ideas and ideals. According to Stephen Kershaw, in his *A Brief Guide to the Greek Myths*, "In essence Greek myths are



traditional tales relevant to society, they are ‘good to think with’” (10). A few crucial aspects of Greek myths are relevant to this discussion. Myths are a “set of variants of the same story which exist... independently,” they concern the supernatural or the heroic, they are traditional, and they are “relevant to society” (Kershaw 21).

When Joyce created a characterization of himself, he chose a myth to frame his *Bildungsroman*. This seems ironic for an author who was so immensely concerned with challenging outworn convention that offered what Joyce considered undo or problematic influences, an idea that Ibsen and others propagated and critics have termed ‘mortmain.’ The author’s relationship with this concept is articulated by Herbert Schneidu:

Fear and loathing of mortmain suffuse the early work of James Joyce... Ireland’s seedy reverence for the past was for him a form of lotos-eating that narcotized the populace, allowing it to forget the oppressive present but also blotting out the most obvious needs for reform... Appalled by the difference between that his body told him and what Jesuits had taught, the young Joyce concluded that sexual life in Western countries was corrupted by hypocrisy; clearly it needed probing reexamination and discussion... yet the hold of the past kept its victims from demanding this. For Joyce, the Irish attitude toward the past created an atmosphere that suffocated souls in their cradles and made escape impossible: it was laid on everywhere, like a gas. (4-5)

Though Joyce was concerned with mortmain, he used myth extensively. For Joyce, myth is exempt from being a specter of the past.

Critics have often observed that Joyce used myth to structure his novels, but the focus on Joyce’s use of myth in *A Portrait* has been consistently overshadowed by his extensive use of the mode in *Ulysses*. In what is “perhaps the most influential formulation of its time” (Block 18), T.S. Eliot famously states in his 1923 essay, “*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth,” that “I hold [*Ulysses*] to be the most important expression which the present age has found; it is a book to which we are all indebted, and from

which none of us can escape” (Eliot 424). Eliot, himself responsible for *The Waste Land* in the same year as *Ulysses*, refers to a ‘mythical mode’ that breaks from the past. “In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity,” Eliot writes, “Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him...It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (426). This classic praise of Joyce’s method is not, however, extended to *A Portrait*. Eliot specifically states that “The novel, instead of being a form, was simply the expression of an age which had not sufficiently lost all form to feel the need of something stricter. Mr. Joyce has written one novel—*The Portrait* [sic]...I do not suppose [he] will ever write another “novel” (426). He states that it is *Ulysses*, not *A Portrait*, that permits authors to “instead of the narrative method...now use the mythical method” (426). The earlier work is considered a completely different type of work than *Ulysses*.

It is not the intent of the present essay to establish that *A Portrait* is structured around myth in as extensively or as successfully of a manner as *Ulysses*. However, the trend in criticism indicates that because *Ulysses* is such an exhaustive and exploratory text, the tactics used in the work are all inherently new to Joyce’s work. Eliot is not the only esteemed critic who has placed *A Portrait* squarely in a different category than *Ulysses*. Northrup Frye places it, with Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*, a Novel-Confession while *Ulysses* alone is called a Novel-Romance-Confession-Anatomy (Denham 115-116). Frye does grant that *A Portrait* is not a normal novel, but that is because of its autobiographical influence, and the “theoretical and intellectual interest in religion, politics, or art” that are “alien to the genius of the novel proper, where the technical

problem is to dissolve all theory into personal relationships" (313). It is not a consideration of anything mythical in form or content that marks *A Portrait*, according to Frye. What justifies *Ulysses* and not *A Portrait* is the following speculation:

If a reader were asked to set down a list of the things that had most impressed him about *Ulysses*, it might reasonably be somewhat as follows. First, the clarity with which the sights and sounds and smells of Dublin come to life, the rotundity of the character-drawing, and the naturalness of the dialogue. Second, the elaborate way that the story and characters are parodied by being set against archetypal and heroic patterns, notably the one provided by the *Odyssey*. Third, the revelation of character and incident through the searching use of the stream-of-consciousness technique. Fourth, the constant tendency to be encyclopaedic and exhaustive both in technique and subject matter, and to see both in highly intellectualized terms. It should not be too hard for us to see that these four points describe elements in the book which relate to the novel, romance, confession, and anatomy respectively. *Ulysses*, then, is a complete prose epic with all four forms employed in it, all of practically equal importance, and all essential to one another, so that the book is a unity and not an aggregate. (Frye, *Anatomy* 314)

This is a reasonable standard to test Frye's theory of modes in previous sections of his essay, but *A Portrait* does not receive the same consideration. Rather, *A Portrait* is pigeon-holed into the category of the "introverted, but intellectualized in content" confession "when we find that a technical discussion of a theory of aesthetics forms the climax of Joyce's *Portrait*" (Frye, *Anatomy* 308).

Even when the mythic modes of *A Portrait* and his later work are compared, the earlier novel receives an honorable mention rather than a close examination. Gould claims that "The simultaneity and coincidence of meaning [in *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*] is, in effect, the open-endedness of mythic thought, available in a development from the epiphanies of *Portrait*" (131). Because of the excellence of Joyce's later novels, the place that critics go when exploring the use of myth in Joyce is almost always to *Ulysses* and not to *A Portrait*. The significance of the use of myth in the development of

Joyce has been acknowledged as a precursor, but not as an end to itself, such as the claim that "*Portrait* cunningly exploited [Joyce's] own autobiography, but also, with the Daedalus symbolism, opened up the strategy of overlaying the past, like a template, on the present. *Ulysses* was a triumphant result" (Schneidu 11).

Some consider the scope and significance of *Ulysses* so much greater than *A Portrait* that the epic does not dwarf the shorter work, but it is the only reason that *A Portrait* is considered at all. "The *Portrait of the Artist* seemed to me a rather cold and priggish book," writes Wyndham Lewis, "It is well done...and that was all ...No writing of [Joyce's] before *Ulysses* would have given him anything but an honourable position as the inevitable naturalist-french-influenced member of the romantic Irish revival" (91). Most critics do not have this extreme of a position, but the disparity in critical acceptance is near universal.

E.M. Forster has no patience for any of Joyce's attempts at structuring around myth. *Ulysses* is "a dogged attempt to cover the universe with mud, it is an inverted Victorianism, an attempt to make crossness and dirt succeed where sweetness and light failed, a simplification of the human character in the interests of Hell" (178). The reliance on myth is "like a bat hanging from a cornice" (178). Not only does it not settle with Forster, but he asks of the structure of the novel "Does it come off? No, not quite" (179). These observations should be taken in light of his disclaimer that "*Ulysses* (Shakespeare & Co., Paris) is not at present obtainable in England. America, more enlightened, has produced a mutilated version without the author's permission and without paying him a cent" (177). Forster's only consideration of Stephen is that he "tries to explore his life through the intellect...and now he is worked into this epic of

grubbiness and disillusion" (179). It is unclear precisely how oblivious Forster was to Stephen's disillusionment in *A Portrait*.

Probably alone among critics in her claim that *A Portrait* is superior to *Ulysses* is Virginia Woolf, who claims that *A Portrait* showed that:

In contrast with those whom we have called materialists, Mr. Joyce is spiritual; he is concerned at all costs to reveal the flickering of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain, and in order to preserve it he disregards with complete courage whatever seems to him adventitious, whether it be probability, or coherence, or any other of these signposts which for generations have served to support the imagination of a reader when called upon to imagine what he can neither touch nor see. (Woolf 109)

Of course when she wrote this, the invocation to "not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small" was for "Any one who has read *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or, what promises to be a far more interesting work, *Ulysses*, now appearing in the *Little Review*" (109), dating her criticism during the serial production of the epic. Once the remainder of *Ulysses* was published, she retracted her praise for *Ulysses* and claimed that it was "underbred,' 'the book of a self taught working man,' [and of] 'the work of a queasy undergraduate picking at his pimples'" (qtd. in Ellman 528). So even though she was virtually alone in considering *A Portrait* to be the more inspiring modernist form, this position comes by default.

The lack of consideration for the subject of the labyrinth myth in *A Portrait* is striking. White spends a considerable segment of an essay called "Mythological Fiction" analyzing the central position of the labyrinth myth and the town of Bleston in Michel Butor's "Passing Time" (84-89). Butor himself is an essayist on Joyce as well as an author, and this essay considers Joyce's mythological work—*Ulysses*, that is—quite

extensively. Two influences on Butor's novel, the labyrinth and *A Portrait*, have a clear correlation that is conspicuously absent from print. Frye considers the "intricate scheme of parallel contrasts" (314) of *Ulysses* that places "The romantic archetypes of Hamlet and Ulysses are like remote stars in a literary heaven looking down quizzically on the shabby creatures of Dublin obediently intertwining themselves in the patterns set by their influences" (314). Though it has not been considered to be the case by critics in the past, similar archetypes are included in *A Portrait*—those of Theseus, Icarus, the Minotaur, and Daedalus.

The consideration of a comprehensively mythic structure behind *A Portrait* is so untouched in criticism that the most extensive source is Diane Fortuna's unpublished 1967 doctoral dissertation "The Labyrinth of Art: Myth and ritual in James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*." This dissertation for a philosophy degree considers anthropological and sociological contexts which frame the use of the labyrinth as an image. In it, she explains that:

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is essentially a mythic novel because both its form and its content are drawn from contemporary accounts of the labyrinth myth. No novel has ever wound itself through so many repetitions of prior incidents, so many recapitulations of terms associated with winding corridors, threads and mazes, so many deliberate passages in which the protagonist seems to be involved in an intricate initiation that includes caves, gates, circling dances, nets, divination, auguries, ritual births, death, and rebirth, riddles, hidings, escapes, and finally ascension. Here the presence of these terms simply evocative, the reader might assume that they constitute the basis of a highly eccentric vocabulary. But when the name of the main character is Daedalus, the implications invite further exploration. (Fortuna 50)

Her treatment and theme are excellent, but lacks a consideration of Joyce autobiographic and exploratory artistic intentions. She focuses, successfully, on the structure of *A Portrait* being a labyrinth, but does not focus on the development of Stephen and what

that reveals about Joyce as an artist. Depending on her insight but departing from her conclusions, this essay will explore the mythic mode of development in Stephen Dedalus.

## II. The Daedalus Myth: More than the fall

This paper will be limited to the mythological cycle of Daedalus and Icarus. The numerous characters within this myth are driven by different desires and represent many of the tensions in *A Portrait*. All of these, however, are bound by a central structure: the labyrinth. I will demonstrate how the structure and allusions in *A Portrait* necessarily connect it to the labyrinth myth. Though the historical criticism considering Stephen Dedalus as a Daedalus or an Icarus figure is well-informed, the protagonist is represented by nearly each character involved in the myth. The representations of these characters create a complex but coherent whole that presents truth in accordance with the aesthetic theories that Joyce articulates in his early essays and in *A Portrait* itself. This representation of truth explains why the Irish author so concerned with escaping from the heavy influences and traditions of the past chose a Greek myth as the uniting structure of his novel to articulate that desire to break from the molds of the past.

Most readers of *A Portrait* know that Daedalus made wings so that he and his son, Icarus, could escape a labyrinth, and that in the process Icarus flew too close to the sun, the wax melted, and Daedalus's son drowned. However, as Robert Scholes and Richard Kain explain in their collection of 'source material' for *A Portrait*, most readers know that Stephen comes from the Christian tradition and Daedalus from the Greek, but "are unfamiliar enough with the details of both Ovid and the New Testament to miss many of the allusive parallels which Joyce has worked into his text" (264). Scholars have written extensively about the significance of 'Dedalus' as the last name for Joyce's alter ego, the epigraph from Ovid, and the depiction of Stephen as an Icarus who has flown too close to



the sun. These are all significant aspects of the work under consideration, but Joyce also uses more obscure aspects of this myth to connect with his pursuit of the creative process.

One characteristic that distinguishes myth from literature is that literature cannot be divorced from its form while retaining its essential nature, while only the content of a myth must be conveyed to give meaning to the work. As such, most scholars are able to work with English translations of a myth. The most common translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is from Mary M. Innes, reprinted in *The Workshop of Daedalus*. Integrity of translation is important, but not necessary to understand allusions to a myth. Unlike many of the critics who have considered the author's use of the allusions in *Metamorphoses*, Joyce read Ovid in its original language. Joyce probably would not consider these translations sufficient, considering the respect for Latin he expressed in an essay called "A Study of Languages" at seventeen-years-old. He claims that "a single Latin phrase or word is so complex in meaning, and enters into the nature of so many words, and has yet a delicate shade of its own, that no single word in English will properly represent" (Joyce, Languages 30). However, the complex content rather than specific form is the key aspect of myth. To convey adequately the content of the myth to be considered, what follows is the entire story, including relevant direct quotations from Innes' translation.

Homer, the oldest source to mention Daedalus, describes him living on Crete as the creator of Ariadne's 'dancing ground.' However, later sources place the Daedalus that Joyce was familiar with as being originally from Athens. Daedalus felt threatened when one of his pupils invented the saw from either the jawbone of a snake or the backbone of a fish and pushed him off of the Acropolis of Athens. The court, the

Areopagos, condemned him, and he fled to Crete (Kershaw 277). Daedalus then became one of the subjects of King Minos, the namesake of the pre-Hellenic culture on Crete, the Minoans.

