

Joyce's Parody of Period-Bound Languages  
in  
'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man'

A Thesis  
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University of Manitoba  
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by  
Rinata Silverberg

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**JOYCE'S PARODY OF PERIOD-BOUND LANGUAGES IN**

**'A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN'**

**BY**

**RINATA SILVERBERG**

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

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## ABSTRACT

"Joyce's Parody of Period-Bound languages in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" examines how Joyce parodies literary languages to dismiss their inherent conventionality and constricting natures.

The idealistic Stephen Dedalus, who is fashioned after the histrionic Emma Bovary, who envisages himself as the Count of Monte Cristo, and who reveres Shelley and Lord Byron is parodically reduced to a mere narcissist whose self-image is rooted in an outmoded romantic code.

The languages of realism and naturalism counter Stephen's romanticism, but are also parodied. Naturalistic determinism and realist verisimilitude are undercut by Stephen's appeal to fate as an excuse for character and by his attempts to "rub his nose" in filth and excrement.

The aestheticism that Flaubert celebrated in Madame Bovary is another object of Joyce's parodic pen. The humorless Stephen parodies the aesthetic cult of art celebrated by Walter Pater in Marius the Epicurean, by George Moore in Confessions of a Young Man, and by Oscar Wilde such essays as Intentions.

Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualization of novelistic discourse as "a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other" is fundamental to Joyce's desire to overcome conventionality, to abolish period-bound languages, and to perpetuate a dialogics of reading.

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"Dead, but still with us, still with us, but dead."

Donald Barthelme, The Dead Father



## Introduction

When Mikhail Bakhtin said that "all there is to know about the world is not exhausted by a particular discourse about it; every available style is restricted, there are protocols that must be observed" (45-46), he could have taken his examples from James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. For Joyce's artist novel seems to epitomize perfectly Bakhtin's theory of stylistic discourse, of the parodic renovation of the language of the novel outlined in The Dialogic Imagination.

With a view to understanding how literary forms and styles arise and go out of fashion, Bakhtin has identified parody as a crucial means for literary language to renovate itself. He affirms that literary genres are "conventional" due to their direct correlation with a particular world view; when that view begins to fade, so too does its linguistic representation. To prevent the retreat and disappearance of the genre itself into such moribund conventionality, the novelist "polemicizes with this language, argues with it, agrees with it (although with conditions), interrogates it, eavesdrops on it, but also ridicules it, parodically exaggerates it and so forth" (46).

Such a stylistic reading of the novel is based on the assumption that literary languages are in direct confrontation, and even in competition with each other within the framework of the

novel's "heteroglossia"--that conceptualization of language which resists all systematic linguistics because any word uttered at a particular place and time "will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions" (Holquist 428). Language, in other words, is never singular or unitary, but differs with every new context, with each shade of meaning given it by speakers from differing times and social backgrounds. So, too, as Bakhtin argues, "The language of the novel" should be seen as "a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other. It is impossible to describe and analyze it as a single unitary language" (Bakhtin 47). For what the novel has to offer is a "novelistic image of another's style" which "must be taken in intonational quotation marks within the system of direct authorial speech (postulated by us here), that is, taken as if the image were parodic and ironic" (44). The "author can express some of his most basic ideas and observations only with the help of this 'language,' despite the fact that as a system it is a historical dead end" (45). For these "images of language are inseparable from images of various world views and from the living beings who are their agents--people who think, talk, and act in a setting that is socially and historically concrete" (49). This social concreteness of language encodes a history which the novelist is bound to represent, though as language "it is represented precisely as a living mix of varied and opposing voices, developing and renewing itself. The language of the author strives to overcome the superficial 'literariness' of moribund, outmoded styles and

fashionable period-bound languages" (49).

Since period-bound languages frustrate literary development by holding authors to stultified conventions, parody is a necessary means for artists to come to terms with the past, and even to emancipate themselves from that past. As Bakhtin shows in his survey of types "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," various "parodic-travestying forms" once "freed consciousness from the power of the direct word, destroyed the thick walls that had imprisoned consciousness within its own discourse, within its own language" (60). This is precisely the case with the literary world Joyce faced in A Portrait, a world in which the languages of romanticism, realism, naturalism, and aestheticism had imprisoned the consciousness of their various adherents, making for little more than a dialogue of the deaf. Joyce's first novel "speaks" each of these languages quite fluently, though without authorial conviction or commitment. As Bakhtin would say, "Only polyglossia fully frees consciousness from the tyranny of its own language and its own myth of language" (61). Polyglossia works in A Portrait in a way which anticipates Joyce's final project in Finnegan's Wake of freeing consciousness from the tyranny of language itself, though it is used in his first novel to free consciousness from the "myths" of period-bound languages.

Although Hugh Kenner opened the way for an entirely new, ironic reading of A Portrait in his 1948 essay "A Portrait in Perspective," critical opinion has long remained divided on the meaning of art and artist in the novel. Past readings of Stephen

as a romantic hero who emancipates himself from an insipid environment persist in familiar forms, such as in James T. Farrell's reading of A Portrait as "the story of how Stephen was produced, how he rejected that which produced him, how he discovered that his destiny was to become a lonely one of artistic creation" (175), and of how he is the "artistic image of Joyce himself." Others, such as Norman Holland, have emphasized naturalist elements in the novel, how "This is a portrait of the artist as a young man, as a sexually driven creature, awash in testosterone" (283), while someone else can assert that where Stephen "lives in a world of abstractions, ... the novel does not; in fact, one of Joyce's chief strengths as a writer is that he always shows us how consciousness is determined by a social existence" (Naremore 113). Contrary to Holland, Naremore concludes that "Joyce's work belongs in a tradition of literary realism" (114). Finally, there are those who continue to interpret the novel as Joyce's aesthetic testament, such as Diane Collinson, who, in her essay "The Aesthetic Theory of Stephen Dedalus," says of Stephen's aesthetic theories that "they saved him, and may save us, too, from the merely 'literary talk' we might otherwise fall into. Like Stephen, we may take them for our own use and guidance until we have done something for ourselves by their light" (72). Stephen's formalist theories were in fact integral to a whole generation of New Critics who acknowledged their paternity in Dedalus, the title of one of their magazines in the 1950s and 60s.

But perhaps these readings which are partial to one literary

school or another have missed the point. In his more recent study of Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Literature, R.B. Kershner cites "dialogism and incremental repetition" (881) as the real source of Joyce's writing, a reading that comes closest to the parodic interpretation adopted in this study. In his study of the Canadian artist novel, Confessional Fictions, David Williams helps to advance this parodic way of reading A Portrait, though since his focus is on the Canadian kunstlerroman, he explores only Joyce's quarrel with the literary language of l'art pour l'art. This thesis seeks to develop further Williams' preliminary research, each chapter examining in-depth a literary genre that Joyce parodies.

A chapter on romantic parody explores the comic schism between Stephen's idealistic aspirations and actual circumstances, his quest for a transcendent realm which is often no more than a comic imitation of some literary work or gesture by British or French romantics. Stephen never really evolves from his early romantic desires for a life of "continuous adventure" (Frye Harper 401), from his aspirations for that remote, impossible realm of the romantic hero. But the self-inflated "Baby Tuckoo" who imagines himself the hero of his own fairytale is constantly being deflated by the third-person narrator, who, in this case, draws our attention to Stephen's urine-soaked bed. Such a sequence of heroic inflation and narrative deflation proves to be Joyce's primary technique throughout A Portrait.

Joyce learned this technique from none other than Gustave

Flaubert who, in Madame Bovary, "deflate[s] the pretensions of characters, either by signal departures from our models of human conduct or else by the description of illusions which contrast with realities announced by the text" (Culler 194). The self-aggrandizing Stephen who imagines his own martyrdom in a vision of his funeral is modelled on Flaubert's Emma Bovary, whose religious rapture is really a sublimated version of eroticism. Joyce's comparison reduces both would-be heroes to mere narcissists whose self-images are from an outmoded romantic code.

Stephen's romantic yearning is based upon other romantic models too, such as the Count of Monte Cristo, Shelley, and Lord Byron. In his repeated refusal to act upon his desire for E. C., Stephen parodies that eloquent avenger who, having refused his "muscatel grapes" and all the experiential world it represents, indicates the superior status to which the romantic typically attributes his/her own desire. Ironically, Stephen misreads such desire in Shelley: he interprets Shelley's poem "To the Moon" as an invocation to aloofness and sequestration, not as the requiem which it really is, Shelley's personal lament for the isolation to which the romantic is ultimately confined.

In a final parody of Byron, Stephen fully embodies such aloofness that even Shelley lamented, the stultifying effects of an overly popular, outmoded discourse. For he has misconstrued Byron too, seeing him only as a rebellious symbol of heresy, but neglecting his lasciviousness, his engrossment in all the world of experience that he, himself, has shunned. Stephen is thus a

parodic inflation of all his romantic predecessors, modelled on types which have gone out of style.

A following chapter attempts an analysis of Joyce's parodic treatment of realism and naturalism. Once again, Flaubert is a primary object of parody, as are Zola, Hardy, Vermeer, Cornelius a Lapide, Baudelaire, and Edmond de Goncourt. Joyce exposes the hypocrisy of realists who would elevate the natural by stressing that it was still an "elevation" that they sought, no different from the romantic elevation of the divine. For example, Stephen's idealization of the simple life of a serving girl is an ironic citation of realist painting, like that of Jan Vermeer, or realist literature which tried to portray the goodness visible in mere surfaces.

In fact, Joyce sets up a dialectical tension between romanticism and realism/naturalism in order to displace both of them. Such a tension is expressed in the scene of the Agricultural show in Madame Bovary, where the "language of romantic love" spoken by Emma and Rodolphe is ironically juxtaposed with the "language of the land" down below, the chairman's exclamations concerning farming and manure. Stephen's habitual retreat into the "misrule and confusion of his father's house" just when his romantic dreams become blunted recapitulates Flaubert's system of realism deflating the pretences of romanticism. At the same time, such a retreat becomes a monkish form of self-flagellation, a rubbing of his own nose in excrement, so to speak, to remind himself that matter is not instinct with spirit.