King Minos of Crete prayed that Poseidon would send him a bull that he could sacrifice to the sea god in order to gain his favor. When a beautiful white bull appeared, Minos was too fascinated with it to complete the sacrifice. In response for breaking his word, Poseidon cursed Pasiphae, the wife of King Minos, to lust after the bull. To help her mate with the bull, she enlisted the help of Daedalus. He built a wooden cow that allowed Pasiphae to climb into it and appeared lifelike enough to attract the bull. The bull mounted her, and she bore a half-man, half-bull, the Minotaur. Minos, disgusted and appalled by his wife and her offspring, constructed a labyrinth in which to put the Minotaur. To accomplish this:

Daedalus, an architect famous for his skill, constructed the maze, confusing the usual marks of direction, and leading the eye of the beholder astray by devious paths winding in different directions. Just as the playful waters of Maeander in Phrygia flow this way and that, without any consistency, as the river, turning to meet itself, sees its own advancing waves flowing now towards its source and now towards the open sea, always changing its direction, so Daedalus constructed countless wandering paths and was himself scarcely able to find the way back to the entrance, so confusing was the maze. (qtd. in Scholes and Kain 266-7)

Minos was very powerful at this time and required the citizens of Athens to pay a tribute of seven youths and maidens each year, who Minos fed to the Minotaur. Theseus, a hero of Athens, volunteered to liberate the Athenians and disguised himself as one of the youths in order to slay the Minotaur. However, when he landed he became romantically involved with Ariadne, one of the daughters of Minos. Ariadne knew that Theseus would be unable to escape the labyrinth, so she, like her mother, asked Daedalus

for help. Daedalus gave Ariadne a spool of thread which she passed on to Theseus. He unwound the thread as he walked through the labyrinth to the center, where he fought and slew the Minotaur. Then he escaped, "for, thanks to the help of the princess Ariadne, Theseus rewound the thread he had laid, retraced his steps, and found the elusive gateway as none of his predecessors had managed to do" (qtd. in Scholes and Kain 267).

Theseus and Ariadne then fled Crete. Minos was furious that Daedalus helped Ariadne and Theseus, and imprisoned him in the labyrinth. Ovid writes:

Meanwhile Daedalus, tired of Crete and of his long absence from home, was filled with longing for his own country, but he was shut in by the sea. Then he said: "The king may block my way by land or across the ocean, but the sky, surely, is open, and that is how we shall go. Minos may possess all the rest, but he does not possess the air." With these words, he set his mind to sciences never explored before, and altered the laws of nature. (qtd. in Scholes and Kain 267)

To change the laws of nature, as referenced in Joyce's epigraph, Daedalus made wings of wax and feather, though and Daedalus was the first to attempt flying, and flew out of the labyrinth successfully, and:

There he hovered, moving his feathers up and down. Then he prepared his son to fly too. "I warn you Icarus," he said, "you must follow a course midway between earth and heaven, in case the sun should scorch your feathers, if you go too high, or the water make them too heavy if you are too low. Fly halfway between the two. And pay no attention to the stars, to Bootes or Helice or Orion with his drawn sword: take me as your guide, and follow me! ... As he worked and talked the old man's cheeks were wet with tears, and his fatherly affection made his hands tremble. He kissed his son, whom he was never to kiss again: then, raising himself on his wings, flew in front, showing anxious concern for his companion, just like a bird who has brought her tender fledglings out of their nest in the treetops, and launched them into the air. He urged Icarus to follow close, and instructed him in the art that was to be his ruin, moving his own wings and keeping a watchful eye on those of his son behind him. Some fisher, perhaps, plying his quivering rod, some shepherd leaning on his staff, or a peasant bent over his plough handle caught sight of them as they flew past and stood stock still in astonishment, believing that these creatures who could fly through the air must be gods... Drawn on for his eagerness for

the open sky, he left his guide and soared upwards, till he came too close to the blazing sun, and it softened the sweet-smelling wax that bound his wings together. The wax melted. Icarus moved his bare arms up and down, but without their feathers they had no purchase on the air. Even as his lips were crying his father's name, they were swallowed up in the deep blue waters which are called out after him. The unhappy father, a father no longer, cried out "Icarus!" "Icarus," he called. "Where are you? Where am I to look for you?" As he was still calling "Icarus" he saw the feathers on the water, and cursed his inventive skill. He laid his son to rest in a tomb, and the land took its name from that of the boy who was buried there. (qtd. in Scholes and Kain 268)

Most consideration of Daedalus ends here, but there remain important aspects of his life that follow his exile from Crete:

As Daedalus was burying the body of his ill-fated son, a chattering lapwing popped its head out of a muddy ditch, flapped its wings and crowed with joy. At that time it was the only bird of its kind, and none like it had ever been seen before. The transformation had been a recent one, and was a lasting reproach to Daedalus: for his sister, knowing nothing of fate's intention, had sent her son, an intelligent boy of twelve, to learn what Daedalus could teach him. This lad, observing the backbone of a fish, and taking it as a pattern, notched a series of teeth in a sharp iron blade, thus inventing the saw. He was the first, too, to fasten two iron arms together into one joint, so that, while remaining equidistant, one arm might stand still, and the other describe a circle round it. Daedalus was jealous, and flung his nephew headlong down from Minerva's sacred citadel. Then he spread a false report that the boy had fallen over. But Pallas, who looks favourably upon clever men, caught the lad as he fell, and changed him into a bird, clothing him with feathers in mid-air. The swiftness of intellect he once displayed was replaced by swiftness of wing and foot. His name remained the same as before. However, this bird does not soar high into the air, nor does it build its nest on branches in the tree-tops; rather it flutters along the ground, and lays its eggs in the hedgerows, for it is afraid of heights, remembering its fall in the days of long ago. (qtd. in Scholes and Kain 268-9)

In addition to this, a tradition holds that Minos sought to find Daedalus to punish him for escaping, so he asked the king of Sicily—where Daedalus had landed—to hold a contest. He asked for anyone who was able to string a conch shell that he possessed. Daedalus did so by securing a thread to an ant and sending it through the shell. Minos

surmised that Daedalus was the only person clever enough to do this, so he must be responsible. However, Minos was killed in his bathtub before attempting to punish Daedalus (Kershaw 285). One account claims that Daedalus received “a hospitable welcome from this same Cocalus, king of Sicily, but spent the rest of his life in exile, mourning for his dead son Icarus” (Fortuna 24). Then, the tales of Daedalus drop off. No reliable tradition explains what happens to Daedalus after Sicily (Kershaw 285).

There are some key observations regarding Daedalus to make before exploring Joyce’s texts. First, there are two accounts of Daedalus threading a circular work of complexity and two of pushing other bright minds off of high places out of jealousy as a response for their invention of the saw. Myths are often the result of several different sources, so it is often difficult to determine a specific timeline for myths. Repetition, a necessary element of the complexity of the labyrinth, is a component of the Daedalus story as well. Readers cannot identify all of the false leads and passageways in exploration of Daedalus and his relation to the labyrinthine text of *A Portrait*. Aside from simply the act of ‘flying too close to the sun,’ the traditionally-interpreted symbol of hubris, “the full myth includes acts of simony, lust, imprisonment, and betrayal. It mentions the invention of dolls, awes, augers, dances, the separation of legs of statues, wings, sails, masts, as well as the wooden cow and the labyrinth itself” (Fortuna 25). The essential objects and images of the full myth of Daedalus emerge as themes in *A Portrait*, connecting the ancient myth with the modern novel.

Scholars occasionally misconstrue the source material for the mythic model, and thereby offer misguided opinions. Margherita Neville, for example, simplifies the story as follows:

Dedalus was a skillful artificer, an inventor and artist. He built a labyrinth, an intricate maze where the monster Minotaur was kept. Dedalus and Icarus, his son, were confined in the labyrinth. (The only way to escape was to fly.) Dedalus made wings of feathers and wax and warned Icarus not to fly too close to the sun. Icarus, delighted with his new power, ignored the warning and plunged into the sea. From this myth emerges the important image of the labyrinth, "...the psychic chaos from which all men must escape in order to obtain selfhood" The other self, which must be defeated is represented by the Minotaur enclosed in the labyrinth of the unconscious world. (14)

Later, she refers to "Dedalus...escaping the Minotaur" (Neville 12, 32), which he did not. Using an incorrect name of the protagonist and incorrect details of the myth misinforms the interpretations of *A Portrait*. The problem with this interpretation is its ignorance of fundamental tensions in the myth. Daedalus was instrumental in the Minotaur's creation and imprisonment, but Theseus defeated the monster before Daedalus and his son were imprisoned. Daedalus and Icarus did, in fact, know how to escape the labyrinth, but they chose to fly to escape the entire island surrounding the labyrinth, including its politics, and to do something that had been considered impossible, much as Joyce and Stephen do by leaving Ireland to "forge in the smithy of [their souls] the uncreated conscious of [their] race" (Joyce, *Portrait* 288).

As demonstrated above, an important aspect of the myth that complicates reading is the agency of the actors. Often the characters in the myth are in situations that they themselves helped create, such as the self-imposed exiles of both Joyce and his creation. One could label myth the ultimate instance of the indefinable and inescapable past influencing daily life and artistic norms. As such, Joyce's employment of a myth to present the story of his autobiographical character discovering his need to break from the past certainly seems illogical. However, the use of the Cretan labyrinth myth as a central structure of his story actually lays the foundation for his assertions regarding the

necessity of rejecting the illogical, constraining institutions of the past. Joyce uses this myth as a structure for his autobiography. "The notion of personal myth," writes Block, "is a modern restatement of the urge toward coherence, synthesis, and generalizing power that has been the property of all literature. As such, it has been a significant incentive for the writer in quest of an organizing center to his art" (21). As such, this piece of ancient imagery serves as an appropriate and individualized tool for Joyce to reject the influences of the past.

### III. Joyce's Mythical Youth: Evidence of early influence

James Joyce was familiar with the classics as were all schoolboys at that time. In his volume on the education of Joyce, Bradley points out that in 1894, at age twelve, "his best mark was in Latin, where...he had translated prepared selections from Caesar's *de Bello Gallico* and the poetry of Ovid" (112). The experience clearly stayed in Joyce's memory, as he depicts the schoolboy protagonist of "An Encounter" reciting segments from Caesar's work, beginning with the recurring epithet "Hardly had the day dawned" (19). Additionally, Stephen Dedalus discovers schoolboy graffiti "written in backhand in beautiful writing: *Julius Caesar wrote The Calico Belly*" (Joyce, Portrait 49). Historical prose was appealing to Joyce, but the myth presented in verse seemed to strike a more personal chord. At age twelve, when assigned to write about 'My Favorite Hero,' "he passed over Hector and Achilles and other burly men to choose wily Ulysses, of whom he had read in Lamb's *The Adventures of Ulysses*" (Ellman 46).

From an early age, Joyce's interest in the heroes of the classics extended beyond curiosity. Near the end of chapter I, as Stephen resolves to complain to Father Conmee about his unfair punishment by Father Dolan, he is spurred to reflection on his place in context with the classics when one of the other schoolboys says "The senate and the Roman people declared that Dedalus had been wrongly punished" (60). As Stephen reacts to the invocation of the ancient brand of authority, SPQR, his internal narrator claims that:

He would go up and tell the rector that he had been wrongly punished. A thing like that had been done before by somebody in history, by some great person whose head was in the books of history. And the rector would declare that he had been wrongly punished because the senate and the Roman people always declared that the men who did that had been wrongly punished...History was all about those men and what they did



and that was what Peter Parley's Tales about Greece and Rome were all about. (60).

It is clear that he is comparing his actions to those that he had been studying in the classics. The final sentence of this reflection describes a picture of Peter Parley on the cover of the book to which Stephen refers and ends with "he was walking fast along the road to Greece and Rome" (60). In the same manner that Joyce leaves an indistinct antecedent in the epigraph, this final sentence clearly can also connect to the conceptions that the young Stephen and his creator have of themselves.

Ellman notes that it was during this time that "Lucifer, Parnell, Ulysses — dissimilar as they were, they began to cluster solemnly in [Joyce's] mind. It was not so much that he wanted to become them...but he wanted... interplay among their images and his own" (Ellman 47). The structure of his young education juxtaposed figures of religion and history with characters from Greek myth. The Daedalus myth in particular took on a more personal nature. It is not possible to know exactly at what point Joyce latched on to this myth, but we know that by "2 February 1904...Joyce was intending to use the name 'Daedalus' in an autobiographical novel" (Feshbach 197). Readers could simply assume that Joyce considered himself to be an artist, so he identified with the quintessential artist of myth and wrote his autobiographical character as having those traits. However, a consideration of Joyce's developing aesthetic theory and historical trends proceeding from *A Portrait* and Joyce's conception of myth itself indicates that his self-identification extends beyond idealization of himself as an artist.

Other evidence does exist that, in the development of Joyce's aesthetic theory, he considered the Daedalus myth. In 1899, Joyce wrote an essay referred to by scholars as "Royal Hibernian Academy 'Ecce Homo,'" an essay that, according to Mason and

Ellman's preface to this essay, states his position "with a new precision and assurance" (31). The essay considers a painting, *Ecce Homo* by Michael Munkacsy. Joyce praises the painting, claiming that "the aspect of the artist is human, intensely, powerfully human" ('*Ecce Homo*' 35). The crowd at the Passion represents "the baser passions of humanity, in both sexes, in every gradation, raised into a demoniac carnival," he claims that depicting John as a man rather than an evangelist and Mary as a mother rather than a Madonna, "is in itself a token of the highest genius" (35-36). To Joyce, this painting represents true drama, which he defines as "the interplay of passions; drama is strife, evolution, movement in whatever way unfolded" (32). As with Stephen's aesthetic theory in chapter V of *A Portrait*, this essay "joins religion and art, spirit and realism, drama and idealization" (Feshbach 202).

A few months later Joyce wrote another essay called "Drama and Life" that attempts to "draw a line of demarcation between literature and drama" (39) and explain that significance on the relationship with art. To Joyce, the case for art representing beauty rather than truth is an "insidious claim...chiefly because beauty is to men an arbitrary quality and often lies no deeper than form" while "truth has a more ascertainable and more real dominion" (43). He instead posits that "men and women seldom think gravely on their impulses towards art. The fetters of convention bind them too strongly" (44). It is in this work that he first claims that "art is marred by such mistaken insistence on its religious, its moral, its beautiful, its idealizing tendencies." Moreover, "it is this doctrine of idealism in art which has in notable instances disfigured manful endeavour, and has also fostered a babyish instinct to dive under blankets at the mention of the bogey of realism" (44).