The "distorting mirror" of the realists is further exposed through Joyce's deliberate disruptions of realist verisimilitude. For what better way to parody the "slice of life" narrative than by giving its hero the name "fabulous artificer," much less than to attach him to the archetypal story of artistic creation? Such parody continues in his title which insists on its artifice, in contrast to realists like Defoe whose titles pretend to a documentary authenticity. Likewise, Joyce's use of imagery recalls the naturalist ideology that people are merely creatures of their appetites; at the same time, he alludes to false cults of nature worship, such as the Jews en route to Jerusalem who worshipped a "bovine god" (120), or Cornelius a Lapide, the Flemish Jesuit who believed that lice "were not created directly by God but by spontaneous generation" (Deane 324). Paradoxically, Stephen cannot escape his own vermin-breeding body, despite his many attempts to clothe it in the robes of literary credos.

Aestheticism is the third and ultimate mode that Joyce parodies, of which Stephen becomes an ironically enduring testament. Having emulated Flaubert in his mockery of romanticism and naturalism, one might suspect that Joyce would also emulate Flaubert's celebration of a cult of art. But unlike Flaubert and Stephen, Joyce is not interested in purifying his own art of all the wrong desires; rather, he sets up a systematic parody of the cult of beauty and the ideal of "art for art's sake." Thus his aesthete Stephen who refuses to act upon his passions is cut off from any immediate contact with life and is isolated as an



exquisitely refined voyeur. As such, he parodies that devotee of pure beauty, Marius of Pater's Marius the Epicurean. Joyce's theory of the epiphany would appear to imply that he had once been committed himself to Pater's aesthetics of apprehension. But when his Stephen actually undergoes such a moment of "spiritual illumination," Joyce has him in the process of experiencing a wet dream, parodically infusing the "frozen apprehension" with an underlying flux. At the same time, the languid, swooning Stephen recalls the often ecstatic subjects of the Pre-Raphaelites and their followers, another "sect" of aesthetes. But his "arrested seed" can only parody the lack of any issue from the aesthete's experience, a lack that Pater himself confesses in having the barren, isolated Marius take comfort in the thought of "generations to come after him" (381).

Joyce would seem to agree with George Moore, whose sequel to Marius exposes Pater's egregious error: his attempt to find in art a substitute for life. For even Moore himself was engaged in a parody of sorts when his narrator Edward describes his own absurd appearance: "I was as covered with 'fads' as a distinguished foreigner with stars. Naturalism I wore around my neck, Romanticism was pinned over the heart, Symbolism I carried like a toy revolver in my waistcoat pocket, to be used in an emergency" (149). Such a parodic delineation of naturalism, romanticism, and symbolism (a precursor of aestheticism) testifies to Moore's anticipation of Joyce, who replicates the order of his predecessor almost precisely.

Stephen also parodies Pater's notion of the aesthetic image as "selfbounded and selfcontained" and Moore's artist's desire to "recreate himself as it were in the womb of a new nationality" (128) in his own absurd appropriation of the female procreative power, whereby he simultaneously plays the parts of Leda, Mary, not to mention the "vast abyss," and conceives none other than the objet d'art itself, a brittle and hypocritical villanelle. But his lengthy attempts to explain his aesthetic "conception" to various listeners prove futile; in each case, the listener retorts with the most fundamental of objections to aestheticism and the doctrine of the elevation of art over life.

This self-flattering hypocrisy resulting from the aesthete's departure from nature finally recalls the more blatant hypocrisy of the decadent aesthete in Oscar Wilde's Intentions, that collection of critical essays in which Wilde protested: "Life! Life! Don't let us go to life for our fulfilment or our experience. It is a thing narrowed by circumstances, incoherent in its utterance, and without that fine correspondence of form and spirit which is the only thing that can satisfy the artistic and critical temperament. It makes us pay too high a price for its wares, and we purchase the meanest of its secrets at a cost that is monstrous and infinite" (173). This is from the same man who said, "What is termed Sin is an essential element of progress" (134). And so Stephen becomes Joyce's parody of Wilde, of the aesthetic critic's desire to sheathe himself from life's sordid perils in art.

Parodying romanticism, naturalism, and aestheticism, Joyce expresses his own refusal to sheathe himself in any particular literary language. For, in setting up tensions between such languages, Joyce displaces them all, proving Bakhtin's assertion that "any direct word and especially that of the dominant discourse is reflected as something more or less bounded, typical and characteristic of a particular era, aging, dying, ripe for change and renewal" (60). The languages of both romanticism and realism, for example, are virtually clichés due to their immense overexposure, while the language of aestheticism, although also passé as a literary mode, would be transformed by another generation into the New Criticism.

With a desire to overcome such conventionality, Joyce constructs a "hybrid" novel, a novel alive with conflict and debate, confirming only the need for renovation through parody. For, behind the literary poses of the young Stephen Dedalus lies the knowing smile of the more experienced artist, whose parodic pen dramatizes how "the novelistic word arose and developed not as the result of a narrowly literary struggle among tendencies, styles, abstract world views--but rather in a complex and centuries-long struggle of cultures and languages" (Bakhtin 83). Perhaps, then, Joyce's dialogical novel only affirms what he revealed in an interview to Arthur Power: "You are an Irishman and you must write in your own tradition. Borrowed styles are no good. You must write what is in your blood and not what is in your brain" (cited in Roche 330).

### An Inflated Portrait: Joyce's Parody of Romanticism

James Joyce once wrote in a letter to Nora Barnacle, "Can you not see the simplicity which is at the back of all my disguises? We all wear masks" (Ellmann 49). By "disguises," Joyce apparently meant the various literary modes he adopted throughout his fiction. For the diversity in literary styles surrounding the composition of A Portrait offered many masks for the literary poseur, one of which was romanticism. Having outlived its usefulness in the earlier part of the century, a residual romanticism nonetheless continued on throughout the latter part of the century, even lingering into the twentieth century. For example, speaking of himself and Lady Gregory, W. B. Yeats proclaims that "We were the last romantics--chose for theme / Traditional sanctity and loveliness" ("Coole Park and Ballylee," 1931). While Yeats laments Romanticism's passing, he acknowledges both its tenuous survival into the twentieth-century and its exhaustion. The language of romance had in fact become tired and overwritten, offering a perfect target for something like Gustave Flaubert's parody of it at mid-century in Madame Bovary, and for Joyce's later imitation of the French novelist Flaubert in A Portrait.

Despite a long tradition of criticism claiming heroic stature for Stephen in A Portrait, Joyce employs a plethora of devices to undercut the romantic "hero." The very first words of the novel expose the seeds of Stephen's romanticizing tendencies:

"Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo" (3). With this fairytale introduction, we are shown Stephen's inclination for the "far away and long ago," which, as Eric Auerbach tells us, is the very realm of romance itself: "All the numerous castles and palaces, the battles and adventures, of the courtly romances--especially of the Breton cycle--are things of fairyland: each time they appear before us as though sprung from the ground; their geographical relation to the known world, their sociological and economic foundations, remain unexplained. Even their ethical or symbolic significance can rarely be ascertained with anything approaching meaning" (130).

Whereas Stephen is immediately inclined toward such a remote realm of dreamy romance, Joyce remains a member of the "here and now," which he reveals in his constant undercutting of the hero. For, following Stephen's initial self-aggrandizement, the third-person narrator "leaks out" some crucial information: "When you wet the bed first it is warm then it gets cold. His mother put on the oilsheet" (3). This sequence of Stephen's romantic inflation and Joyce's subsequent deflation of the "hero," exposing him as "all wet," turns out to be Joyce's principal technique throughout A Portrait.

Joyce learned this technique, the undercutting of the romantic hero, from Flaubert who does the same sort of thing in Madame Bovary. As Joyce's companion Frank Budgen has recounted,

of all the great nineteenth-century masters of fiction, Joyce held Flaubert in highest esteem, "having read every line of his works and committed whole pages of them to memory" (Cross, v.) In his discussion of Flaubert's techniques in Madame Bovary, Jonathan Culler asserts that Flaubert uses irony to "deflate the pretensions of characters, either by signal departures from our models of human conduct or else by the description of illusions which contrast with realities announced by the text" (194).

Such contrast is expressed in the deviation between the language of romantic sensation and the language of religious exaltation. Of relevance here is a definition of romance claiming that its interest in "continuous adventure ... is in fact a sublimated form of eroticism" (Frye Harper 401). For an element of sublimated eroticism is quite transparent in Flaubert's description of the communion made by that thwarted romantic, Emma Bovary:

Emma felt something powerful pass over her that rid her of all pain, all perception, all feeling. Her flesh had been relieved of its burdens, even the burden of thought; another life was beginning; it seemed to her that her spirit, ascending to God, was about to find annihilation in this love, like burning incense dissolving in smoke. The sheets of her bed were sprinkled with holy water; the priest drew the white host from the sacred pyx; and she was all but swooning with celestial bliss as she advanced her lips to

receive the body of the Saviour. (240)

For Emma, religion is clearly a version of eroticism, and we might be tempted to agree with the priest, who is "of the opinion that her faith might by its fervor come to border on heresy and even on extravagance" (241). Emma's communion does not offer a vision of Divine Love, but rather, of the profane body of love. Emma seeks to elevate the mundane to the sublime, to raise her own sensual experience to a god-like marriage with "the body of the Saviour."

This dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual exposes the whole code of Romance as a "wish-fulfilment dream" in which "the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals" (Frye, Anatomy 186) in confirmation of its own social ascendancy. As Northrop Frye describes the dialectical conflict inherent in romance, "the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the ideals and the villains the threats to their ascendancy." Part of the comedy, then, of Emma's "spiritual" ascendancy is that she is a member of the bourgeoisie using religious imagery to fulfil her own dream of social ascendancy. But in another way, Emma's "martyrdom" only exposes the self-congratulation of a ruling class which "is the general character of chivalric romance in the Middle Ages, aristocratic romance in the Renaissance, bourgeois romance since the eighteenth century, and revolutionary romance in contemporary Russia" (Frye 186).

Starting in A Portrait where Flaubert leaves off in Madame Bovary, Joyce mocks the language of religious exaltation in the

obviously jejune "martyrdom" of a hero from the lower class, a hero who suffers the taunts of classmates who are evidently from better families than he. Early in A Portrait Stephen has a vision of martyrdom that is similar to Emma's, based on the same desire for exaltation of the self:

There was cold sunlight outside the window. He wondered if he would die. You could die just the same on a sunny day. He might die before his mother came. Then he would have a dead mass in the chapel ... All the fellows would be at the mass, dressed in black, all with sad faces. Wells too would be there but no fellow would look at him. The rector would be there in a cape of black and gold and there would be tall yellow candles on the altar and round the catafalque. And they would carry the coffin out of the chapel slowly and he would be buried in the little graveyard of the community off the main avenue of limes. And Wells would be sorry then for what he had done. And the bell would toll slowly. (22)

The highly detailed manner in which Stephen envisions his funeral reveals his narcissistic concern to be at the centre of an heroic scene, a scene that coincides with the language of romantic exaltation of Emma's "religious" rapture. In addition, Stephen's motivations are as self-ennobling as those of Emma, for his "martyrdom" is really a desire for revenge. Thus, where Emma yearns for a "physical" release, religion "offers Stephen a



chance to consummate this narcissistic love affair with his psyche. It bequeaths on the soul the magical power of transubstantiation" (Henke 67).

In reflecting the religious preoccupations of Emma Bovary, however, Stephen unwittingly parodies her. A striking discrepancy exists between the simplistic language in which Stephen's fantasy is couched and the extravagance of the dream itself. Such terse, matter-of-fact statements as "He wondered if he would die" and "Wells would be sorry then for what he had done," as well as the non sequitur of sentences beginning with the word "And," all reflect the underlying immaturity of the dreamer. Likewise, Stephen's focus on Wells at the end of the description reveals the true inspiration of his fantasy: to avenge himself on his social "better" for having pushed him into a ditch. Clearly our romantic hero is little more than a disadvantaged, but egocentric child.

Stephen's recital of a nursery rhyme in this scene further conveys the childish nature of his fantasy:

Dingdong: The castle bell!  
Farewell, my mother!  
Bury me in the old churchyard  
Beside my eldest brother.  
My coffin shall be black,  
Six angels at my back,  
Two to sing and two to pray  
And two to carry my soul away. (22)

Self-pity is finally compensated by a fantasy of power that can command even the angels to exalt him over his "betters."

On one level, Stephen's fantasy echoes the language of spiritual exaltation, his soul surpassing the boundaries of time and space to take revenge upon his playmates for taunting him. On another level, the fantasy parodies that of a much more elaborate death-wisher, Emma Bovary:

One day at the height of her sickness, when she thought she was dying, she had asked for Communion; and as her room was made ready for the sacrament ... Emma felt something powerful pass over her that rid her of all pain, all perception, all feeling. Her flesh had been relieved of its burdens, even the burden of thought; ... the beams of the two wax tapers burning on the chest of drawers seemed to her like dazzling emanations of divine light ... she saw God the Father in all His glory, surrounded by the saints bearing branches of green palm; He was gesturing majestically, and obedient angels with flaming wings were descending to the earth to bear her to Him in their arms. (240)

Just as Stephen's fantasy takes place while in the infirmary, after he has contracted a cold from the incident with Wells, Emma dreams of dying while sick in bed after being rejected by Rodolphe. Both fantasies are induced by vengeance, Emma wanting to punish Rodolphe for his desertion.

Despite their similarities, however, the language in which

such fantasies are couched diverges. Where the language characterizing Emma's dream is poetical and lyrical, that of Stephen's fantasy is juvenile and mundane. In the latter case, language undercuts Stephen in his adolescent yearnings; infantile language exposes infantile desires; now, the genre of romance itself becomes an instance of infantile longing.

The narrative style of Madame Bovary is not consistently poetic, however; it is often blunt and matter-of-fact, at which point Flaubert also exposes the juvenility of Emma's fantasies. The description of Emma's desire for sainthood typifies one such stylistic overwriting: "Among the illusions born of her hope she glimpsed a realm of purity in which she aspired to dwell: it hovered above the earth, merging with the sky. She conceived the idea of becoming a saint. She bought rosaries and festooned herself with holy medals; she wished she had an emerald studded reliquary within reach at her bed's head, to kiss every night" (241). Here, the bluntness of the singular sentence "She conceived the ideal of becoming a saint" makes transparent the plain narcissism of Emma's fantasy; sainthood becomes incorporated into a shopping list of objects to be bought and sold as any other good.

The reduction of the heroine's exaltation to self-promotion reveals her total lack of imagination, since her fantasies are merely an appropriation of liturgical conventions, much like her earlier appropriation of the conventions of sexual romance. Believing that sainthood is a saleable good, Emma is now exposed

as an extremely shallow thinker whose materialism symbolizes her inability to penetrate beyond surface appearances. The liturgical conventions from which her desire derives illustrate Bakhtin's notion of how coded language "locks every stylistic phenomenon into the monologic context of a given self-sufficient and hermeneutic utterance, imprisoning it, as it were, in the dungeon of a single context" (74).

Stephen is imprisoned in such a monological style to an even greater degree than his predecessor, as his own death vision reveals: "How sad that was! How beautiful the words were where they said 'Bury me in the old churchyard!' A tremor passed over his body. How sad and how beautiful! He wanted to cry quietly but not for himself: for the words, so beautiful and sad, like music. The bell! The bell! Farewell! O farewell!" (22). Complete with sighs, exclamations, and "farewells," Stephen's language marks his entrapment in romantic discourse, further revealed by his desire to "cry quietly but not for himself: for the words." In fact, the words ARE himself, as he becomes a living testimony of a period-bound language, overwritten and overused for at least a century.

The overt acknowledgement of Stephen's dependence on romantic language exposes the textual imprisonment that Flaubert's narrative only insinuates. As with Emma, "we are being shown a mind whose mode of conscious perception is narrative: Stephen not only thinks but perceives in phrases and sentences. We might say his consciousness is 'narratized'"

(Kershner "Dialogism" 888). Incidentally, the sonorous rhyme of the words--"the bell" and "farewell"--are themselves narrative devices, hinting that our dreamer has indeed been drifting, and is in desperate need of awakening. Stephen's fascination with such childish rhymes also harkens back to the first page, and the story of baby tuckoo, wherein the reader is immediately removed from the "here and now" and launched into the "long ago and far away" realm of fairytale. But beneath the naive infant voice lies the corrective hand of an author who sets up coded languages only to subvert them.

Culler's assessment of Flaubert's method in Madame Bovary works equally well for Joyce:

Our experience of the [novel] gives us a sense of the various codes in which thoughts and events may be rendered, and we quickly come to identify the appearance of one of these codes with irony. As soon as we feel confident of our ability to recognize and categorize a particular type of discourse, that discourse comes to be read as if it were being quoted or displayed by the text with a modicum of distance; and as we accept that distance in sighing 'oh, more of that sort of thing' we undertake an ironic reading.

(195)

"More of that sort of thing" occurs in Stephen's recital of the story of baby tuckoo, with whom he immediately identifies ("He was baby tuckoo"). Stephen's desire to become the fictive

character baby tuckoo conveys his textual dependence, a dependence that parodies Emma's literary-based world, depicted in her conventionalized conception of marriage: "Before her marriage she had thought she had love within her grasp; but since the happiness which she had expected this love to bring her hadn't come, she supposed she must have been mistaken. And Emma tried to imagine just what was meant, in life, by the words 'bliss,' 'passion,' and 'rapture'--words that had seemed so beautiful to her in books" (Flaubert 39).

The dangers implicit in such confusions between life and art are apparent. Emma's obsession with romantic modes of speech is largely responsible for her inability to reconcile the realities of marriage with her "literary" expectations. As Leo Bersani observes,

Emma's mistake indeed seems to be to confuse the literary props of passion with its reality, but more profoundly she errs in thinking that passion is a reality which can be determined at all outside of literature... Emma Bovary is an impressively rigorous if narrow thinker; having picked up certain words in literature, she refuses to use them a bit sloppily (which is the only way to use them) in life ... But nothing is meant by those words in life; they 'mean' only verbally, and especially in books.... (309)

That Stephen is guilty of the same confusion of literary passion with sexual passion is revealed by his inability to find

in the real world the object of his romantic fantasy, Mercedes:

He returned to Mercedes and, as he brooded upon her image, a strange unrest crept into his blood. Sometimes a fever gathered within him and led him to rove alone in the evening along the quiet avenue. The peace of the gardens and kindly lights in the windows poured a tender influence into his restless heart. The noise of children at play annoyed him and their silly voices made him feel, even more keenly than he had felt at Clongowes, that he was different from others. He did not want to play. He wanted to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld. (67)

But the chances of Stephen meeting this "unsubstantial image" are highly unlikely, considering the romantic illusion upon which his fantasy is based. That he imagines himself "transfigured" (67) confirms the impossibility of his demands. This transfiguration is played out in his refusal to kiss E. C. in the tram car, where he is left "sitting alone on the deserted tram" (73), torn ticket in hand as he stares "gloomily at the corrugated footboard" (73). He then attempts and fails to write a poem to E. C., after which he retreats again into revery and gazes "at his face for a long time in the mirror" (74) in a pointed parody of the "transfiguration" he desired in his vision of Mercedes. Incidentally, E. C. is identified in Chapter Three and in Stephen Hero as Emma Clery. "Emma" is obviously the Flaubertian

figure of "romance" who haunts Stephen in the "progress" of his romantic dreams from love to heroic martyrdom to artistic transcendence.