Taken together these two essays form the basic tenets of the aesthetic theory that Joyce exhibits throughout his writing. He denies beauty for the sake of truth. Fortuna characterizes these opposing ideals as 'romantic' art which "sees itself in terms of the monstrous or the heroic, ideal extremes or characters which function as representations of ideals," and 'classic' art, which "embodies human truths according to human laws or patterns that actually exist in time and space" (16). Based on his innovative style and the themes of his writing favoring unconventional naturalism, it is clear that Joyce considers classic art to be superior. This position, adopted by Joyce at such an early age, became a basic tenet of the school of modernism. "We agree, I hope," writes Joyce's contemporary T.S. Eliot, "that 'classicism' is not an alternative to 'romanticism,' as of political parties... on a 'turn-the-rascals-out' platform. It is a goal toward which all good literature strives, so far as it is good, according to the possibilities of its place and time" (426). That Stephen's aesthetic theory resembles Joyce's at the same age is only more evidence of the strong correlation between the two in *A Portrait*.

Because of the common associations of myths with fairy tales or legends it is counterintuitive that Joyce would embrace myth as an embodiment of the real. Joyce writes that "life we must accept as we see it before our eyes, men and women as we meet them in the real world, not as we apprehend them in the world of faery" (Drama 45). Additionally, he claims in this essay that "Greek drama is played out. For good or for bad it has done its work, which, if wrought in gold, was not upon lasting pillars. Its revival is not of dramatic but of pedagogic significance" (39). This seems to be an indictment on the reliance on Greek myth. However, though Greek drama often transmitted the content of myth and informs our understanding of the Greek mythological

system, it is not itself myth. Joyce was criticizing the form of the drama, not the myth itself. He levied criticisms not against art that is simply old in form and content, but rather art that is obsolete. If myth is useful to the accurate depiction of truth, then it is useful to art. Kershaw's introductory definition of myth as a culturally relevant story to explain reality exempts myth from Joyce's criticism. In fact, the powerful and explanatory content of myth is foundational to what Joyce considered art.

Joyce not only allows Greek myth but actually invokes the Daedalus myth in particular to explain his aesthetic theory. In the beginning of "Ecce Homo," he notes that "in the statuary art the first step towards drama was the separation of the feet" (Joyce, 'Ecce Homo' 32). This innovation of stance in statues is one of the things attributed to Daedalus, as well as their eyes being open and their arms apart from their sides (Feshbach 198). This is a valuable step that makes his statues a more explicit representation of truth. The same essay that has Joyce's first noted references to Daedalus is also "the beginning of his evolving and increasingly complex conception of the function of the artist in general and his sense of his own mission" (Feshbach 202). Additionally, "Drama and Life" claims that if a piece of art presents "the everlasting hopes, desires and hates of us, or deals with a symbolic presentment of our widely related nature... then it is drama... In every form that was not fit for it, it made an outburst, as when the first sculptor separated the feet" (41). Joyce references the mythical character of Daedalus to explain the trajectory of art towards truth.

It is necessary to this argument that myth exists as an attempt towards a depiction of truth. It may seem strange now to consider myths to be anything approaching history. However, the modern concept of myth does not reflect the common view of Joyce's time.

Fortuna extensively considers this historical trend in relation to the myth of the Cretan labyrinth. In Joyce's "belief that myth presented a historical reality, Joyce was undoubtedly more influenced by contemporary classicists and antiquarians than by the symbolists, naturalists and occultists of his immediate literary milieu" (19). A group of classicists for the three decades before Joyce's writing of "Ecce Homo" had "gradually secured serious attention by claiming that myths were essentially 'true'" and they asserted that "in myth one could trace the intellectual, social and moral evolution of mankind" (Fortuna 19). Joyce considered myth to have social utility.

Labyrinths, in particular, provided a strong connection to history, as they were not merely symbols of past religious practices, but tangible remains of lost civilizations. Labyrinths were not merely the tools of myth, but also the actual location for rituals. These included "lustration; tests or riddles; dances; ritual marriage; coronation and its corollary, sacrifice; and ritual rebirth," and so the labyrinth "became a symbol of initiation into cultural, sexual and religious mysteries" (Fortuna 36-7). These same themes are apparent throughout *A Portrait*. Because the labyrinth had a connection to both legend of old and actual historical ritual, it served as a bridge from the existing ancient cultures and their legends. D. N. Deeds summarizes: "Above all, the Labyrinth was the center of activities concerned with those greatest mysteries, Life and Death. The Labyrinth, as a tomb and temple, fostered the development of all art and literature, activities which in those days possessed a religious and life-giving significance" (qtd. in Fortuna 48). Academics of the time discussed and appreciated myths in general, but "in the period of 1900-1911, the period of time of Joyce's literary apprenticeship, the

Daedalus myth became the focus of wide-spread scholarly and public excitement” (Fortuna 25).

The newfound appreciation for the myths surrounding the Cretan labyrinth started in 1900 when Arthur Evans, “a relatively obscure archaeologist” in Crete, discovered what “a maze of columns and courtyards... terraces and staircases that in their intricacy were clearly the remains of what the ancient world called the labyrinth of Daedalus” (Fortuna 26). He did not actually think that a half-man, half-bull had once stalked through the site of his excavations; merely that the stories that had come from the lives of the ancients, referenced this place. He claimed that “there can be little remaining doubt that this vast edifice, which in a broad sense we are justified in calling the ‘palace of Minos’, is one and the same as the traditional ‘labyrinth’” (Fortuna 27-8)

Evans described this aspect of his findings and its relation to the myth of the Minotaur:

Let us place ourselves for a moment in the position of the first Dorian colonists of Knossos after the great overthrow... Hard by the western gate in her royal robes, today but partially visible, stood Queen Ariadne herself — and might not the comely youth in front of her be the hero Theseus, about to receive the coil of thread for his errand of liberation down the mazy galleries beyond? Within, fresh and beautiful on the walls of the inmost chamber, were the captive boys and maidens locked up by the tyrant of old. At more than one turn rose a mighty bull, in some cases, no doubt, according to the favorite Mycenaean motive, grappled with a half-naked man. The type of the Minotaur itself as a man-bull was not wanting on the soil of prehistoric Knossos, and more than one gem found on this site represents a monster with the lower body of a man and the forepart of a bull. (qtd. in Fortuna 28)

Partially due to descriptions such as the one above, these findings were sensational. News spread all over the Western world, and renewed interest in the classical world sparked further archaeological and academic exploration, particularly into this myth.

Evans received honorary degrees from both the University of Edinburgh and the University of Dublin. This recognition was significant because "at the time, Joyce was in his third year at University College a half mile away and actively engaged in student intellectual life. As such, it is very likely that Evans' name and the general import of his discoveries became known to Joyce at this time (Fortuna 29-30).

I am not asserting that the correlation exists merely because it is contemporary. We know that Joyce was interested in myth and had extensive exposure to the Daedalus/Icarus myth in particular. By 1904, Joyce "called himself Stephen Daedalus (then, to make it a little less improbable, Stephen Dedalus) after Christianity's first martyr and paganism's greatest inventor" (Ellman 148). Three of his letters during this period were signed Stephen Daedalus, as was his July submission of "The Sisters," the first of his short stories which would eventually make up *Dubliners*. Joyce never explicitly stated why he took the pseudonym outside of his work. Feshbach suggests that he may have "intended to build a public name, or to reinforce his identification with a hero, or to propose this story as his own and his character's first artwork, or to hide from the responsibility of the artwork, or to hide from the responsibility for the story" (197). The character of Stephen Dedalus was developed as a pen-name before a work of fiction, blurring the lines of representation. By 1904, Joyce was manipulating the possible identifications of himself with the mythical artist (Feshbach 197).

This trend continued for the next ten years. The main work during this time, *Stephen Hero*, was the early form of *A Portrait*, and "has its share of mazes, madcows, diseased oxen, bulls, monsters and escapes" (Fortuna 81). But there is an inherent difference in the presence of the Minoan myth in *Stephen Hero* and in *A Portrait*. It is

hard to determine the exact prevalence of the myth based on the fragments of the lengthy work, but “it does seem that these allusions do not in any way condition the scene of *Stephen Hero*” (81). *A Portrait*, as opposed to *Stephen Hero*, does not use the Minoan myth as descriptive allusion but as a necessary element of structure: “It is the difference between referential myth and myth used as a complete structure” (82).

*Stephen Hero* was abandoned by Joyce, possibly due to his dissatisfaction with the lack of structure that the Daedalian labyrinth would provide in *A Portrait*.

Alternatively, “Joyce seems to have presented Stephen as a hero as the title testifies. But from the tenor of his own criticism, heroics were the basis for ‘romantic’ art, a type of writing that he clearly had rejected.” (Fortuna 83). These suggestions are speculation, but we do know that “in the later novel, *A Portrait*, Joyce uses Minoan myth as its structure and drops the characterization of Stephen as a hero” (83).



#### IV. Mythical Epiphanies: Daedalian parallel in *A Portrait* chapters I-IV

In *A Portrait* the correlations and references to the labyrinth myth are explicit.

Stephen, the young artist, opposes the institutions that tie him to his position in much the same way that Daedalus resists the imprisonment handed down to him by Minos. The epigraph and his name refer to Daedalus, and “caught in the labyrinth of his own life, Stephen seeks to flee Ireland just as Daedalus, imprisoned in his own artwork, seeks to fly from Crete” (Fortuna 85). But this superficial analysis overlooks much of the nuance Joyce builds into the structure of his *Bildungsroman*. Stephen’s life is described as a confusing labyrinth, such as when it is said that “By day and by night [Stephen] moved among distorted images of the other world” (Joyce, *Portrait* 112) or “The ache of conscience ceased and he walked onward swiftly through the dark streets. There were so many flagstones on the footpath of that street and so many streets in the city and so many cities in the world” (159). Such examples as these of the wandering Stephen fill the narrative. It has been noted that Stephen continually walks, but Fortuna points out that

Stephen not only walks, he creeps along the fringe of the line, flies in and out of winding corridors, circles, ascends, descends, runs round the park track, makes rounds with the milkman, takes turns riding the tractable mare round the field, circles nearer and nearer to the quarter of the brothels, feels his mind wind itself in and out of curious questions, circles about his own centre of spiritual energy, notes with dismay (at this time perhaps dizzy from the activity) that Jesuits do much cycling and that Conglowes was where Jesuits walked round the cycle track, and attends a physics lecture on theories of coils, winding ellipses and ellipsoids. In short, in noting that Stephen does a great deal of walking, critics have missed the far more important point that ...he ‘moved in circles, and those circles moved.’” (53-54)

This trope is useful to Joyce’s narrative, but, more importantly, the very structure of the novel that conveys Joyce’s dependence on the Daedalus myth to highlight the

significance of exile and liberation from the labyrinth in Stephen which struggles to discover art as truth.

Even if one accepts that *A Portrait* is a labyrinthine work, the significance of this framework can be lost simply because the structure itself is often overlooked. Fortuna explains that “critics and laymen alike have ignored the shape of the labyrinth because they have assumed that it is only a chaotic linear path nearly always ending in blind alleys. But this is a modern misunderstanding” (Fortuna 54). The essential nature of the labyrinth is a spiraling structure leading towards a center point. She claims that “the best modern example of the figure is Brancusi’s *Symbol of Joyce*” (55). This image, the epigraph of Ellman’s biography of Joyce, is not merely “concentric circles” as Fortuna claims, but a spiral with three vertical lines representing additional barriers outside of the labyrinthine structure. Brancusi uses a labyrinthine structure in his artistic depiction of Joyce himself, revealing the prominence of the trope in Joyce’s writing. Though modern misconception may cast the labyrinth as simply a tricky maze, Joyce was familiar with the actual structure of the labyrinth. Fortuna asserts that even “if Joyce did not consult any of the innumerable contemporary commentaries on the Cretan labyrinth (a highly unlikely supposition for an artist attempting to write a modern novel about a character named after Daedalus), he knew that the labyrinth had been represented by a spiral” (55).

The structure as well as the language feed into this concept of a labyrinth spiraling inward and then back outward. *A Portrait* winds into a center, the sermon of Father Arnall with the intensity of Hell at the exact structural center of the novel, preceded and followed by nine sub-sections. Stephen considers his soul damned, and begins the sojourn out of the labyrinth, while “Stephen’s psychological development thereafter

becomes more free. Having reached the center, he reverses his course to move out of the labyrinth" (70). The center of that labyrinth, both in history and myth, included a ritual based on bull-worship, and Stephen encounters a "bovine god" at the center of his labyrinth (Joyce, *Portrait* 126). As he travels away from the hellish center of the labyrinth, his mind becomes more at ease, and, after rejecting the Jesuits for art, "he is ready at the end of the novel to escape ... and fly beyond the nets of nationality language and religion. He circles ever outwards through more complex and mature levels until he finds, in aesthetics, the thread that carries him back out of the labyrinth" (Fortuna 70). Fortuna's observations of this psychological journey are useful. However, though much of her research is foundational to this exploration, I will demonstrate that her conclusion that aesthetics represent a thread that allows Stephen to exit the labyrinth does not accurately depict Stephen's journey.

The labyrinth not only was a place for initiation rituals, but it also came to symbolize art itself, a convention familiar to Joyce (Fortuna 49). Joyce was "not content, however, simply to confer the authority of this archetype upon his portrait of the artist. Joyce chose to embody the labyrinth, with its associated images and usages, in the fabric of his narrative" (Fortuna 86). T.S. Eliot explains that "One can be 'classical,' ... by turning away from nine-tenths of the material which lies at hand, and selecting only mummified stuff from a museum... Or one can be classical in tendency by doing the best one can with the material at hand" (426). Though Joyce consciously structures his narrative around this myth, it remains his narrative. "The manipulation of the continuous parallel that Eliot describes," writes Block, "is perforce the work of the individual writer, who reshapes the myth as he recreates it in his art. Eliot's view of myth emerges as yet

one more statement of the necessary interplay of tradition and originality" (18-19).

While the structure of the novel is a labyrinth, Joyce includes subtle details throughout Stephen's journey that call the Daedalian labyrinth to the mind of the reader, inviting comparisons among the mythic characters, Stephen, and Joyce.

Most of the explicit references to the Daedalian labyrinth occur later in the novel, which correlates to Stephen's unawareness of his position in a metaphorical labyrinth at the beginning of the novel. Yet, even in the early depictions of Stephen's sexual awakening, an 'initiation' much like the rituals in ancient labyrinths, there are subtle details that relate to the Daedalus myth. The district of brothels in chapter II is a mazelike structure, and Joyce includes something that appears to be insignificant but actually corresponds to the myth: "Her room was warm and lightsome. A huge doll sat with her legs apart in the copious easychair beside the bed" (Joyce, *Portrait* 100). Likely, "Joyce has included this objective correlative to the myth to remind the reader that to Daedalus [were] commonly ascribed both the invention of dolls and the separation of the legs of statues" (Fortuna 98). Furthermore, by including the work of Daedalus that preceded the construction of the labyrinth and the wooden cow, Joyce is claiming that "sexual initiation is a necessary prelude to the higher mystery of artistic initiation. The knowledge of the flesh and of mortal beauty is the basis for Daedalus' realism in the creation of the doll for Ariadne" (99). As previously explained, from Joyce's early writing on aesthetics, Joyce showed concern for depicting the true human experience and naturalism, even with taboo subjects such as sexuality. The carnality and timelessness of human desire for sexual exploration is the exact type of subject Joyce incorporated as part of his art. We know that "Stephen will later reject any system that divorces itself from

the flesh because art must begin with 'the gross earth or what it brings forth'" (99) and Joyce uses the innovations of the first artist to illustrate that point.

Other subtle and interesting details relate allusively to the labyrinth myth throughout the novel. They will be mentioned as relevant, but to avoid the criticism that "too often Joyce criticism has treated every Homeric [or Daedalian] parallel and analogical detail as of equal symbolic importance (White 80), much of the consideration will take place in relation to the epiphanies of Stephen Dedalus. These epiphanies have an element of the mythic, but "it is not a sense of the mythic as transcendence or borrowed from mythological motifs that Joyce points to in epiphanies," writes Gould. "Like those statements in myth which have the potential for transformation...., Joyce's descriptions of Stephen's awe at the mysterious beauty of the world reveal subtly expanding but thoroughly existential coincidences... between Stephen and his context" (150). The mythical nature of these epiphanies reveal the context of Stephen in a larger myth that involves art and his creator, Joyce.

In the central chapter of the novel, immediately before Stephen encounters the depiction of Hell in Father Arnall's sermon and reverses direction, the mythic structure and images become more apparent:

As he walked home with silent companions a thick fog seemed to compass his mind. He waited in stupor of mind till it should lift and reveal what it had hidden. He ate his dinner with surly appetite and, when the meal was over and the greasestrewn plates lay abandoned on the table, he rose and went to the window, clearing the thick scum from his mouth with his tongue and licking it from his lips. So he had sunk to the state of a beast that licks its chaps after meat... His soul was fattening and congealing into a gross grease, plunging ever deeper in its dull fear into a somber threatening dusk, while the body that was his stood, listless and dishonoured, gazing out of a darkened eyes, helpless perturbed and human for a bovine god to stare upon. (Joyce, Portrait 126)

This is much more obvious than the subtle connections that Joyce included in the earlier sections of the novel. Once aware of the structural importance of the Daedalian labyrinth to *A Portrait*, no reader can fail to see the explicit reference to the Minotaur. Fat and grease call to mind the sacrifices to the Minotaur of myth or the bull-cult of history. The Minotaur was the product of a literal animalistic lust, which Stephen equates to his own history of whoring, claiming that “like a beast in its lair his soul had lain down in its own filth” (Joyce, *Portrait* 130). Stephen develops these thoughts as he reaches the center of the labyrinth.

Joyce depicts Stephen’s change in direction in terms that highlight the tight circles and bestial presence of the labyrinth’s center, as Stephen describes a dream where he sees “goatish creatures with human faces” (157). As they approach him “They moved in slow circles, circling closer and closer to enclose, to enclose” (157). They are part-human, part-beast creatures, exactly like the Minotaur. Stephen is helpless as they circle around, getting closer and closer to his central location, exactly like the design of the labyrinth. His reaction to meeting the beasts at the center of the novel drives Stephen to begin circling back outward.

At the center of this novel there is a bull figure, just as in the labyrinth. Yet it seems that Stephen is not necessarily avoiding an encounter or seeking to destroy the bull-figure in the center—as are the people in the Daedalus myth—but in many ways resembles the Minotaur himself. Indeed, Fortuna claims that “the submerged labyrinth references tend to identify Stephen as the Minotaur,” (133). One of the clear aspects of Stephen’s identity within the labyrinth structure lies in his difficult relationship with his father. If a reader were to examine the Minotaur not as a monster but as a product of his

environment, the beast-man becomes a more sympathetic character, a creature locked away and disowned. Stephen finds himself totally separated from his father by the late sections of the novel. Joyce's obsession with eponymy manifests itself in an interesting consideration of names. Simon, the distant and estranged father of Stephen, is an anagram for Minos, who is "the putative father of the Minotaur, but he is father in name only" (132). This may be coincidental, as Simon the character name connects him to a disciple of the New Testament (in the vein of other characters such as John, James, and Stephen), but Joyce's delicate selection of names means that every possibility of nuance exists. In addition, the "moocow" in the embryonic opening of the novel represents Stephen's mother. So the paternity of Stephen is represented in terms of a bull and with the connection to Daedalus and Minos.

Other evidence further supports Stephen's representation as the Minotaur, particularly related to religion and sacrifice. In chapter III, Stephen confronts the "bovine god" at the center of the novel (126). Judeo-Christian tradition holds that man is made in the image of his god, and Stephen's god is a bovine god, so "Stephen is the bovine-child, a type of Minotaur" (Fortuna 149). This Minotaur is considered by critics such as Neville to be an embodiment of "the other self" that one must defeat before exiting the labyrinth, such as the object of Theseus's quest (14). The sacrifice of that monstrous self seems to take place in the confessional booth in chapter III; where Joyce's description of the confessional booth highlights where "the slide was shot to suddenly. The penitent came out. He was next. He stood up in terror and walked blindly into the box" (163). The image of a sacrifice in a slaughtering pen at the center of the labyrinth of the novel connects Stephen to the victims of the labyrinthine bull-worship. The Minotaur is usually

considered the recipient of a sacrifice, rather than the sacrifice itself. Stephen as Minotaur is still a monster, but an innocent product of his environment; he has elements of a bull to be worshipped and those of a bull to be sacrificed. I will articulate the intricacies of this below, but the inherent ambiguity demonstrates how Joyce exploits all aspects of a particular trope, even if they seem contradictory, in order to best express the true, but complex, nature of life.

The sacrifice does not defeat the “other self,” that monstrous nature Stephen attempts to destroy with the process of confession and penitence. In chapter V, after he rejects the path to becoming a Jesuit, he is still aware that he could be considered a monster. His companion Davin expresses disgust at certain aspects of Stephen’s past, saying, “honest to God, Stevie, I was not able to eat my dinner” (230). Davin’s comments resemble a confession, being ‘honest to God.’ Stephen responds, “Thanks... You mean I am a monster” (230). Davin denies this, but “a tide began to surge beneath the calm surface of Stephen’s friendliness” (231). Tides, surges, and calm surfaces generate the sea image that Joyce has used to describe inescapable forces at play, as Stephen claims that “this race and this country and this life produced me... I shall express myself as I am (231). This reading of Stephen as the Minotaur claims that Stephen is a product of his environment, but does not deny that he is a monster. Likewise, the sympathetic reading of the Minotaur, which charges his environment for his character, does not change that he is, by definition, a monster.

The turning point at the center of the novel depicts Stephen as both a monster and a person trying to avoid or defeat a monster. Joyce repeats these themes at other moments in the novel. The labyrinth and Minotaur tropes are useful tools to illustrate this



overarching theme. Through these tropes, Joyce uses an aspect of the Daedalus myth other than Stephen's identity as either Icarus or Daedalus to illustrate a fundamental tension in Stephen's development. In this case, Joyce draws upon myth to present reality rather than to idealize it, and thus employs myth without violating his aesthetic principles. Joyce is relating these considerations from his own childhood and development, so the idea of self-identifying as a disowned monster is one that originated in his own adolescence.

Chapter IV subtly introduces another element of the Minoan labyrinth. One of the legendary creations of Daedalus is the dancing-grounds of Ariadne. In fact, this component of *The Iliad* provides the very first reference to the existence of Daedalus, predating Ovid's account by nearly a millennium. The findings at Knossos, including frescoes of youths dancing on and around a bull, led to the conclusion that ritual dance occurred in the physical spaces of ancient labyrinths. Two types of dance are associated with the Minoan labyrinth: the 'crane dance' associated with Ariadne and the 'bull dance' associated with the Minotaur. Fortuna claims that there is "a kind of dance step" as Stephen paces between Clontarf Chapel, which is "Gaelic... for the Meadow of the Bull" (128-9), and the pub where his father is. He tires of waiting for his father to leave the pub and wanders to the Bull Wall. Joyce includes this initial 'dance' around bull images before his character encounters one of the most explicitly Daedalian scenes in the novel.

Fortuna notes that "the Bull dance exhibited the skill and daring of the dancer before the Minotaur ... and in a few moments Stephen will be hailed ritualistically as Bous Stephanoumenos, a sacrificial victim" (129). She concludes that "as Joyce uses the motif, the dance in which Stephen engages is a preparation for his dedication to art, a

dedication in terms of the myth that necessarily leads to a sacrificial act” (Fortuna 129-130). This reading connecting the dance with art seems reasonable, but there an alternative reading also explains Stephen’s ‘bull dance.’ The segment between his confrontation with “a bovine god” in chapter III and his trip to the waterfront in chapter IV includes a series of delicate steps throughout. The opening pages of chapter IV describe his attempts at piety after encountering and ‘defeating’ the Minotaur at the center of the novel. *A Portrait* says that “every part of his day, divided by what he regarded now as the duties of his station in life, circled about its own centre of spiritual energy” (168). He acts in a prearranged, specific pattern based on a memorized sequence and form, laying out a specific routine of self-mutilation and daily dedications. This description of his ritual is itself the definition of dance, with Stephen literally going through the motions. The pagan ritual of the bull or crane dance associated with the labyrinth connects with the varied rituals of Catholicism.

The implications are varied. One is that he is enacting the “skill and daring of the dancer before the Minotaur” (Fortuna 129), taking the necessary steps to avoid destruction by the ‘Minotaur’ that he encounters in his soul in chapter III. This reading implies that he is not being genuine, but merely playing his part before he is ultimately sacrificed to the bull-man. Joyce identified himself with Stephen, the first martyr of the church. Here, he associates the motions of Catholic ritual with the dances of pagan ritual before ultimate sacrifice. Again Joyce uses even obscure elements of ancient myth to articulate further his presentation of the reality that his character feels.

The subtlety drops off even more in the next section in what Fortuna calls the “most explicit mythic scene in the work.” Stephen approaches the Bull Wall where other

students call him “Bous Stephanoumenos! Buos Stephanoferos” (191), meaning ‘Crown-Bearing bull, Bull About-to-be Crowned.’ Fortuna asserts that by referring to him in his Greek form, “the fellow students identify him as the sacrificial bull” (108), noting that “often the Bull dance ended with a sacrificial death” (129). Other classicists go beyond this simplistic analysis to point out that “*Bous* is Greek for bull. *Foros* is the bull as powerful victor and *menos* is the bull as sacrificed animal” and claim that “Stephen, as artist, is this bull, an ambivalent symbol of powerful victor and tragic victim” (Hochman). The Christian image of the sacrificial lamb has replaced the image of the sacrificial bull, but “Armed with all of this classical mythology, it should be clear why Stephen has been represented as a bull rather than a lamb: he is strong, or resolved, and un-Christian; further he is becoming a pagan, a lover of nature, the senses, and experience” (Hochman).

Stephen himself recognizes these relationships when he thinks about his connection to the myth, and then considers the implications of his thoughts:

At the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air. What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some medieval book of prophecies and symbols, a hawklike man flying sunward above the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being? (P 192)

At this point, Stephen himself makes the connections about his complex relationship with his namesake. Neville claims that “at this moment of realization, the myths of Dedalus and Icarus become one with Stephen. The union from the primitive subconscious through the myriads of time, space, and culture is culminated” (70-71). However, though Stephen makes these connections, he poses them to himself as questions, and refers to the

connection as a possible 'quaint device.' Joyce phrases this passage delicately to keep Stephen from exalting himself fully into the heroic and idealized. This is also a representation of Joyce's own thoughts, as the namesake of his character has already been adopted by the author as a pseudonym. The Joyce-Stephen connection is strong at this point of the novel, so the considerations of Stephen's namesake are comparable to the considerations that caused Joyce to adopt Stephen Dedalus as his alternative identity.

The interaction of Stephen with the swimmers of chapter IV in conjunction with the above observations presents another set of connections with the Dedalus myth. The calls of the swimmers, particularly "Cripes, I'm drowned!" (P 193) present the possibility of drowning. Stephen does not swim with his friends, a decision that may reflect the fear of drowning associated with an Icarian flight. Simultaneous with his presentation of Stephen as the victorious hawklike man, Joyce allows the consideration of Stephen as the floundering, drowning son of the true artist.