The narcissistic longing for transcendence that Joyce parodies through the Mercedes/E. C. sequence leads to an overall parody of the romantic hero. Stephen represents such yearning when he dreams of becoming the outcast extraordinaire, Dumas's Monte Cristo. His imaginative re-creation of himself is tantamount, in fact, to a plagiarism of The Count of Monte Cristo: "At night he built up on the parlour table an image of the wonderful island cave out of transfers and paper flowers and coloured tissue paper and strips of the silver and golden paper in which chocolate is wrapped. When he had broken up this scenery, weary of its tinsel, there would come to his mind the bright picture of Marseilles, of sunny trellises and of Mercedes" (65). The cave on the island of Monte Cristo where Dantes discovers his treasure, a reward for his unjust sufferings, is reduced to the "wrappings" of mere confections, the literal equivalent of a literary "sweet tooth." Even the bus transfer in this heap of garbage points to the plagiarism taking place: Stephen attempts to transfer the heroic status of Dantes onto himself. Compared to Dantes, however, who returns to confront those responsible for his wrongful imprisonment, Stephen is clearly the rebel without a cause. In fantasizing a role for himself as Monte Cristo, Stephen reduces a narrative of heroic isolation to a parlour fiction in which the writer of romances,



like Dumas, is revealed in his desire to isolate himself from his domestic circumstances. The romantic hero is nothing more than an escapist with a taste for exotic scenes.

But Stephen's childish imitation of the romantic hero is not the only target of the parody. Just as his domestic isolation induces his fantasy, Monte Cristo's imprisonment also feeds his fantasy of vengeance, much as the romance writer's own sequestration feeds the romance. Writing is thus associated with a desire for vengeance upon life, for heroes and writers alike to claim their due place in a world that has suppressed them. When Stephen utters Monte Cristo's famous words, "Madam, I never eat muscatel grapes" (65), he takes his revenge upon that world of romantic heroines who have failed to recognize his excellence. But considering the way he has seen the girl "urge her vanities, her fine dress and sash and long black stockings," and knows in his heart "that he had yielded to them a thousand times" (69), his gesture of refusal is more of an imposture, a declaration of superiority to his own desire. This refusal is quite as absurd as Monte Cristo's denial of Mercedes after fourteen years of imprisonment. For "When the outcast counts on being crucified, indeed savours the prospect; when, bitter and gay, he abstains ... for fear of losing the indispensable and 'heroic ecstasy,' then we know we are dealing with a tradition which has become fully, not to say histrionically, self-conscious" (Kermode 22).

Stephen's refusal likewise parodies Flaubert's notion that the artist must not be involved in life, for his/her "sight will

be affected either by suffering or by enjoyment," and so the artist is finally "a monstrosity, something outside nature" (Steegmuller 112-113). Thus Stephen, "arms held tightly by his side" and "glancing neither right nor left," becomes precisely the monstrosity which Flaubert prescribes.

Unfortunately, however, not all readers have discerned the parody. Scholes and Kain, for example, claim that "Flaubert's emphasis on impersonality and his careful avoidance of the autobiographical ... may help us understand how Joyce arrived at his concept of an impersonal autobiographical novel" (241). Robert Day discriminates only slightly more between the author and a protagonist from whom he is distancing himself: "Joyce sympathetically understood that whatever his talent, Stephen had not yet fully absorbed the truth that Joyce himself had learned, and that T.S. Eliot stated so memorably: 'one is prepared for art when one has ceased to be interested in one's own emotions and experiences except as material'" (83). And Don MacLennan, though he is aware of Stephen's shortcomings as a hero, fails to see the shortcoming in the code of heroic romance which Stephen takes from Dumas: "Stephen is not a romantic hero, for a romantic hero is one who is capable of primary action, like Byron and Monte Cristo ... But Stephen is not Monte Cristo, ... because he cannot act in the real world. ... And where the novel increases in richness and resonance, Stephen himself becomes more of an absence" (122). What this view fails to note is the reduction of the genre, much less of the hero, to an "absence"

that cannot fill the lack it describes.

In a recent study of Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Literature, R.B. Kershner finally locates Joyce's parody of The Count of Monte Cristo on a proper level of literary allusion:

Certainly Joyce's Portrait echoes CMC in theme, images, and language; but the elder Dumas's book is itself a farrago of allusions, adaptations and borrowings from earlier romantic literature ... Edmond Dantes ... becomes a self-conscious artist whose basic mode is the conventional romantic tableau: for all the talk of his uniqueness, he works upon his victims most powerfully through their shocked recognition that they have been cast as the victims of poetic justice. Perversely, they only know the Count is unique when they recognize him in the stock figure of Nemesis ... he is paradoxically recognized as 'original' primarily because he employs signs belonging to an established repertoire. (209-210)

Stephen is thus a copy of a copy, a would-be hero who models himself on a model of a model which regresses into an endless series of imitations.

According to Kershner, the repertoire on which this stylized hero depends is largely determined by the contradictory demands of egotism and selfless "dedication to a mission" (204). If Edmond Dantes, the Count of Monte Cristo's crimes are to be excused on the grounds of his mission, that mission is none the

less more private than it is public; the hero serves an image of himself, rather than any ideal of justice or love or social commitment: "What I most loved after you, Mercedes, was myself, my dignity, and that strength which rendered me superior to other men; that strength was my life" (II 442). The mission of the romantic hero, it turns out, is to confirm his superiority to the rest of the world.

Although Kershner recognizes that "the egotism" of Edmond Dantes and Stephen Dedalus alike "is licensed, even depersonalized, by their extreme dedication to a mission" (203-204), he begs the question of what mission Stephen even pretends to in his fantasies of the literary Mercedes. Stephen most obviously has no object beyond himself in which to clothe his self-love. Even when he joins a group of adventurers, "Stephen, who had read of Napoleon's plain style of dress, chose to remain unadorned and thereby heightened for himself the pleasure of taking counsel with his lieutenant before giving orders. The gang made forays into the gardens of old maids or went down to the castle and fought a battle on the shaggy weedgrown rocks, coming home after it weary stragglers..." (65). Hiding his ambition from his "superior" to play Napoleon to his lieutenant, he more obviously sets himself above his peers in a way that only he (and the reader) can know. But the inflated prose in which the allusion is embedded also exposes the pretence of Edmond Dantes to have some mission which transcends himself. The consecutive placement of the Monte Cristo allusion and the boyish

adventure thus causes the latter to comment upon the former, both as it appears in A Portrait and in its original form. The Count of Monte Cristo offers as puerile a view of romantic or heroic action as a boy dreaming of how "he would be transfigured" (67), redeemed out of all the drab world around him.

As dependent as Stephen is upon Dumas to realize his romantic conception of himself, Dumas's hero is even more dependent on his literary precursors. As Kershner notes, "Dumas's direct reliance upon Byron is undeniable, nor does he attempt to hide it" (Bakhtin 210). Nor does Joyce's Stephen try to hide his kinship with the Byronic hero:

wronged by his intimates or by society in general, he is compelled to a rebellion that is essentially solitary, whether or not he is surrounded by cohorts. He loves one woman, who is denied to him. He is possessed by Weltshmerz, which Thorslev acutely analyzes as a tension between the drive to lose the self in a vision of the absolute and the drive to assert the self as individual. Put in these terms, the relevance to Stephen Dedalus's character is clear.

(210-211)

What is less clear in Stephen's stance, however, is any self-consciousness, more typical of the Byronic hero, of being "driven by an overriding but somehow illegitimate purpose" (211).

Stephen is too bloodless, too monkish with his Irish Catholic background, to be fully Byronic in his isolation; his true mentor

in poetic isolation would seem to be Shelley, whose criticism, like his poetry, attempts to legitimate the "unacknowledged legislators of the world."

One of the first indications that Shelley is a target of Joyce's parody of romantic discourse comes in a bar while Stephen attends his father on a trip to his childhood city of Cork. Listening in on the conversation between his father and his friends, Stephen muses that "An abyss of fortune or of temperament sundered him from them. His mind seemed older than theirs" (102). Considering that Stephen is by far the youngest of the crowd and that he has just witnessed the auctioning of the family property, such musings seem to be an attempt to compensate for his feelings of inferiority. Defending the poet who stands apart from other men, Shelly claims in A Defence of Poetry that the poet "participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one," and "as far as relates to his conceptions, time and number are not" (Perkins 1073). Stephen, who despairs of his present company, imagines that he "participates in the eternal" in the quality of his mind which "shone coldly on their strifes and happiness and regrets like a moon upon a younger earth" (95). He has managed to transcend the body which so often defines the "illegitimate purpose" of the Byronic hero; he legitimates himself by escaping the desire of mere flesh.

Stephen's detachment from life is soon identified in terms which are explicitly Shelleyean, not Byronic, as he recalls the lines from Shelley's "To the Moon:" "Art thou pale for weariness

/ Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth, / Wandering companionless...?" Since he has just likened himself to the moon, Stephen also makes himself the implied subject of these lines, which parody Shelley's Platonic indifference to mere mortal concerns. A fitting symbol for Stephen's own indifference, the moon, literally above life, finds no object down below that is worthy of its "constancy" (though the moon is ironically a sign of inconstancy). It represents the 'contemptus mundi' Stephen has exhibited in his need to differentiate himself from his father. Representing art over life, the flight of the artist, and the overlife of poetry, Shelley's "Moon" offers Stephen a form of escape, a means to distance himself from his family and from life.