This scene contains another significant aspect that critics consider to be related to the Daedalian myth. As Stephen wades through the water after leaving his friends at the Bull Wall, he experiences another epiphanic moment below:

He was alone. He was unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life. He was alone and young and willful and wildhearted, alone amid a waste of wild air and brackish waters and the seaharvest of shells and tangle and veiled grey sunlight and gayclad lightclad figures of children and girls and voices childish and girlish in the air. (195)

The description here places Stephen in the labyrinth and connects him to several figures from the labyrinth myth. Joyce uses repetition, the essential aspect of the labyrinth, with the words 'alone' and 'wild,' as well as words denoting youth ('young', 'children', 'childish'). The entrapment and isolation of the 'wildhearted' connect Stephen to the

Minotaur, especially since Stephen has just been hailed as a bull within the novel itself. The Minotaur is a tragic monster placed in the 'tangle' of the labyrinth. The Minotaur lacks the cunning to escape and does not encounter an outsider who can help him escape, a helplessness that Stephen occasionally expresses. However, the passage also draws connections to Theseus and Icarus, who are young, willful, and wildhearted. This description contains recurring instances of 'wild air and brackish waters,' and Icarus's wild action in the air caused his death in the 'brackish waters.' Additionally, the reference to the 'seaharvest of shells and tangle' possibly alludes to Daedalus threading the conch shell or the 'tangle' of Icarus's wings in the water. Traditionally, critics have claimed that Stephen transitions from Daedalus to Icarus, representing a progression of characters. However, this paragraph contains simultaneous allusions to multiple characters that illustrate different aspects of Stephen.

In addition to their representation of different aspects of Stephen's labyrinthine journey, Theseus, Icarus, and the Minotaur have a unique relationship to Daedalus. The Minotaur is born with the assistance of Daedalus's bull, and placed in Daedalus's prison. Theseus must travel through Daedalus's prison and relies on Daedalus to escape by Ariadne's thread. Icarus is Daedalus's son, is imprisoned for being so, and drowns when he does not heed his father's advice. Hence the uniting figure in this description of Stephen is Daedalus the artist. At this point in his journey, Daedalus, the ideal artist, does not represent Stephen directly, but Stephen is inherently connected to the myth of the Cretan labyrinth and its implications for Joyce's art. The creator, Daedalus, forming the center point of different aspects of Stephen's mythical character is also Joyce, who is

the creator of the novel and character of Stephen by organizing these archetypal characters around the developing Stephen.

The paragraph immediately following the description of Stephen's mindset depicts a more explicit connection to Ariadne, a character essential to the labyrinth:

A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and soft-hued as ivory, were bared almost to the hips, where the white fringes of her drawers were like feathering of soft white down. Her slate-blue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face. (109)

Many scholars have referred to this figure as the "bird-girl." Critics have claimed that her resemblance to a bird causes Stephen to think about escaping Ireland and his current life in terms of flight. The character parallels to Ariadne in pretty much every aspect of Joyce's description. Not only is this the description of a bird, but also her legs specifically are as 'delicate as a crane's'. In Cretan culture, "Ariadne was traditionally associated with the crane, as the dance created for her demonstrates. Further, all the Minoan goddesses were represented by the dove" (Fortuna 109). In addition, Theseus abandons Ariadne on Naxos shortly after their escape, leaving her to gaze out to sea after him as he sails away. This connection seems apparent, but its significance becomes clearer after the following paragraphs:

She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness. Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither. The first faint noise of gently moving water broke the silence, low

and faint and whispering, faint as the bells of sleep; hither and thither, hither and thither; and a faint flame trembled on her cheek.

-Heavenly God! cried Stephen's soul, in an outburst of profane joy.

He turned away from her suddenly and set off across the strand. His cheeks were aflame; his body was aglow; his limbs were trembling. On and on and on and on he strode, far out over the sands, singing wildly to the sea, crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him.

Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways and error and glory. On and on and on and on! (195-196)

Ariadne is an important figure within the context of the labyrinth myth. Though the thread of Ariadne is an important aspect of her myth, classicists often focus on her life after Theseus's abandonment of her, whereupon Dionysus finds her. The god of wine is "another bull-god" connecting her to a bull while Stephen had just been compared to a bull at the sacrifice. As his consort she "presided over death and rebirth. In this function, she guided the soul through the winding labyrinth of life to freedom and a new existence" (Fortuna 110). So Ariadne gave the tool for Theseus to find his way out of the labyrinth, and Joyce uses the bird-girl as an inspiration for Stephen to pursue art.

Critics focus on aspects of the bird-girl as an Ariadne-like guide, but these are ultimately limited by context. For example, Neville claims that the bird-girl is "suggestive of the messenger of ultimate Truth... [Stephen] becomes strangely aware of his destiny...this is the beginning of his contemplation of art, for in her Stephen finds mortal beauty, released from sensual feelings" (73). With the perspective of the bird-girl as a bearer of truth and Joyce's aesthetic principle holding truth as the bedrock of art, Ariadne convincingly represents this character. Hence, a classical figure from mythology, the most ancient of literary and religious influences, represents the pathway

to escape the system of flawed institutions in Stephen's life. This ironic but effective use of myth reveals how subtly Joyce is able to construct his narrative to illustrate reality.

This is an intriguing reading, but Ariadne is more than just a *deus ex machina*. In the same way that the connection to the Minotaur cannot be taken without reservation, essential aspects of the myth render the character different from the myth. Her interaction with Theseus was passionate and brief. She does not descend into the labyrinth to offer an escape route, but rather equips him before he enters. Additionally, Theseus abandons her shortly after escaping the labyrinth. To claim that the bird-girl is simply an Ariadne who provides the thread to escape the labyrinth in Stephen's life ignores important aspects of the myth. As Ariadne had no relation to either Icarus or the Minotaur, one can hardly interpret the bird-girl/Ariadne figure as the link between the monstrous beast and floundering artist within Stephen.

The epiphanies of these chapters reveal that there are multiple aspects, often in tension with each other, just like the complicated Daedalus myth itself. Just as with myth:

All the events in the epiphany are simultaneous and open-endedly significant, left so open-ended, in fact, that the meaning becomes deliberately impoverished and provoking, not merely understated. The Joycean epiphany comes into being through a problem-solving consciousness, homologous to the logic of mythic thought, constantly trying out its terms and holding them in a tension, "resolving" them only momentarily, for the terms change. (Gould 146)

Stephen's epiphanies consistently relate him to the myth of the ancient creator. By creating these moments, Joyce interconnects the identities of Stephen, Daedalus, and Joyce himself.



#### V. The Beauty Maze: The Labyrinth in the aesthetic theory of chapter V

The 'labyrinth' that becomes clear in the later chapters of *A Portrait* is Stephen's pursuit of aesthetic theory, the 'beauty maze' (Fortuna 112). Before assessing whether or not Stephen's pursuit of aesthetics represents the escape from the labyrinth of *A Portrait*, the aesthetic theory of Stephen Dedalus should be explored in both its content and its significance. As with the scene in chapter II when the visit to the prostitute includes details which connect the Daedalus-Icarus myth to a seemingly unrelated scene, Stephen's discussion of aesthetics in chapter V reveals Joyce's attempt to keep Daedalus in the mind of the reader while discussing what seems to be an unrelated subject.

Stephen claims that proper art should not excite 'kinetic' emotion, but rather a 'static' emotion "raised above desire and loathing" (233). Improper art spurs on the base emotion that either "urges us to possess, to go to something"... or "urges us to abandon, to go from something" (233). The conversation he has with Lynch corroborates with the aesthetic theory Joyce lays out in his critical writing, in which he includes details connecting minor characters in *A Portrait* to the labyrinth. Lynch claims that a work of true art, the Venus of Praxiteles, caused desire in him, leading Lynch to write his own name on the statue's posterior. Stephen's classmate is intrigued by a statue, which Daedalus is known for being able to create so lifelike that a bull mounts one. Stephen retorts that Lynch also once "ate pieces of dried cowdung" (233). Any reference to cows is significant, but this specific instance is further assisted by what comes immediately after. Lynch breaks "again into a whinny of laughter and again rubbed both his hands over his groins," then, as Stephen examines his companion, he "looks at him for a

moment boldly in the eyes" (234). Lynch returns the look "from his humbled eyes" and observes:

The long slender flattened skull beneath the long pointed cap brought before Stephen's mind the image of a hooded reptile. The eyes, too, were reptilelike in glint and gaze. Yet at that instant, humbled and alert in their look, they were lit by one tiny human point, the window of a shriveled soul, poignant and selfembittered. (234)

Stephen provides his own analysis for the observations of the previous seconds, saying "in polite parenthesis, we are all animals. I also am an animal" (234). The significance of the statement itself will be explored momentarily, but the set of details that leads to this conclusion is highly relevant. First, eating cowdung as a child can signify the basest form of attempting to comprehend art. In the same way that Joyce presents reality to include taboo subjects such as sex, he freely incorporates scatological references into his work. Here, dung is an object that 'sprung up from the raw earth,' as art is supposed to do. Of course, with all of the moocows, bulls, and bovine gods in *A Portrait*, Joyce chose the source of his excrement carefully.

Lynch's similarity to a 'hooded reptile' becomes also significant to the analysis. In the same way the Minoan labyrinth is associated with bulls and the Minotaur, the Egyptian labyrinth, upon which Daedalus reputedly modeled his own labyrinth, is associated with crocodiles. During the time of the public hype regarding Arthur Evans's findings in Crete, Joyce bought W. Marsham Adams's *House of the Hidden Places: A Clue to the Creed of Early Egypt from Egyptian Sources*. It describes some of the intricacies of the winding layout of the Great Pyramid. In his findings, "Evans was able to prove that a brisk trade existed between Egypt and Crete as early as 2000 B.C. That the two courts had exchanged artisans was a fact. Classical historians were undoubtedly

correct in asserting that Daedalus had built the Cretan labyrinth on the model of the Egyptian" (Fortuna 27). In fact, the labyrinth was near a town that the Greeks called Crocodilopolis (Fortuna 20). So Lynch, by writing his name on a Daedalian statue, eating dried cowdung, and reminding Stephen of a crocodile, represents an early, rudimentary form of aesthetics, developed later by the more advanced Daedalus-Stephen.

A focus on eyes further marks this passage. The text repeatedly compares the eyes of cows compared to those of bulls, the former representing a docile and passive blankness and the latter representing enraged reaction. Crocodiles also have a focus on eyes; they do not blink as their eyes sit at water-level. Indeed, Stephen's example that humans impulsively react to external factors is that "Our eyelid closes before we are aware that the fly is about to enter our eye" (234). By choosing these two animals with association of "bold" stares and "humble" stares, Joyce presents multiple-purposed eyes that allow the viewer to read and be read. Joyce's other writings also evidence a strong association with eyes. In the earliest surviving essay from his childhood entitled "Trust Not Appearances," the fourteen-year-old Joyce claims that "there is a 'something' that tells us the character of man. It is the eye...It is the eye that reveals to man the guilt or innocence, the vices or the virtues of the soul" (16). Stephen picks up "one tiny human point, the window of a shriveled soul, poignant and selfembittered" (234) in Lynch's eyes. So Lynch, a central though animalistic figure in the labyrinth has a distinctly human spirit within the animal constraints. This sympathetic depiction of a humanized animal reiterates the prevalent theme of the Minotaur.

A comparison to cows and crocodiles arises again at the conclusion of the novel in the pages of the diary. In the March 22 entry, Stephen writes: "In company with

Lynch followed a sizable hospital nurse. Lynch's idea. Dislike it. Two lean hungry greyhounds walking after a heifer" (283). As before, he and Lynch are characterized as animals as they walk. This time, however, their goal draws comparisons to a heifer to be killed. If compared to the object of their previous ambulation, where their goal lay in disclosing a coherent aesthetic theory, a key to the labyrinth, then Stephen is characterizing that pursuit as being the same. Chasing a cow like predators is compared to chasing aesthetics. In the March 30 diary entry, Stephen writes:

This evening Cranly was in the porch of the library, proposing a problem to Dixon and her brother. A mother let her child fall into the Nile. Still harping on the mother. A crocodile seized the child. Mother asked it back. Crocodile said all right if she told him what he was going to do with the child, eat it or not eat it.

This mentality, Lepidus would say, is indeed bred out of your mud by the operation of your sun.

And mine? Is it not too? Then into the Nile mud with it! (285)

This second passage echoes another conversation with fellow students involving 'problems' and comparing them to animals devouring prey. Stephen equates the heifer that Lynch and Stephen followed as wolves and the baby that the crocodile ponders whether or not to eat. This is another connection to sacrifice that shows Stephen thinking in those simultaneously mythical and natural terms.

Lynch also seems aware of this delicate position, and says that "though I did eat a cake of cowdung once, that I admire only beauty" (235). The two discuss rhythm, which Stephen describes as "the first formal esthetic relation of part to part in any esthetic whole or of an esthetic whole to its part or parts or of any part to the esthetic whole of which it is a part" (234-5). This presentation uses repetition both in form and content to connect rhythm to the labyrinthine structure of winding and doubling back. Stephen

expresses camaraderie with Lynch and claims that it is a good thing to converse as they are:

To speak of these things and to try to understand their nature and, having understood it, to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand- that is art. (235)

In this conversation Stephen is learning and teaching at the same time. Joyce presents both Lynch and Stephen as animal-human figures attempting to find their way through a labyrinth of experience with aesthetic theory as a guide. By associating Lynch with an earlier and lesser developed labyrinth, Joyce places Stephen as teacher while keeping him as a student and peer. Stephen may have some answers, but does not stop seeking more.

While explicating his aesthetic theory, Stephen also reveals some of his intellectual sources. He speaks of Plato, who "said that beauty is the splendour of truth" (236). Stephen claims that "the true and the beautiful are akin" (236), and relates this thesis to Aristotle, saying that "Aristotle's entire system of philosophy rests upon...his statement that the same attribute cannot at the same time and in the same connexion belong to and not belong to the same subject" (236-237). This concept, known as the Law of Identity and often rendered as 'A is A' provides a basis for the Joycean principles of the dispensation of reality and the beauty of truth, or classical art. Joyce intertwines Greek myth and Greek philosophy to assist the presentation of his aesthetic theory.