But Joyce's parodic intentions are revealed none the less in Stephen's misapplication of Shelley. Just before his recital of Shelley's poem, Stephen muses on his present condition in terms which expose the empty transcendence of Shelley's moon: "He had known neither the pleasure of companionship with others nor the vigour of rude male health nor filial love nor piety. Nothing stirred within his soul but a cold and cruel loveless lust. His childhood was dead or lost and with it his soul capable of simple joys, and he was drifting amid life like the barren shell of the moon" (102). The sombre tone of the narrator corresponds with the banality of Stephen's thinking. Since Shelley defines poetry as "the expression of the imagination" (Perkins 1072), Stephen's mimicry is highly parodic. More importantly, whereas Stephen

admires the moon's aloofness, Shelley's poem laments it as a symbol of the isolation to which the romantic is ultimately confined. The speaker in Shelley's poem asks the moon if it is not weary of "ever changing, like a joyless eye / That finds no object worth its constancy," and refers to it as the "chosen sister of the Spirit, / That gazes on thee till in thee it pities." Whereas the speaker in Shelley's poem laments the moon's inability to partake in life, Stephen celebrates that very remoteness. In his merely superficial understanding of Shelley's poem, he has become the very "barren shell" that it deplores.

Much later, when the fledgling poet echoes Shelley's verse in the creation of his own villanelle, asking of the moon, "Are you not weary of ardent ways," the parody comes full circle. The term "weary," as Day points out, "is a favorite adjective of the Decadents who were fond of posing as delicate souls, eternally weary of the sordid world around them; but a young man of eighteen or so who has just enjoyed a good night's sleep is not weary; and if he thinks he is, it is a case of life trying to imitate art without much success, for the word has come from the poem, not from his own feelings" (78). But even the earlier scene of Shelley's "moon" reminds us that the poem has enabled Stephen to "[forget] his own human and ineffectual grieving" (102), and confirms the escapist tendencies in Stephen's attraction to Shelley. That Shelley's grieving has also escaped Stephen, however, makes his recitation even more ineffectual.

In fact, the very ineffectuality of romantic discourse is



precisely what Joyce exposes in his parodic re-citation of its repertoire. A survey of the popular literature during Joyce's writing of A Portrait shows that "In the course of the century, the audience for the romantic narratives of a 'radical' artist like Byron had shifted downward socially, so that they too might be said to have become popular literature" (Kershner Bakhtin 8). Stephen's own veneration of Byron indicates the "downward shift" Kershner describes. As a parody of Byron and the Byronic hero, Stephen embodies the stultifying effects of an overly popular, outmoded discourse. Stephen's "romantic" ineffectuality on the tram discussed earlier certainly illuminates those stultifying effects. Having suppressed his urge to kiss E. C., Stephen decides to write her a poem, beginning "To E--C--" since "He knew it was right to begin so for he had seen similar titles in the collected poems of Lord Byron" (73). His mind then wanders to himself "sitting at his table in Bray the morning after the discussion at the Christmas dinnertable, trying to write a poem about Parnell on the back of one of his father's second moiety notices," a reflection that casts parodic light on his present actions. Just as the poem to the dead Parnell cannot alleviate the family's financial troubles, the poem to E. C. is a poor substitute for the kiss he would not give her. Art can not be a suitable substitute for experience. In light of Byron's declaration that "The great object of life is Sensation--to feel that we exist--even though in pain," and that the "'craving void' ... drives us to Gaming--to Battle--to Travel--to intemperate but

keenly felt pursuits of any description whose principal attraction is the agitation inseparable from their accomplishment" (Marchand 109), chances are that the Byronic hero would have shunned Stephen's inaction.

Further comparison between Stephen and Byron is their mutual rebelliousness. Having just been called a "sly dog" (80) on the basis of his attraction to E. C., Stephen recalls being tormented by his peers for claiming Byron to be the greatest poet:

--Admit that Byron was no good.

--No.

--Admit.

--No.

--Admit.

--No. No. (86)

As his "tormentors" head back to the city, he pants and stumbles "after them half blinded with tears, clenching his fists madly and sobbing" (86). The episode parodies Byron's own defence of his poem Don Juan on charges of immorality in a letter to Douglas Kinnaird:

As to "Don Juan", confess confess--you dog and be candid--that it is the sublime of 'that there' sort of writing--it may be bawdy but is it not good English? It may be profligate but is it not 'life,' is it not 'the thing?' Could any man have written it who has not lived in the world?--and [f]ooled in a post--chaise? in a hackney coach?--in a gondola? against a wall?--in

a court carriage?--in a vis a vis?--on a table?--and  
under it? (Perkins 938)

The similarities between Stephen being forced to admit that Byron is a "bad man" and Byron's own defence of his so-called "immoral" poem are too striking to ignore.

More important, however, are the differences between Stephen and the poet Byron. Whereas the gist of Byron's defence is that Don Juan, in all its lewdness, represents "life," or "the thing itself," Stephen's declaration ends with him sobbing like a child while his peers venture toward the city. This depiction, combined with the orgasm he is about to have while fantasizing that he is touching E. C.'s hand (87), directly contradicts Byron's glorification of the man of experience, both in Don Juan and in his epistolary defence. The bawling Stephen who becomes aroused by the mere thought of the light pressure of E. C.'s fingers upon his hand, a memory which "traversed his brain and body like an invisible warm wave" (87), is a far cry from Byron's man of experience. His writing of the poem to E. C. symbolizes his attempt to replace life with art; in so doing, he is a poor "kissing cousin" to Don Juan, a "... bachelor--of arts, / And Parts" who "danced and sung" and "though a lad, / Had seen the world--which is a curious sight, / And very much unlike what people write" (Don Juan XI,45,47).

Aside from its lewdness, Byron's Don Juan is a humorous, satirical work exulting in buffoonery and constantly undercutting itself. That Byron has not taken himself too seriously in the

context of the poem is evident in the opening fragment:

I would to heaven that I were so much clay,  
 As I am blood, bone marrow, passion, feeling--  
 Because at least the past were pass'd away--  
 And for the future--(but I write this reeling,  
 Having got drunk exceedingly to-day,  
 So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)  
 I say--the future is a serious matter--  
 And so--for God's sake--hock and soda-water! (I)

Byron's comic self-deprecation should be juxtaposed with the serious tone of the description of Stephen's fight with his playmates: "It was the signal for their onset. Nash pinioned his arms behind while Boland seized a long cabbage stump which was lying in the gutter. Struggling and kicking under the cuts of the cane and the blows of the knotty stump Stephen was borne back against a barbed wire fence" (86). It is only at this point that the "heroic" Stephen repeats to himself the "'Confiteor' amid the indulgent laughter of his hearers" (87). Describing the game of war between Stephen and his playmates as a "moment of danger," Timothy Webb comments that "It is no accident that Byron is the poet with whom Stephen should be associated," for "love, poetry, heresy, and consequent separation from the values of the crowd are richly intermingled" (40). But the description of a children's game with such over-blown terms as "onset," "pinioned," "seized" and "borne back" makes Stephen sound self-pitying instead of self-mocking. That Don Juan is itself a mock

epic further justifies Joyce's undercutting of Stephen, for although Stephen ardently defends Byron and sees himself as a heroic rebel of sorts in doing so, the fact that the model upon which his defence is based is itself a parody indicates his misunderstanding of his predecessor.

The final effects of such parody, however, are more than comical. That a character as sequestered as Stephen poses as the Byronic hero symbolizes the ultimate stultification of this literary convention. In his farcical adherence to an outdated romantic language, Stephen is an anachronism. At the same time, however, Joyce's parody of romance through Stephen lends that very language new life. As Bakhtin contends of the "parodic-travestyng consciousness," it transforms language "from the absolute dogma it had been within the narrow framework of a sealed-off and impermeable monoglossia into a working hypothesis for comprehending and expressing reality" (61). Stephen's veneration of romance thus calls that very language into question, and opens the way to a renovation of literary language. Even as we begin to question romance as a prescribed code of conduct and an outmoded literary genre, we sense the need for new ways of conceiving life and art.

## The Distorting Mirror: Joyce's Parody of Realism and Naturalism

Joyce's parody of romanticism and the romantic hero, his rejection of a literary form that had become "thin and lifeless because it had lost touch with ordinary, everyday life" (Becker 5), might lead one to assume that realism and naturalism, the dominant literary forms from about 1857 to 1892, were his preferred forms. Such, however, is not the case; Joyce sets up a dialectical tension between romanticism and realism/naturalism in order to displace both of them, to expose their inescapable relativity.

The combined presences of realism and naturalism in Joyce's artist novel are strong enough to have led H. G. Wells to the belief that the novel's "interest depends on its quintessential and unfailing reality," while Virginia Woolf said that, in comparison to Joyce's earlier works, A Portrait "attempts to come closer to life" (Staley and Benstock 4). The following chapter seeks to correct the distortion of such readings by showing that Joyce, through Stephen, deliberately parodies literary modes of both realism and naturalism. Even as Joyce uses realism and naturalism to deflate Stephen's romanticism, he manages to expose the ideological confusion and hypocrisy at the heart of both these literary movements.

The presence of romantic and realist/naturalist discourses in the same text suggests an ongoing tension between these genres during the time of Joyce's composition of A Portrait. The

romanticism of the previous century still lingered on in such contemporary writers as Bulwer-Lytton and Maryatt, while Flaubert, Zola, and later Arnold Bennet had already introduced the new realism to European literary society. The realists intended to hold a mirror up to nature, to portray life truthfully and without embellishments. They replaced the heroic and idealizing representations of the previous genre with the ordinary lives of ordinary people, on the conviction that truth is ultimately located in the home, by or near the hearth. Defining the realist genre, George J. Becker points out that "realism really did constitute a fresh start because it was based on a new set of assumptions about the universe. It denied that there was a reality of essences or forms which was not accessible to ordinary sense perceptions, insisting instead that reality be viewed as something immediately at hand, common to ordinary experience, and open to observation" (6).