In addition to Plato and Aristotle, a third source is Saint Thomas Aquinas, who Joyce claims was "perhaps the keenest and most lucid mind known to human history" (Joyce, Ireland 161). Stephen gives Aquinas's definition of beauty, saying, "that is beautiful the apprehension of which pleases" (236). However, an important corollary that

limits this definition lies in Aquinas's clear command "to keep away good and evil which excite desire and loathing" (236). Certainly this source influenced Stephen's earlier description of proper art. Later, Stephen explains that the beautiful must include the sensible — that which the senses can perceive — by translating a phrase of Aquinas, saying, "I translate it so: *Three things are needed for beauty, wholeness, harmony and radiance*" (239). Stephen even admits that his theory could be called "applied Aquinas" (238), so it is clear that in his search for an aesthetic theory Aquinas serves as a noteworthy source.

Scholars have analyzed this connection with the saint extensively. Some have interpreted Aquinas as Stephen's Ariadne, mainly due to Stephen's claim that "So far as this side of esthetic philosophy extends, Aquinas will carry me all along the line" (238). Obviously, any reference to a 'line' that is followed through a complicated and repetitive structure should be considered in light of Ariadne's thread. Ariadne is a subversive part of the household of Minos that leads Theseus to freedom from the very house she represents. Aquinas is a canonical member of the Catholic Church, though his teachings help Stephen escape the Catholic Church.

As with any reading of Stephen, Aquinas's aesthetics as Ariadne's thread can be carried too far. Theseus abandons Ariadne after she helps him escape the labyrinth, and Stephen's conversations of literary theory in *Ulysses* indicate that he has not abandoned this theory, even if he has failed to be recognized for it. In addition, Stephen deviates from Aquinas in gestation. Joyce and Stephen share a literary model, so if Aquinas served as a guide to Joyce then he did to Stephen. However, it is clear that with Joyce's

inclusion of 'unholy' subjects and his rejection of Catholicism, that he did not follow Aquinas completely. Grayson summarizes this disparity, emphasizing that:

Underlying the Thomistic aesthetic philosophy, which for St. Thomas is merely a minor offshoot of his ethical philosophy but upon which Stephen bases his own aesthetic theories, is the assumption that the creation is beautiful since it proceeds from God; therefore all things are inherently beautiful... But [Stephen] does not perceive the inherent beauty of the things which form his world; for him there is no intellection *per se*, no fundamental understanding or apprehension of the things which allows him to see them in relation to other things. (316)

As such, Stephen clearly accepts only applicable tenets of Thomistic philosophy, rather than the entirety. Ariadne's thread led Theseus out of the labyrinth so he could return to Ariadne. Joyce is using Thomistic aesthetics, but not following it to its source assumptions. The metaphor of Aquinas's aesthetics as Ariadne's thread is useful to readers as the theory itself is to Stephen: helpful, but not essential.

Joyce presents his aesthetic theory during this conversation, but perpetuates the labyrinth in the mind of the reader. Whenever Stephen correctly defines a term from Aquinas, Lynch responds with "Bull's eye!" (241,242). The center of a dartboard is itself the image of a labyrinth. The labyrinth was not only an edifice, but had a symbol that represented it, "a spiral enclosing a bull" (Fortuna 54-55). The very structure of the labyrinth centers on the Minotaur, and the structure of the novel centers around an encounter with a bovine god. In addition, Lynch, for whom human-animal eyes have already been discussed, once again refers to the eye of an animal. The tiny center surrounded by the repetitive patterns gives meaning to the entire dartboard in the way it gives meaning to the entire labyrinth. By using this term, Lynch repeatedly invokes the image of the labyrinth.

Even Stephen's description of perception, which supposedly leads him out of the labyrinth, recalls the theme of meandering repetition where "you pass from point to point, led by its formal lines; you apprehend it as balanced part against part within its limits; you feel the rhythm of its structure... You apprehend it as complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, the result of its parts and their sum, harmonious" (241-242). Stephen eventually explains all of Aquinas's components, including *claritas*. He does so with an invocation of his early assertion about the Law of Identity, saying the ultimate form of perception occurs when one perceives "that it is that thing which it is and no other thing. The radiance of which he speaks in the scholastic *quidditas*, the *whatness* of a thing" (242). This definition consolidates the ideas Joyce articulates in his early essays regarding aesthetics. The reality of individual experiences and encounters transmits through a mode which adequately represents the purity of that nature.

Stephen's exploration of his aesthetic theory is essential to the labyrinthine structure of the novel. As articulated above, Fortuna submits that the pursuit of the aesthetic theory is the final phase of the labyrinth. However a consideration of the nature of the mythic and historic labyrinths shows that this conclusion needs revision. The rituals of the labyrinth focused on individual trials and rites of passage, but these, like all rituals, were institutional. Historically, many members of a community commonly underwent rituals in labyrinths. All underwent the same steps of the rituals and emerged as initiates. In myth, few successfully escaped the labyrinth. Importantly, unlike a maze, there is only one path to enter and exit a labyrinth. Yet one of the defining characteristics of the Daedalus myth is his discovery of an alternative mode of escape through cunning. Since he had literally built his own prison, it would seem that he entrapped himself,



especially given the lack of indication of other obstacles keeping Daedalus in the labyrinth. However, if he had simply walked out, the myth would take on an entirely different meaning. Theseus depends on the cunning of Daedalus to find the only exit in the labyrinth; Daedalus already knows how to escape. Ovid's account indicates that Daedalus 'was himself scarcely able to find the way back to the entrance.' He could do it, but would not. In fact, he decides to leave only because he 'tired of Crete and of his long absence from home, was filled with longing for his own country, but he was shut in by the sea'. So it seems that the walls of his own structure do not contain him, but rather the conditions outside of the labyrinth. In the lines immediately before what is included as the epigraph of *A Portrait*, "he said: 'The king may block my way by land or across the ocean, but the sky, surely, is open, and that is how we shall go. Minos may possess all the rest, but he does not possess the air'" (Scholes and Kain, Workshop 267). This is a decisive defiance of authority. Due to naval supremacy, Minos owns the sea that bounds Daedalus. The escape from the labyrinth is more of a self-imposed exile, rather than a desperate escape. Stephen's decision to escape by extraordinary means, to reject the entire system of the labyrinth, is an absolutely essential component of his development and this myth.

With an emphasis on the rejection of the labyrinth as an entire system, the image of aesthetics as Ariadne's thread leading Stephen out of the maze no longer holds true. Theseus departed the labyrinth using a thread, following 'love' out of the maze. He did not simply decide more than halfway through the maze that he would start following the thread out the way Stephen has a change of heart after confronting his "bovine god" in the center of the novel. Daedalus and Stephen both make clear decisions to escape the

labyrinth. Fortuna's reading implies that the rejection of the priesthood constitutes a part of the normal initiation associated with Stephen's labyrinthine journey. However, the claim of *non serviam* implies that he is rejecting the authority under which the labyrinth was constructed, not the labyrinth itself. If he had continued with the priesthood, then the labyrinth would have served his purpose, and he would have completed the initiation that he had begun. But fleeing the labyrinth over the walls, like Daedalus, is not the same as simply dredging one's way through, like Theseus. Like Daedalus, Stephen knows the step he would have to take to exit the labyrinth; he would just have to join the priesthood. He also, like Daedalus, understands the constraints outside of the labyrinthine system; namely the constriction of the Church. His pledge to fly by the nets of "nationality, language, and religion" bears striking resemblance to Daedalus' statement about flying to avoid all that Minos possessed. Thus, although Fortuna's analysis is helpful to establish many structural parallels with the Cretan labyrinth, her conclusion needs revision.

## VI. Stephen as an Artist: Searching for success

If the aesthetic theory does not draw at all from the 'Ariadne's thread' image, it is reasonable to explore why Joyce goes to such great lengths to include images from the Daedalus myth. One of the important and oft-debated questions asks whether or not Stephen succeeds as an artist. Clearly, Stephen starts to take flight, but the reader in *A Portrait* does not know if he drowns as an Icarus or flourishes as a Daedalus. The aesthetic theory finds its most appropriate symbol in the context of the myth not as Ariadne's thread but as Daedalus's waxen wings. While both serve as mechanisms of escape, there is a choice that must be made. The thread presents certainty, but also enclosure in the existing system. The waxen wings allow one to fly outside of all constraints, but leaves open the possibility of failure. Stephen chooses wings to escape, leaving the reader free to speculate whether he will fly or fall.

One can discuss the success or failure of Stephen as an artist in light of his performance as an artist, his intentions in his artistic theory, or his presence in *Ulysses*. Yet, too often, scholars use this final justification to make assessments about the Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait*. For example Heininger points out, "from the beginning, it is apparent that the weary Stephen we encounter on page three of *Ulysses* contrasts sharply with the hopeful and eager Stephen of the end of *A Portrait*" (435). However, *A Portrait* does not serve as a prologue to *Ulysses*. The earlier novel provides enough material on its own to explore fully whether Stephen is an Icarus or a Daedalus figure. Full consideration of Stephen's experiences in *A Portrait* will precede consideration of the young artist in *Ulysses*.

The discussion of aesthetics in chapter V makes apparent the identity of Stephen's aesthetic theory with what we know of Joyce's from some of his early critical writings, particularly the exaltation of a more naturalistic art derived from "Ecce Homo" and "Drama and Life." The villanelle in chapter V serves as the only actual 'art' Stephen creates in *A Portrait*. Robert Scholes claims that "in order to fulfill the term of Stephen's esthetic gestation, it was necessary for Joyce to present us with a created thing, with a literary work which was the product of his inspiration" (485). It is apparent to this point in the novel that Stephen takes great interest in art, but this enthusiasm does not qualify him as an artist. Bowers coolly claims that until the composition of the villanelle, "Stephen has done little to warrant being described as an artist. His esthetic theory has been long-winded and contrived, and even he must be aware that talking about art is not art" (231). Stephen articulates how art that simply inspires an emotional response does not constitute real art, stating that "The arts which excite [desire or loathing] are therefore improper arts" (233). Someone who responds at such a base level is not an artist, but an aesthete. In chapter V, however, Stephen creates the poem as he awakes to a surge of inspiration: "O what sweet music! His soul was all dewy wet. Over his limbs in sleep pale cool waves of light had passed. He lay still as if his soul lay amid cool waters, conscious of faint sweet music...A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water, sweet dew, moving as music" (247). He was inspired by a dream where he "had known the ecstasy of seraphic life" and "The instant flashed forth like a point of light and now from cloud on cloud of vague circumstance confused form was veiling softly its afterglow." The narrator refers to this morning afterglow again, claiming "An afterglow deepened within his spirit, whence the white flame had passed" (246-247). With all of the images of

moisture (dew, wet, waters), flashing ecstasy, and afterglow, it seems apparent that Stephen has had an erotic dream ending with a nocturnal emission. However, art cannot be designed to promote desire or loathing. There is no inconsistency with Stephen's theory, regardless of the source of inspiration, if he creates art with a serious purpose. The reader observes Stephen's process of creating the poem exhibits references to his moments of inspiration, but a delicate concern not to "revile and mock" his source of inspiration (251).

Stephen may be an artist, but Joyce's aesthetic theory, as early as "Ecce Homo" and "Drama and Life," ascribes different value to different types of art. Stephen considers himself an artist, but does not self-describe as a 'classical' artist. This insight explains what Fortuna calls the "air of failure about Stephen" (120). Icarus has a literal 'air of failure' about him as he flaps his naked arms and falls into the sea, indicating that in *A Portrait* Stephen "does not fulfill his Daedalian role; he merely initiates it" (Fortuna 121). Stephen is often considered to be an Icarian figure by the end of the novel, especially considering the final invocation of Daedalus as his father in the final lines of the novel, which "serve to underline...the final irony of characterization" (126). In the last entry of his journal, he writes "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead" (253). This invocation has frequently been interpreted as the final depiction of Stephen as "the artist as a young man, a romanticist and an Icarus, poised before his final fall" (Fortuna 126).

Neville attempts to reconcile the disappointment of the "Villanelle of the Temptress" which leads many readers to consider Stephen a failure as an artist. He

claims that the explication of his aesthetic theory, not the villanelle that defines him as an artist, countering:

Stephen paints the picture of his esthetic theory with the borrowed brush strokes of Aquinas and Aristotle splashing upon the canvas through the most perfected words of his total experience. In this attempt for harmony, radiance, and wholeness, "Stephen-Artist" steps aside from the canvas and contemplates his destiny. This allows the reader for the first time to see the total picture, the "whatness" of Stephen Dedalus. Only then is the portrait complete. (79)

As appealing as this reading is, Stephen's own explication of his aesthetic theory is not for an aesthetic end. The portrait for Stephen is not yet complete for the reader, though it may be for Joyce.

The question of whether or not Stephen deserves status as an artist and finds additional depth in Stephen's further explanations of his aesthetic theory. After summarizing the influence of Aquinas, Stephen proposes questions that he had prepared to test his theory. It is "in finding the answers to them I found the theory of esthetic which I am trying to explain" (243). Joyce uses a question and answer format to lay out a theory that could be accepted *a priori*. This structure is similar to the form of the Catechism, the book of education for students of Catholic theology. This form of education is referenced in the text, in chapter III as Stephen and his classmates wait for the rector to begin the lessons from it. Stephen's thoughts connect the trajectory of the labyrinth with the later form of exposition for his aesthetic theory:

As he sat in his bench gazing calmly at the rector's shrewd hard face, his mind wound itself in and out of the curious questions proposed to it... If a layman in giving baptism pour the water before saying the words is the child baptized? Is baptism with a mineral water valid? How comes it that while the first beatitude promises the kingdom of heaven to the poor of heart the second beatitude promises also to the meek that they shall possess the land? Why was the sacrament of the eucharist instituted under the two species of bread and wine if Jesus Christ be present body and

blood, soul and divinity, in the bread alone and in the wine alone? Does a tiny particle of the consecrated bread contain all the body and blood of Jesus Christ or a part only of the body and blood? If the wine change into vinegar and the host crumble into corruption after they have been consecrated, is Jesus Christ still present under their species as God and as Man? (120)

Not only does Stephen find “an arid pleasure in following up to the end the rigid lines of the doctrines of the church” (119), he does so by winding “in and out of the curious questions” (120). In the same way Stephen lays out his own set of rebuttal questions that challenges the theories of his Catholic teachers and calls to mind the labyrinth, he drafts his own questions to explore the theory further.

These questions relate to art and connect this exploration with Daedalus. They include, “*Is a chair finely made tragic or comic? Is the portrait of Mona Lisa good if I desire to see it? Is the bust of sir Philip Crampton lyrical, epic, or dramatic? If not, why not?*” (243). They legitimately test his theory, but his final example references Daedalus explicitly as well. Stephen asks, “*If a man hacking in fury at a block of wood make there an image of a cow, is that image a work of art? If not, why not?*” (243-4). This final question overtly refers to the construction of the wooden cow for Pasiphae, which allowed for the birth of the Minotaur. This conversation marks one of Joyce’s most clear appearances in the novel as Stephen. He did in fact ask those questions of himself in his Paris notebook, “patterned on the rhetorical style of Aristotle [which shows] a conscious effort to clarify key ideas later modified in the discussions of aesthetic theory” (Fagnoli and Gillespie 10). In the notebook he answers the question he posed in *A Portrait*. The answer is as follows: “The image of a cow made by a man hacking in fury at a block of wood is a human disposition of sensible matter but it is not a human disposition of sensible matter for an aesthetic end, therefore it is not a work of art”

(Scholes and Kain, Workshop 55). Daedalus did not hack 'in fury,' but the wooden cow still served to incite or respond to lust, and "the satisfaction of a queen's lust has nothing to do with an aesthetic end. From the tenor and structure of Stephen's aesthetic in *A Portrait*, he would certainly answer, No" (Fortuna 114)

An interesting coincidence is a statement that E.M. Forster makes regarding Joyce's artistic ambition and application. In a conversation concerning the future of modernism, he refers to a to-be-realized type of artist called 'the prophet' who, according to Forster's consideration, seems in many ways like Joyce, however:

[The prophet] does not hammer away. That is why we exclude Joyce. Joyce has many qualities akin to prophecy and he has shown (especially in the *Portrait of the Artist*) an imaginative grasp of evil. But he undermines the universe in too workmanlike a manner, looking round for this tool or that: in spite of all his internal looseness he is too tight, he is never vague except after due deliberation; it is talk, talk, never song (199).

Forster's criticism is topped by an even cooler assessment, that "There is not very much reflection going on at any time inside the head of Mr. James Joyce. That is indeed the characteristic of *the craftsman*...I do not mean that he works harder or more thoroughly than other people, but that he is not so much an inventive intelligence as an executants" (Lewis 106). Forster and Lewis, whether they consciously do this or not, relate Joyce to the man hacking at the wooden cow. Again it is the aesthetic purpose that is important, but Daedalus, Stephen, and Joyce are all accused of conscious and contrived efforts due to excessive workmanship.

Many critics claim that Stephen eventually becomes an Icarus figure—a failed artist—but Fortuna alternatively suggests "one could read [Stephen] as a Daedalus figure and still come to the same ironic conclusions about his failure as an artist" (121). She claims "critics who make the Stephen-Icarus identification usually damn Stephen



implicitly for not becoming a full-fledged Daedalus, in his fatal fall destroying the possibility of his growing to be another master artificer" (121). Fortuna does not agree that reading Stephen as Daedalus necessarily makes his a representation of the 'true artist' (121). This is a very interesting conclusion. The underlying assumption of general scholarship is that Daedalus is the first artist, so, essentially, he must be *an* artist. Verily, if one of his many creations does not qualify as art it does not necessarily preclude Daedalus from being an artist, but other evidence suggests that Daedalus would not qualify as a 'classical' artist, though he is an artist from classical antiquity.

Immediately after posing the questions from his notebook, Stephen characterizes sculpture as an 'inferior' art that "does not present the forms I spoke of distinguished clearly one from another" (244). He creates of lifelike statuary not for an aesthetic end, and even such a purpose would not render him the ideal artist, as the form is itself inferior. In addition, Stephen claims that "the artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails" (245). If this were to apply to Daedalus, then his creations would not qualify at all. He is inherently attached to his waxen wings; they cannot exist without his body giving them structure and his mind giving them form. In addition, myth presents Daedalus as a reactionary—twice attempting murder in response to the creation of another. As explained above, reactionary emotion, such as lust or anger, violates the aesthetic principle that Joyce expounds.

The epigraph, "'And [Daedalus] altered/improved the laws of nature,' written in the context of constructing the waxy wings" (Hochman), supports this claim. Joyce's critical theory exalts art that does not alter nature, but represents it. As explained above,

the reference to Daedalus in the aesthetic lecture infers that Daedalus was not a 'classical' artist. The practical nature of the wooden cow makes it essentially different from the type of art that Stephen has crafted. Daedalus's "cow was designed and constructed...to allow a queen to consummate her passion for a bull, not to be a thing of beauty or to 'epiphanize' reality" (Fortuna 122). However, even if Daedalus does not succeed in achieving the kind of artistry that Joyce and Stephen agree is ideal, such a concession does not compromise the mythical character's position as a central figure in the structure of the story.

Daedalus, then, is not a true artist, at least not according to the aesthetics of Joyce-Stephen. Likewise, it seems that Stephen, who models himself on the mythic inventor, fails for the same reason. According to Stephen's aesthetic theory and resolution to leave Ireland "to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (288), Hugh Kenner claims that "improving the work of nature is [Stephen's] obvious ambition" (121). As such, "Stephen does not...become an artist by rejecting church and country. Stephen does not become an artist at all" (Kenner 121). Claims regarding Stephen's failure typically draw support from the unconvincing Villanelle or the depiction of Stephen in *Ulysses*. Here, however, mere intentions disqualify Stephen from consideration as a pure artist.

On first approach, this conclusion reads as an indictment not only of Stephen but also of Joyce. In possibly the most backhanded compliment ever bestowed on Joyce, Wyndham Lewis characterizes the relationship between Stephen and Joyce as it develops:

Joyce is fundamentally autobiographical, it must be recalled; not in the way that most writers to some extent are, but scrupulously and

naturalistically so. Or at least that is how he started. The *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was supposed to give you a neat, carefully-drawn picture of Joyce from babyhood upwards... You get an accurate enough account, thereupon, of a physically-feeble, timid, pompous, ill-tempered, very conceited little boy. It is interesting honest, even sometimes to naïveté—though not often that; but it is not promising material for anything but the small, neat naturalism of *Dubliners*. It seems as unlikely, in short, that this little fellow will grow into the protagonist of a battle between the mighty principles of Spirit and Matter, Good and Evil, or White and Black, as that the author of the little, neat, reasonable, unadventurous *Dubliners* would one day become the author of the big blustering *Ulysses*. (117)

Coming from the same critic who claimed that “It would be difficult, I think, to find a more lifeless, irritating, principal figure than the deplorable hero of *Portrait of the Artist*” (Lewis 116) such criticism is not terribly surprising. Regardless of the questionable value judgment on Stephen, Lewis characterizes the intentional and realistic nature of Joyce’s autobiographical style correctly. Their critical theories are identical, and Joyce wrote himself into the novel as a Daedalian figure. Joyce does consider himself a true artist, however. It becomes important to consider what Joyce is attempting to say about himself in the novel. Joyce writes himself into the novel as an artist, but also continually lays a foundation that suggests his failure as an artist. If Joyce violates the laws of nature and reality, then he is no true artist according to his own criteria. But he simultaneously claims that he is an artist. To add an additional level of complexity to this set of premises, if readers attempt to accept these two conflicting ideas simultaneously, then they must defy the principle that Joyce-Stephen claims is essential to perception, that “the same attribute cannot at the same time and in the same connexion belong to and not belong to the same subject” (237), or A is A.

When readers examine the development of the aesthetic theory exactly, they see that though Joyce and Stephen have identical aesthetic theories, there is a distinction

between the two agents. Stephen introduces a description of how the most proper 'classical' artist would be exhibited through the artistic forms. He characterizes the dramatic, as espoused by "Drama and Life," as the "highest and most spiritual art" (244). He compares it to the lyrical form, saying it is the "simplest verbal vesture of an instant of emotion, a rhythmical cry such as ages ago cheered on the man who pulled at the oar or dragged stones up a slope" (244). He is saying that the literary model developed from the ancient model associated with ancient naval life (the Greeks) or myth (Sisyphus pushing the stone up the mountain), connecting his 'classical' art with the classics themselves. He articulates that the difference is that "the narrative is no longer purely personal. The personality of the artist passes into the narration itself, flowing round and round the persons and the action like a vital sea" (244). He describes the product of his narrative style within the form of the very description, and he uses the imagery of both water and circling to invoke the labyrinth and the surrounding sea simultaneously. In this way, Joyce again uses the tools of myth to depict reality through his art.

Stephen follows by describing the "dramatic form," but doing so in terms exhibited by the highly wrought *A Portrait*. He claims that "the Dramatic form is reached when the vitality which has flowed and eddied round each person fills every proper and intangible-esthetic life. The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalizes itself" (244). He is describing the process of the novel that he is in. The beginning of *Portrait* could best be described as a 'cry or a cadence or a mood' from Stephens description. Joyce's personality moves then into a 'fluid and lambent

narrative.' In *A Portrait* Joyce has not yet achieved the final stage of impersonalizing himself in Stephen.

Joyce describes the development of his text within the work itself. He is relating the ideal, but giving hints that his creation cannot live up to this ideal because he is still engaged in representing purely emotional art. Here Joyce recounts his previous mindset. F.L. Radford summarizes this representation of Joyce redeeming himself by ironizing his younger self:

If Stephen Dedalus is viewed ironically in the romantic extremism of his artistic ambition and the extravagance of his language, the superb control of these elements within a context of precisely evoked realism is simply more evidence of the excellence of the artist-to-be. In this way *A Portrait* is supremely self-reflexive. The artist at the end of the book will create the book and only by reading to the end are we ready to read again from the beginning, realizing that the superior art of the mature narrator both validates and deconstructs the self-concepts of his younger self. (271)

But he also leaves with a promise that his personality will refine itself out of existence within the text. Joyce's entire body of work exhibits this transition that Stephen describes. Neville notices this trend and claims that "One must read all of Joyce's works to notice the growing detachment of the author from his characters. Yet, ironically, the portraits become more personal, less restrained" (Neville 3). By the end of *A Portrait*, however, the Joyce-Stephen connection remains most striking. Joyce has not yet refined himself out of *A Portrait*, though he is telling us in this text that Stephen is seeking to refine himself out of the text. Joyce accomplishes this by presenting this ideal and then by completing *Ulysses*.

Stephen may not excel as an artist, but the conscious depiction of Stephen as a floundering artist with potential qualifies Joyce as an artist. The novel itself qualifies as art if it is the "human disposition of sensible or intelligible matter for an esthetic end"

(Joyce, *Portrait* 235). Though complicated, it is certainly sensible, intelligible, and for an aesthetic end. The question is not whether Stephen is a 'romantic' artist or the superior 'classical' artist, but Joyce. The answer is contingent on whether Joyce is presenting truth, even about himself. Joyce presents himself as a young man, with all faults and contradictions. Joyce represents an earlier version of himself that would fail as an artist, but in so doing becomes a success as an artist. The depiction of the sinful intention of the epigraph to 'alter the laws of nature' that damns his literary characterization is also the truthful confession that redeems the author.

The novel, however, concludes not with the explication of the literary theory, but with self-imposed exile from Ireland. Exile of Stephen connects the author with his character, and moreover, connects the pair with their mythical forefather. Joyce's experience of leaving his country "could be seen as particularly Irish," and "it would not be misguided to suggest that Joyce's act of leaving his country completed his initiation into Irish cultural identity" (Canadas). As Joyce himself said in a 1907 lecture, "The economic and intellectual conditions that prevail in [Ireland] do not permit the development of individuality...No one who has any self-respect stays in Ireland, but flees afar as though from a country that has undergone the visitation of an angered Jove" (Joyce, *Ireland* 171). This is the same sentiment that Daedalus cites when he decides to construct the waxen wings.

However, the exile of Joyce and Stephen are different from "the majority, who largely left their homeland to escape economic hardship" (Canadas). Leaving for the Continent indicated a search for "a cultural tradition distinct from that of the British" (Canadas). This play between Ireland and Britain is similar to that between Crete and

Greece. Each of the large islands, Ireland and Crete, has its own unique culture, though it is often associated with its respective 'mainland.' The Minoans, with whom Daedalus is associated, left behind a legacy including architecture and material culture that is distinct from the Greek tradition. Celtic Ireland is a continuing source of national identity for the Irish. Theseus, the Athenian hero, left Athens to pursue glory abroad. Daedalus, like Stephen and Joyce, was driven from his homeland because of individuality. So the brooding Daedalus misses his homeland, Athens, but does not actually return. The nostalgic, exiled artist—aware that his home is an inescapable aspect of himself but unwilling and unable to return—is identical to the self-exiled Joyce writing obsessively of Ireland without returning. *A Portrait* is Joyce's endeavor to capture exactly how he reached that position.

## VII. Conclusion: Stephen as Icarus or lapwing in *Ulysses*

Any consideration of the relationship between Stephen Dedalus and the Daedalus myth should consider his presence in *Ulysses*. Traditionally, his flight has been considered a failure, so he is considered an Icarus figure. It is nearly impossible for students of Joyce to completely separate the Stephen Dedalus of *Ulysses* and that of the end of *A Portrait*. Readers of Joyce's later novel must compare the Stephen on June 16, 1904, and the one from thirteen months before. We know that Stephen leaves Ireland for Paris and, as "he seems to have become frustrated, self-accusing and self-justifying young man, a would-be artist disillusioned by his recent encounters with the 'reality of experience'" (Heininger 435). The readers can only assume that the flight to Paris did not transpire as planned. In Joyce's later narrative, he only presents memories of his trip in indistinct segments, but, nonetheless, "Joyce portrays Stephen Dedalus' Paris experiences as a consistent pattern of frustration and dashed hopes" (Heininger 435-6).