In fact, Joyce did acknowledge his departure from the school of romanticism and his own early allegiance to the new realism in an interview with Arthur Power:

In realism you get down to facts on which the world is based; that sudden reality which smashes romanticism into a pulp. What makes most peoples' lives unhappy is some disappointed romanticism, some unrealisable misconceived ideal. In fact you may say that idealism is the ruin of man, and if we lived down to fact, as primitive man had to do, we would be better off. That is what we were made

for. Nature is quite unromantic. It is we who put romance into her, which is a false attitude, an egotism, absurd like all egotisms. (Butler 261)

Joyce's initial comments on the thriving school of realism were evidently informed by those of Flaubert, who, in a letter to Louise Colet, expresses similar notions: "Let us absorb the objective; let it circulate through us until it is externalized in such a way that no one can understand this marvellous chemistry. Our hearts should serve only to understand the hearts of others. Let us be magnifying mirrors of external truth" (Becker 94).

Flaubert's own fiction, however, reveals an entirely different viewpoint from the one expressed to Colet. In Madame Bovary, Flaubert betrays his dissatisfaction with the realist ethos. In the scene of the Agricultural show, for example, realist discourse is ironically juxtaposed with romantic discourse. While the chairman of the fair announces the "first prize for all-round farming," Rodolphe tells Emma of how their love was determined by fate, that they were brought together "the way two rivers flow together" (167). But Flaubert exposes both pronouncements as disguised attempts to rise above one's social class, to distinguish oneself from one's peers, as Emma and Rodolphe try to do literally by looking down on the fair from an upper room, and as the agriculturalists do symbolically by apotheosizing their commodities: "Here, the grape; there, the cider apple; yonder, the colza; elsewhere, a thousand kinds of cheese. And flax, gentlemen, do not forget flax!" (164). The lovers are quick to congratulate



themselves on their superiority to bourgeois life: "And they talked about the mediocrity of provincial life, so suffocating, so fatal to all noble dreams" (156). But the language of romantic destiny is comically undercut by the language of bourgeois realism even as bourgeois realism is exposed for its own lack of significance. The intermixing of the two styles reveals low "thoughts" on both sides parading as elevated sentiments:

"A hundred times I was on the point of leaving, and yet I followed you and stayed with you...."

"For the best manures."....

"...so that I'll carry the memory of you with me...."

"For a merino ram..."

"No, though! Tell me it isn't so! Tell me I'll have a place in your thoughts, in your life!"

"Hogs: a tie! To Messieurs Leherissé and Cullembourg, sixty francs!" (168)

It is indeed a tie between these two styles, since the romantic fatalist pretends to an elevated thought he does not possess, and the other to a dignity of essence revealed in "the best manures." The "star-crossed" lover himself is no better than a hog driven by appetite, while the dignified bourgeois, taking so much pride in his humble subject, hogs the limelight in his praise of mediocrity. The point is not that the romantic's language is exposed as "manure," but that the realist's language is equally banal. It is a "tie" between "hogs" wherever the languages of realism and romanticism are concerned.

Through Stephen, Joyce also questions the ethos of literary naturalism, that movement defined by Becker as "an emphatic and explicit philosophical position taken by some realists, showing man caught in a net from which there can be no escape and degenerating under those circumstances; that is, it is pessimistic materialistic determinism" (35). Flaubert's Rodolphe at one point appeals quite cynically to romantic determinism as a way of ending his affair with Emma: "'Fate alone is to blame--nothing and no one but fate!' 'That's always an effective word,' he remarked to himself" (228). But Joyce has more in mind than the hypocrisy of the romantic when he has Stephen appeal to fate to justify his refusal of holy orders: "His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders. The wisdom of the priest's appeal did not touch him to the quick. He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world" (175). What Joyce seems to have in mind is the materialistic determinism of Zola and other naturalists who make environment or heredity the natural equivalent of Greek fate. For Stephen tries to excuse his own weakness--his own fear of the responsibility of priesthood--by claiming that he could never hope to rise above his origins anyway, smiling "to think that it was this disorder, the misrule and confusion of his father's house and the stagnation of vegetable life, which was to win the day in his soul" (176). Stephen's reaction is precisely the hypocritical posturing of one who claims he has no choice, that fate makes him what he is, or his environment leaves him helpless to be any

different. Ironically, he uses such determinism as an excuse to "fall" into "sin." In the next scene, none the less, Stephen uses romantic views of flight to escape his "destiny" of the flesh, claiming that "This was the call of life to his soul, not the dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair" (184).

Similarly, Stephen's habitual retreat into the "misrule and confusion of his father's house" becomes a monkish form of self-flagellation, a rubbing of his own nose in the beastliness of life to remind himself that matter is not instinct with spirit. But earlier in his career, Stephen had also tried to rise above the brutal realities of life to apprehend it in its ideal state, to surrender to material existence as the ultimate good:

Stephen sometimes went round with the car which delivered the evening milk: and these chilly drives blew away his memory of the filth of the cowyard and he felt no repugnance at seeing the cowhair and hayseeds on the milkman's coat. Whenever the car drew up before a house he waited to catch a glimpse of a wellscrubbed kitchen or of a softlylighted hall and to see how the servant would hold the jug and how she would close the door. He thought it should be a pleasant life enough, driving along the roads every evening to deliver milk, if he had warm gloves and a fat bag of gingernuts in his pocket to eat from. But the same foreknowledge which had sickened his heart and made his legs sag suddenly as he raced round the park, the same intuition which had made

him glance with mistrust at his trainer's flabby stubblecovered face as it bent heavily over his long stained fingers, dissipated any vision of the future.

(66)

For Stephen, there is always a lingering threat in nature, remarked in the sordid "filth of the cowyard" or in the "hayseed," which threatens to drag life onto the dungheap. His sickening "foreknowledge" is of the corruption implicit in nature, that "vision of the future" which can only end in decay. For the young Stephen is an implicit naturalist, struggling not to see the "true" end of man: as a piece of filth swallowed up in excrement.

Upon closer analysis, however, one finds a dialectical structure by which the hero's will rises above materialist determinism in its romantic conception of itself transcending the limits of matter. For following Stephen's fatalistic excuses, he imagines himself in a "moment of supreme tenderness" wherein "He would fade into something impalpable under her [Mercedes'] eyes and then in a moment, he would be transfigured" (67). One notes the interplay between naturalism and romance, how each deflates the absolutist claims of the other. But the despair of the naturalist is also overcome by the hope of the romantic; now the cowyard, with its "green puddles and clots of liquid dung" (66) is left behind in the "hero's" romantic vision of himself as Monte Cristo returning to his Mercedes ("he returned to Mercedes and, as he brooded upon her image, a strange unrest crept into his blood" [67]). Likewise, the aesthetic distance implied by the "chilly

drives" which "blew away his memory of the filth" (66) works to restore the "romance of the real" in a vision of "a pleasant life" which is ironically reduced to a "fat bag of gingernuts." Thus the languages of naturalism and romance, each of which yield "so many slight shocks to [Stephen's] boyish conception of the world" (67), become engaged in competition, a struggle for power through which Joyce undercuts them both. For the key to this whole passage is the "boyish conception of the world" which oscillates between the filth of the real and the "unsubstantial image" of the spirit, discrediting both.

The numerous literary allusions in the cowyard passage, however, reveal a more detailed mockery of a realist faith in surfaces, as well as of the deterministic ethos of naturalism. The reference to the milkman recalls the creator of the most (in)famous milk-maid of all, Thomas Hardy. Stephen's idealization of milk in the truck, combined with his intolerance of "the filth of the cowyard," harkens back to Hardy's own tale of an ill-fated milkmaid, Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891). For Tess is herself the victim of a male idealist, her suitor, Angel Clare, who insists, "What a fresh and virginal daughter of nature that milkmaid is" (176), and who sees her "no longer [as] the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman--a whole sex condensed into one typical form" (187). Though Clare is critical of his own brothers because "neither saw or set forth life as it really was lived" (220), he is hardly a realist himself who sees "life as it really was lived." His most obvious blindness is to the real life of milkmaids,

particularly Tess's sexual history. After her confession that she is not a virgin, he rejects his wife on the grounds that "You were one person, now you are another" (298); the "realist" is in fact a schizophrenic "idealist."

On the other hand, Hardy as narrator is not a realist, either, who can grant his heroine a real mind and will of her own. As such critics as Penny Boumelha have noted, Tess is asleep or drowsy at almost every crucial moment of the plot (121), through which Hardy hints that she is not responsible, and that the true instrument of her fate is destiny, or rather the determining author who makes of her a sacrifice to the naturalistic forces of the body which his society has repressed. But, as Mary Jacobus says, "To regard Tess as unimplicated is to deny her the right of participation in her own life. Robbed of responsibility, she is deprived of tragic status, reduced throughout to the victim she does indeed become. Worst of all, she is stripped of the sexual autonomy and the capacity for independent being and doing which are the most striking features of Hardy's conception" (78).

Stephen's nauseated naturalism, like Angel Clare or Hardy's, is only overcome by his own steady concentration on surfaces, his attempt to see the real as being good by forgetting its end and looking only at its present appearance. No suitor of the milkmaid, he is at least a close observer of the servant girl "to see how [she] would hold the jug and how she would close the door" (66). The "wellscrubbed kitchen," "softlylighted hall" and servant holding a jug are in fact stock images of pictorial realism. In

fact, these contrivances of Stephen's vision of domestic bliss allude to one of the first paintings done in the realist technique, Jan Vermeer's Young Woman with a Water Jug (c. 1665). In Vermeer's painting, an angelic-looking woman, likely a servant due to her attire, holds a silver water jug while opening a large window which opens sideways, like a door. Vermeer, unlike his predecessors, chose as his subject-matter Dutch middle-class dwellings with people engaged in household tasks and reflecting a humble dignity. Although the woman holding the jug is engaged in a common task, the symbolic presence of light and the great detail with which she is painted bestow her with an almost religious sanctity. Most notable about the painting is the woman's face, which appears to be illuminated from within, conveying her angelic quality and the inner light she possesses. Joyce's allusion to Vermeer's deified servant corresponds with Stephen's own vision of domesticity. Although he seems to want a humble life, what he really wants is a deified humbleness, which is precisely what Vermeer offers.