Icarus and Daedalus have identical ambitions; the difference between the two is success. As such, the basis of considering Stephen to be an Icarus has been by considering his failure to set out what he accomplished to do. At the end of *A Portrait* it seems that Stephen desires two things: to 'fly by the nets' of institutions and to achieve success as an artist. A symbol of the nets that he intends to fly by is the control that the institutions of Ireland have over sex. Heininger claims that when considering Stephen's sexual exploits, "instead of succeeding in his announced plans to 'fly by' the 'nets' of sexual and emotional satisfaction with a woman, Stephen is frustrated in every instance" (436). In the 'Proteus' episode, Stephen "associates sex with art and sin with sex in his series of charges against himself and his past conduct" (437). The fact that sin and sex



remain connected despite Stephen's claims in *A Portrait* demonstrate that he has unsuccessfully been able to fly by those nets. He reveals that he has not yet "found the other satisfaction he seeks, which is 'How to win a woman's love?'" As he considers the position of Shakespeare's sexual experience with Ann Hathaway in "Scylla and Charybdis," he reveals that, despite his visits to prostitutes, he has not had such an experience: "And my turn? When?/ Come!" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 286). The dialogue in *Ulysses* reveals that his sexual experiences have failed to fulfill his sexual ambition.

Additionally, he also has become fairly disillusioned with what he considers his artistic destiny at the conclusion of *A Portrait*. Though he has "some small successes... for the most part he absorbs a series of checks to his ambitions" (Heininger 442). We see this consideration in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode: "Fabulous artificer, the hawklike man. You flew. Whereto? Newhaven-Dieppe, steerage passenger. Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus. *Pater, ait*. Seabedabbled, fallen weltering. Lapwing you are. Lapwing he" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 315). Both 'fabulous artificer,' and 'hawklike man' are exact phrases from Stephen's epiphanic moment in chapter IV of *A Portrait*. He recalls this directly, but by openly comparing himself to Icarus or a lapwing, it is clear that he is considering himself a failure.

Most often, critics label Stephen a failure in *Ulysses*, and consequently read him as an Icarus figure, a not entirely appropriate interpretation. It certainly fits in many regards. He feels that he hailed his namesake and aspired to exceed his predecessor's powers. In Paris, "Stephen has not found in Paris any of the successes he had hoped for but rather a series of political, artistic, religious, and sexual disillusionments" (Heininger 443). The flight of Icarus was intended to deny existing forces of nature, but the

unstoppable forces of the sun and the sea, the two nets that Daedalus warns his son that he must fly in between, prove too powerful and capture the son. In the same way, by Stephen's disillusionment in Paris, "the 'nets' he had tried to escape by leaving Ireland have demonstrated their universal reach and unexpected strength" (Heininger 444). Such circumstances would make him seem to be an utter failure in his task.

However, most myth traditions hold that nothing remains of Icarus except a splash and the loss felt by Daedalus after his fall. Some critics have proposed as the more accurate image of the 'lapwing.' The reference above is not the only consideration of Stephen as a Lapwing in *Ulysses*. Scholes claims that "Stephen Dedalus resembles not only the fabulous artificer and his son Icarus but also that too-clever nephew of Daedalus who was pushed off a high tower by his uncle and turned into a lapwing. In *Ulysses* Stephen's main resemblance is clearly to this third, lapwinged member of the Daedelian trinity" (Scholes and Kain, Workshop 264).

This has been accepted by many critics, who claim that Stephen is struggling to soar, unable to reach the heights of the hawklike man in *A Portrait* but also not drown as Icarus, but Geckle considers a lapwing to be a worse fate (104). He claims that Stephen is "no longer even an Icarus, but a faithless lapwing who has rejected his mother, his sister Dilly ...and his brother Maurice" (Geckle 111). To support this he refers to the description that Joyce uses describing her sister causing him to drown, and when Stephen thinks: "A brother is as easily forgotten as an umbrella./ Lapwing./Where is your brother? Apothecaries' hall...Lapwing" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 316). Referring to how lapwings fly near water, close to being pulled in as Daedalus warns Icarus, and the word itself in amidst descriptions of abandoning his brother shows him to be even worse failure. Geckle also

claims that as lapwings dwell near graves, Stephen's brief poem comparing his mother's death and a vampire proves that "even in terms of his artistic being, Stephen is like a lapwing...Stephen's major, (in fact, his only) poetic achievement in *Ulysses* corroborates the interpretation that he is a failure in all respects" (Geckle 112).

Though the majority of scholars base their criticism off of Mary Innes's translation, Geckle takes issue with that practice. Geckle asserts that the nephew transformed into a lapwing is actually "described in Ovid as a 'perdix,' which translates 'partridge.' The translation of Mary M. Innes (Penguin Books 1961) that Scholes and Kain reprint is certainly a misleading one. It implies a connection between Stephen's 'lapwing' and the Ovidian story that does not, in fact, exist" (Geckle 104).

Geckle's research into the nature of the term 'lapwing,' including the legitimacy of the translation accepted by most critics, provides valuable insight. However, he uses his observations regarding the negative connotations of being a 'lapwing' to make the following conclusion:

It is time to discontinue the critical approach to *A Portrait* that sees Stephen Dedalus as some sort of autobiographical study of James Joyce. Those critics who merge Stephen and Joyce inevitably find the young Dedalus to be something of a Stephen Hero (without ironical implication). The lapwing references in *Ulysses* lead us in another direction. If there is any sympathy for Stephen it is not because he is a potentially great artist (Mulligan, for all of his meanness, sees Stephen's 'potential' for what it is; see 245-6/249) but because he is aware that he is a failure. As Stanislaus Joyce bluntly put it: "*A Portrait of the Artist* is not an autobiography; it is an artistic creation. As I had something to say to its reshaping, I can affirm this without hesitation...If the Dedalus of *Ulysses* were intended to be a self-portrait it would be a very unflattering one. In temperament he [James Joyce] was as unlike that figure, mourning under the incubus of remorse, as he could well be" (Geckle 112).

That conclusion depends on the premise that the references in *Ulysses* inherently alter the nature of Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait*. Geckle is not alone in making that assumption.

Trotter claims that Stephen is “different only in the degree of self-doubt to which he is subject, and to which a new interior monologue technique gives us unprecedented access” (83), so the nature of the character is inherently identical. Since it is the same character, “The first nine episodes of *Ulysses* consign *A Portrait* to history by invalidating its solipsism” (Trotter 84).

Discovering what the relationship is between Joyce and Stephen in *Ulysses* is crucial. It is understandable that seeing a novelist’s character at a later work will have some bearing on the interpretation of the character, but every aspect of Stephen *A Portrait* should not be reconsidered after seeing him in *Ulysses*. Grayson points out that “Joyce’s artistic intentions for Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait* are necessarily different from those he had for him in *Ulysses*. Though Stephen is a surrogate for Joyce in both novels, we should not make the mistake of seeing him as a direct counterpart for the author” (310). The role of Stephen Dedalus in relationship to James Joyce is different than the autobiographic nature of Stephen in *A Portrait*. Stephen’s aesthetic theory called for an artist who “remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails” (245). Stephen in *A Portrait* could not accomplish this, but Joyce uses Stephen in *Ulysses* to fulfill his own requirement of art. This would mean that “the ironic narrative stance is that shown by the older Stephen in *Ulysses*” are not as damning and self-deprecating as has been suggested, since *Ulysses* does not posture itself as an autobiographical novel (Radford 271).

Critics often claim that though Stephen resembles different characters in the mythical structure at different times, he cannot resemble different characters simultaneously. For example, F.L. Radford claims that the development of Stephen

shows “a strong central consciousness that sees other characters and events and judges its experience according to its own prejudices and aspirations” (272). He notes that “this is a progressively more educated consciousness capable of elaborating for itself a satisfying and justifying symbolic complex” (272) and that a second consciousness is “the narrating consciousness which subjects the character’s romantic aspirations to the test of sordid reality and which sets up a counterpoint of conflicting images” (272). However, he then claims that “the character Stephen constantly thinks of the analogy between himself and Daedalus, but never of Icarus. When he does think of a fall, it is the grander one of Lucifer, who does not merely disappear beneath the waves”. The repeated image of a fall encourages the reader but not Stephen to think of Icarus, then asserts that “of course, the later Stephen of *Ulysses*, who is to be the putative narrator of *A Portrait*, thinks of himself as that neglected Daedalean relative, ‘Lapwing’” (Radford 272). Yet a contradiction arises with the text immediately following the word ‘lapwing:’ “Icarus. *Pater, ait*. Seabedabbled, fallen weltering” (Joyce, *Ulysses* 315) ‘*Pater, ait*’ is Stephen’s attempt to quote Ovid’s account of Icarus’s drowning plea for his father, and a lapwing, though low-flying, is neither ‘seabedabbled’ or ‘fallen.’ Stephen entertains comparisons of himself to Icarus and the lapwing in his mind simultaneously, inviting readers to entertain the same notion. Heinger presents this distinction of Stephen-Icarus or Stephen-lapwing, summarizing by saying “the composite portrait of Stephen that emerges from *Ulysses* can be interpreted as that of a self-loathing artistic failure, as that of a sadder but wiser young man possessing still unrealized artistic gifts”, or as indicating still other possibilities (444).

These comments do not suggest that Joyce is calling Stephen a failure, but that Stephen is calling himself a failure. As Radford points out, "the Daedalian image is the character's own conscious self-concept, an obvious one for Stephen Dedalus to choose, given his name" (256). Stephen and Joyce make both explicit and subtle references to the mythical system, and "the multiple implications of Daedalus (and Icarus) are of obvious and continuing value to Joyce... for their blend of the heroic and the ironic" (Radford 256). Because of the strong connection to the author at the end of *A Portrait*, critics often prematurely conclude that Joyce is Stephen in *Ulysses*. Drawing conclusions about the place of the author in *A Portrait* versus the place of the author in *Ulysses* proves more challenging. *A Portrait* is a *Bildungsroman* encompassing a number of years. The critical writings and biographical information about Joyce corroborate with the development of Stephen. The Stephen-Joyce connection is apparent on almost every level of the text. Alternatively, Stanislaus Joyce claims that the Stephen in *Ulysses*—The disillusioned, hurt, self-deprecating soul that presents himself as an Icarus or a lapwing—does not represent his brother.

These criticisms overlook an important concept. The question of the author's voice is at the forefront of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* because the novel is itself a portrait of the artist as a young man. The title, changed from *Stephen Hero*, "must lead us to the sister art of painting where such titles always mean that the work is by the artist of the title. This encourages us to think of *A Portrait* as an autobiographical work, but as the autobiography of Stephen Dedalus, not Joyce, however closely they may be related" (Radford 271). The novel intentionally displays questions of the author's voice and its changes throughout the growth of the author-protagonist. *Ulysses* on the other

hand represents characters on one day, offering a particular snapshot of their lives. While Joyce does depict recurring themes and memories in the characters, ultimately all conclusions consider only what those characters recall and experience on that day. As an author known for his moments of epiphany, Joyce creates characters that are consistently inconsistent. Though the day certainly represents a changed and disillusioned Stephen, no evidence indicates that this is his only mode of thought from day to day. Thus, though Stanislaus Joyce and others claim that the disillusioned and lost Stephen in *Ulysses* is a less accurate characterization of the author than the Stephen at the conclusion of *A Portrait*, the author and his creation may never fully lose that connection. Of course, Joyce tells us that Stephen is not exactly Joyce in *Ulysses* by implication. June 16, 1904 was the first day that Joyce went on a date with Nora Barnacle. We know how Stephen's day progresses on that day of *Ulysses*, and that it did not include such an encounter. As such, Joyce signals a departure from the character. Richard Ellman claims that "On June 16, as he would afterwards realize, he entered into relation with the world around him and left behind the loneliness he had felt since his mother's death... June 16 was the sacred day that divided Stephen Dedalus, the insurgent youth, from Leopold Bloom, the complaisant husband" (156).

In the same way that the myths surrounding Daedalus tell us of his exploits and character but do not relay the remainder of his life, Joyce develops Stephen, and then releases him. As Frye suggests, *A Portrait* is "a bildungsroman in which the author examines a younger version of himself in order to objectify the younger self and break something of its hold on him" (Frye, *Myth and Metaphor* 366). It seems that Joyce

severs the connection with Stephen, freeing him from his dependence on the author's persona.

Daedalus, the exiled and re-exiled artist of Greece, serves as a good model for both Stephen Dedalus and James Joyce. After his adolescence, Joyce exiled himself from Dublin. He lived for a time in Paris, then in Trieste, and in Zurich. He did return to Ireland a few times, but never permanently. However, he wrote exclusively of the capital city and its inhabitants. Similarly, Daedalus could not handle life in Athens as his flight resulted from a perceived threat to his artistic invention. Tradition identifies him as an influential artisan on Crete. He is imprisoned and chooses to exile himself. Like Joyce, his drive "to alter the laws of nature" supersedes all loyalty to authority and creates something entirely new. Daedalus is flying by nets, affecting the principle of *non serviam*.

Each of the characters in the Cretan myth system, though different from the others in character and action, has a strong connection to Stephen that illustrates varying aspects of his character. It is essential, not merely useful, to use an analysis of these characters to understand the various positions Stephen holds in the labyrinth of the work. The structure of the labyrinth itself serves as a model for the entire structure of *A Portrait* and illustrates the development of Stephen Dedalus as he chooses exile and flight. Even after escaping the labyrinth, the figures of Icarus, Daedalus, and the lapwing continue to illustrate the important characteristics of Stephen.

James Joyce is concerned with the defiance of convention in order to forge a new form better representing truth, moving—as modernists would term it—from 'romantic' emotional art to 'classical' natural art. He paradoxically uses myth, an ancient



convention associated with the fantastic and impossible, to structure and illustrate the novels that demonstrate his ambition. However, Joyce demonstrated a willingness to use any elucidating technique to depict the psyche of humans, whether mundane or heroic. He created an autobiographic character completely centered around a mythical structure that blurred the connections between author, creation, and past. By creating a personal myth and clearing the way for what Eliot called "the mythical mode," it is Joyce himself who "set his mind to sciences never explored before, and altered the laws of nature."

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