The woman in Vermeer's painting is also frozen in time, or rather, has transcended time due to her holiness. But the authorial remark which follows Stephen's vision of the servant girl ("He thought it should be a pleasant life enough") clearly conveys his remoteness from the holiness to which Vermeer's young girl is privy. If the young woman in the painting achieves a type of transcendence, no such flight shall occur for the gingernutmunching Stephen, whose vision is grounded entirely on the physical, and which appropriately culminates with "the mare's hoofs

clattering along the tramtrack on the Rock Road and the great can swaying and rattling behind him" (67), leaving a lingering scent of cowdung in the air. Stephen's "realism" is thus an ironic citation of Vermeer, since, unlike the painter, Stephen cannot even sanitize matter, much less transcend the real.

In fact, by relegating Stephen to the merely physical realm, Joyce exposes the central paradox of the realist ethos. Despite their claims of the sanctity of common life, the realists' ultimate goal is to transcend that life. Stephen exhibits precisely one half of the realist credo, the purely theoretical one. He is Joyce's parodic reply to the realists, as he embodies the very superficiality to which the realists lay claim, for what he lacks is what they have failed to document. Stephen therefore parodies the efforts of the realists who, as Becker rightly points out, sought to "get the ideal back into literature committed to the representation of the here and now" (Becker 6).

Stephen's imprisonment in a "real world" which is anything but ideal is most strongly symbolized, however, in the word "foetus" he finds engraved on his father's school desk. According to John Paul Riquelme, Joyce eschews the pretence of realism by including heterogeneous materials within his text. "By disrupting the semblance of a continuous flow of narrative," Riquelme affirms, "these elements draw attention to the book's artifice, to its status as art, and to themselves as relatively independent of the text containing them" (88). The fetus episode sets up precisely the sort of "countermovement in the reading process" which Riquelme



describes. Upon entering the "anatomy theatre"--an authorial jab at Zola's naturalist manifesto "The Experimental Novel" which made the novelist no more than a scientist in a laboratory--Stephen becomes "shocked ... to find in the outer world a trace of what he had deemed till then a brutish and individual malady of his own mind" (95). The engraved word becomes the focal point of the episode--Joyce's tool for disrupting the continuous flow of narrative which is characteristic of realist and naturalist prose --to remind us of that prose's status as language and as art. By focusing our attention on language itself, Joyce creates a set of conditions that Bakhtin claims are characteristic of all novels, that is, that "Under conditions of the novel every direct word--epic, lyric, strictly dramatic--is to a greater or lesser degree made into an object, the word itself becomes a bounded ... image, one that quite often appears ridiculous in this framed condition" (49-50). And what better choice of diction to convey this "framed condition" than the word "foetus!" For it mocks both realism and naturalism in their efforts to bear new life through art. What the parody makes clear is that despite such efforts, art can merely convey a fragment of life, an incomplete rendition of it, like an unborn foetus. The part does not evince the whole, and the "slice of life" cannot ultimately represent the pie.

Further suggestion of artifice which dismantles the facade of realism is the title of the novel itself. Early practitioners of realism in fictive prose such as Daniel Defoe took great pains to cover up all notions of artifice with his title The Fortunes and

Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders & co., and his subheading "Written from her own Memorandums," while Henry Fielding named his book The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams, thus invoking the facticity of history. Joyce, however, blatantly departs from such conventions with his title A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, in order to emphasize the artifice of the portraiture, moreover, an incomplete portrait, not of the whole man but "as a young man." And despite the diary segment at the end, verisimilitude is completely obliterated with the concluding words of the novel, "Dublin 1904 Trieste 1914," the times and places of the start and completion of A Portrait. For

in A Portrait the disturbing elements that raise the question of the book's marginal status are most prominent at the beginning, and the ending. These are the locations of the text's margins, its borders with a world not determined by language of the story. Title, epigraph, and journal are the gates into and out of Joyce's work. They provide for the reader portals of discovery, margins to be negotiated and filled during the reading process. (Riquelme 89)

That Flaubert was also aware of the inherent dichotomy of a fiction which claims to be real and the dangers of such claims becomes apparent in a conversation between his fictional characters. Speaking of her current reading preferences, Emma remarks, "Nowadays I'm crazy about a different kind of thing--

stories full of suspense, stories that frighten you. I hate to read about low-class heroes and their down-to-earth concerns, the sort of thing the real world's full of" (95), to which Leon replies, "You're quite right ... Writing like that doesn't move you: it seems to me to miss the whole true aim of art. Noble characters and pure affections and happy scenes are very comforting things. They're a refuge from life's disillusionments. As for me, they're my only means of relief, living here as I do, cut off from the world. Yonville has so little to offer!" (95). Paradoxically, Emma and Leon read romances in order to identify with them, to live vicariously through them, which is precisely what Flaubert identifies as the danger of representation in both romantic and realist aesthetics: the danger of confusing the artistic representation with the represented. For, as Bersani says of Emma's choice of reading, it "dismisses art" by trying to separate the romance from the literature and thereby ignoring the work--the effort and the product--of the writer. She brings to these books what they require: a lack of imagination. She reads literature as we might listen to a news report. Emma Bovary parodies all the pious claims which have been made by Realism in Western Esthetics for the relevance of art to life" (313).

What better parody of the pious pretense of realism in Joyce's novel than a character named "Dedalus," the Latin term for artificer? With this name, Joyce injects the text with the antibody of myth, an injection which seriously jeopardizes its vraisemblance, its pretension of true representation. In a

discussion of some perils of the realist ethic, George J. Becker explains that

...there is a serious psychological barrier to the maintenance of objectivity. The realistic writer attempts to retrace the steps by which he arrived inductively and empirically at certain generalizations ... The difficulty is that once he is tempted to use them functionally without reproducing the process of induction ... he is in danger of manipulating his data to strengthen them, to simplify and to clarify them, and to heighten them as literature--which is essentially what the imposition of a body of myth also does. (Becker 33)

The Dedalus myth is thus a means for Joyce to explore the ironic correspondences between the vraisemblable and myth, a similarity which imitates the realists' propensity for manipulation. For as Kenner tells us, the name "Dedalus" "never had the effect Joyce counted on. For would he not have meant it to arrest speculation at the outset, detaching his central figure at a stroke from the conventions of quiet naturalism?" ("Cubist" 174). By aligning himself with the highly manipulative tradition of myth, Joyce subverts the realist and naturalist doctrine of material determinism. For as soon as a writer employs myth, he associates himself with a long line of artificers, deeming his writing anything but realistic.

The use of myth could even return us to the world of romance. According to Northrop Frye, "With the low mimetic, where fictional

forms deal with an intensely individualized society, there is only one thing for an analogy of myth to become, and that is an act of individual creation. The typical result of this is 'Romanticism,' a thematic development which to a considerable extent turns away from contemporary forms of fiction and develops its own contrasting kind" (59). As Joyce used realism to deflate the pretensions of romance, so too did he undercut the illusion of realism with the obvious artifice of romantic myth.

Further departure from realist and naturalist conventions can be seen in Joyce's use of imagery. Certain images are strategically placed within the text to contrast with romantically inflated entries, the two opposing genres deflating one another, or at least creating a dialogue. For example, after Stephen imagines himself as the Count of Monte Cristo and the scene with his "gang of adventurers in the avenue" who costume themselves in daggers, whistles, or for Stephen, in "Napoleon's plain style of dress" (65), we learn that the highlight of the "adventure" is to "take turns in riding the tractable mare round the field" while the men milk the cows. Stephen's vision of himself as the hero on a horse, a Dantes or a Napoleon, is thus undercut by the reality of his situation, an adolescent waiting his turn to ride on a plow horse.

The cow is also a recurring figure in A Portrait, from the opening "moocow" to the later image of the "bovine god" (120). Aside from serving as an image of myth or fairy tale, however, bovine images recall Stephen's status as an animal being. As such,

the image recalls the naturalist belief that human beings are creatures driven only by instinct. In fact, the naturalist penchant for focusing upon particularly sordid and grotesque details has led to the opinion that they do not hold a mirror up to life so much as a distorting glass, or even a badly positioned magnifying glass. "For all their claims of objectivity, the result was often a curious subjectivity of vision somewhat akin to earlier romanticism" (Frye Harper 307). Becker, who could be describing Hardy's treatment of Tess, makes a similar observation: "When our writers have turned to a doctrine as tight-meshed as naturalism they have almost always convicted themselves of untruth. They want man to be the hapless victim of circumstance; they want him to be destroyed. Thus they continue a demonstration that becomes ridiculous in its excess, hysterical in its insistence that there is no way out" (19). To such writers, "animal imagery easily becomes a system, a constant and pervasive referent which consistently downgrades every thought and act of the human protagonists. This is a violation of objectivity, since it does not permit the reader to see or judge the characters in any but one dimension" (32).

That Joyce indeed attributed such symbolic, if ironic, significance to the cow is the reason for its appearance on the first page. The cow which encounters the romantic ego in "baby tuckoo" sets up an opposition between the real and the ideal, the ongoing clash in the novel between romanticism and realism/naturalism itself. But it also recalls the mythological

allusion upon which the hero's name is based. According to myth, "Daedalus constructed an artificial cow in which the queen, Pasiphae, hid herself in order to gratify her passion for a bull. The bull was deceived by the contrivance, and Pasiphae conceived the Minotaur, which was half man, half bull" (Grant & Hazel 105). The myth thus symbolizes the conflation of the sacred and the profane, a conflation which resulted in a monstrosity. Joyce uses this story of fleshly desire of a particularly grotesque nature and its hideous result to parody the naturalist conviction that human beings are creatures driven solely by appetite.

The Stephen we encounter in chapter three is a parodic embodiment of precisely such bestiality. Following his escapades with prostitutes, a plethora of naturalist techniques exposes his condition of moral degradation. In the following passage, for instance, Stephen is made the quintessence of the naturalist creature of instinct:

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 his chaps after meat. This was the end; and a faint glimmer of fear began to pierce the fog of his mind. He pressed his face against the pane of the window and gazed out into the darkening street. Forms passed this way and that through the dull light. And that was

life. (119)

But what Stephen perceives as "life" does not coincide with the perceptions of the narrator. Rather than offering a naturalist testimony on the nature of reality, Joyce, through Stephen, exposes the "violation of objectivity," the wholesale manipulation of belief described by Becker. Stephen's feelings of guilt for having fornicated become the true source of his current animalistic behaviour. Because he has sinned, he has relegated himself to a purely physical being, an animal licking its chaps. Extending the allusion, Joyce implies through Stephen that realism and naturalism are themselves excuses, means of absolving a point of view which, having elevated reality to extreme proportions, is guilty of denying the realm of the spiritual.

Confirming this view is the subsequent description of the corrupt condition of Stephen's soul, which has been "fattening and congealing into a gross grease, plunging ever deeper in its dull fear into a sombre threatening dusk, while the body that was his stood, listless and dishonoured, gazing out of darkened eyes, helpless, perturbed and human for a bovine god to stare upon" (119-120). One notices the peculiarity of a bovine god amidst the seemingly naturalistic description of spiritual malaise, a peculiarity which merits some scrutiny. In fact, it refers to none other than the golden calf, and we are reminded through Stephen of another group of sinners, the Jews who lost faith in the desert. Such wrongful worship--the worship of the material--which is the message of the biblical tale contradicts the naturalist belief that



human beings are creatures driven solely by appetite. Stephen therefore embodies both the worship of nature and denial of God of which both the Jews and the naturalists were guilty.

Early in chapter five, Stephen has become so infested with the vermin typical to naturalist writing that his mother must wash him clean. Ironically, he has just had a transcendent vision of his soul flying free of the flesh, exchanging a flesh-and-blood girl for her aesthetic "image [which] 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," we are told, though his "leap" has been away from the girl and her power to "recreate life out of life" into the pure empyrean where his soul takes flight into itself in art: "To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!" (185) Juxtaposed with this romantically inflated episode are the words of Stephen's mother: "Well, it's a poor case ... when a university student is so dirty that his mother has to wash him" (189). The mother's sentiments, in addition to the lice infesting Stephen's body, parodically deflate his heroic vision of his own transcendence through art by bringing him down to a more "earthly" level.

In a similar juxtaposition, Stephen, after having glimpsed E. C., constructs yet another romantic fabrication, wherein he "tasted in the language of memory ambered wines, dying fallings of sweet airs, the proud pavan: and saw with the eyes of memory kind gentlewomen in Covent Garden wooing from their balconies" (253). The vision takes a more sensuous turn yet when Stephen recalls that

"... it was her body he smelt: a wild and languid smell: the tepid limbs over which his music had flowed desirously and the secret soft linen upon which her flesh distilled odour and a dew" (254). This sensual and sensuous language finally undercuts Stephen's romantic revery by exposing the wholly instinctual drive which induces his lofty meanderings. We are therefore shown the extent to which Stephen is still imprisoned in his body, an imprisonment that mimics the naturalists' confinement of their human subjects to the world of senses.

So we are not surprised to learn, in the following paragraph, of the sordid creatures which Stephen's mind has bred:

A louse crawled over the nape of his neck and, putting his thumb and forefinger deftly beneath his loose collar, he caught it. He rolled its body tender yet brittle as a grain of rice, between thumb and finger for an instant before he let it fall from him and wondered would it live or die. There came to his mind a curious phrase from Cornelius a Lapide which said that the lice born of human sweat were not created by God with the other animals on the sixth day. (254)

The juxtaposition of bodily lice with romantic revery exposes the latter as the product of a purely sexual drive.

More than a deflation, however, the lice serve the same purpose as the cow mentioned earlier. The allusion to Cornelius a Lapide, a "Flemish Jesuit who claimed that lice ... were not created directly by God but by spontaneous generation, as lice from

sweat" (Deane 324), harkens back to Joyce's central criticism of the naturalist ethic, that in its glorification of the earthly, it sets up a false deity. In failing to recognize that God is the creator of all living matter, Cornelius a Lapide, like the naturalists, has denied the reality of the spiritual. The scientific absurdity of Lapide's assertion, of course, makes a mockery of that very elevation of the natural, placing such realist assumptions in a particularly parodic and ridiculing light.

In a wider parodic way, lice are also common images in French romanticism, specifically in the writing of the symbolist poet Baudelaire. As one critic has suggested, "The often-noted alternation of emotional highs and lows in A Portrait, of scenes of sublimity and squalor ... is similar to the Baudelairean vacillation between 'ideal' and 'spleen.' Stephen's poetic-erotic ecstasy, with choirs of the seraphim ... falling from heaven, is balanced against a splenetic spasm of despair and lice falling from the air" (Weir 89). Weir goes on to cite the 'vermine' of Baudelaire's "Au Lecteur," specifically the lines "His mind bred vermin. His thoughts were lice born of the sweat of sloth," as the source of the image in A Portrait. Thus Baudelaire's vacillation between the body and the spirit acts as a point of departure for Stephen's similar vacillation. In an early analysis of A Portrait, Hugh Kenner has commented similarly on the dialectical movement of the book, that "each chapter closes with a synthesis of triumph which in turn feeds the sausage machine set up in the next" ("Perspective" 56). Thus in recapitulating Baudelaire's method of

vacillation, Joyce parodies the symbolist vision; and in turn, implies that even the greatest of romantics could not concede entirely to a romantic vision; that no matter how glorified the dream, the body always intervenes.

That Flaubert felt a similar intervention of the flesh is conveyed in a letter complaining of the drudgery of the realist style: "... I believe my 'Bovary' is going all right, but I am hampered by my propensity for metaphor, which dominates me too much. I am devoured by comparisons as one is by lice, and I spend all my time squashing them; my sentences swarm with them" (cited in Becker 92). In another letter, Flaubert complains, "I twist and turn; I scratch myself. My novel is having trouble getting under way. I suffer from abscesses of style, and phrases itch at me without coming out" (91). Thus Joyce's mockery of the vermin-breeding body of his artist serves to recall Flaubert's larger criticism of the vermin-breeding thoughts of literary realism and its later extension known as naturalism.

Another type of vermin-breeding thought seems to be the false humility of realists who use "reality" to disguise their subjective ideology. Stephen is apparently guilty of their methods on more than one occasion, as when, for example, he has been pandied unjustly and then lionized as a hero for daring to make this injustice known to authorities. After "The cheers died away in the soft grey air" (60), we learn that Stephen was "happy and free: but he would not be anyway proud with Father Dolan. He would be very quiet and obedient: and he wished that he could do something

kind for him to show him that he was not proud" (61). Stephen's glorified musings which are hidden under false pretences of modesty parallel the realists in their concealment of grandiose visions beneath the humble guise of "reality."

The imagery with which this first chapter of the novel ends points to parodic accents in a whole series of such scenes: "...and from here and from there through the quiet air the sound of the cricket bats: Pick, pack pock, puck: like drops of water in a fountain falling softly in the brimming bowl" (61). The words reiterate the sound of cricket bats heard earlier: "The air was very silent and you could hear the cricketbats but more slowly than before: pick, pock" (44). The distant sound of water is a reminder of Stephen's own remoteness from life, his position as spectator, having distanced himself from action. Hearing the cricketbats in the distance, Joyce emphasizes Stephen's isolation, his unwillingness to partake in sport, and by extension, in life. Stephen thus comes to embody Bakhtin's notions of period-bound language, whereby "The individual in the high distanced genres is an individual of the absolute past and of the distanced image" (34).

The "brimming bowl" in which such drops of water fall is ironically linked to a subsequent stream of water imagery, that of urine. One recalls the bed-wetting on the first page, an activity which hints to the reader that the self-aggrandizing "Baby Tuckoo" is all wet. Such deflation typifies the lingering presence of urine within the text. For instance, following Stephen's

performance in the school play, he experiences a kind of crisis, imagining "the simple body before which he had acted magically deformed" (90). The sense of depletion Stephen undergoes results from the end of his role-playing, and may be interpreted as a refusal to retreat to his actual self. "Pride and hope and desire like crushed herbs in his heart sent up vapours of maddening incense before the eyes of his mind" (91), as "He strode down the hill amid the tumult of suddenrisen vapours of wounded pride and fallen hope and baffled desire." The sense of dismay Stephen feels at the end of his acting relates to Bakhtin's view of individuals of "high distanced genres," that although they may be "fully finished and completed being[s]" (34), "what is complete is also something hopelessly ready-made ... [They are] ... completely externalized. There is not the slightest gap between ... [their] ... authentic essence[s] and ... [their] ... external manifestation[s]" (34). Stephen has become precisely this completed being Bakhtin describes, refusing to engage in the further contingency of becoming.

However, despite Stephen's desire to retreat into the role of the completed character he plays--what Bakhtin calls a "ready-made"--life still intrudes in the scent of "horse piss and rotted straw" (91). In other words, the self-aggrandizing Stephen cannot escape the scent of the animal being, or his very own physicality. He is thus imprisoned in his corrupt desires, an imprisonment that parodies the naturalist devotion to excrement and the body. And yet Stephen is convicted once again of a false humility; filled

with sentiments of "wounded pride," he really descends to "horse piss and rotted straw" to mortify his vanity: "It is a good odour to breathe," he thought. "It will calm my heart. My heart is quite calm now. I will go back" (91). His wilful descent into excrement thus makes a mockery of the realist's desire to rub our noses in it.

In fairly specific ways, Joyce also makes nonsense of Edmond Goncourt's realist credo, expressed in the prologue that the realist or naturalist begins "with the dregs of nature because the woman and man of the people, nearer to nature and the savage state, are simple uncomplicated creatures" (Becker 24). By chaining Stephen to his physical self, by lowering him to a truly savage state, Joyce makes hash of Goncourt's claims for rude simplicity. For Stephen is neither simple nor representative; realism can never be as uncomplicated as it seems.

In parodying both realism and naturalism, Joyce engages in what Bakhtin terms a "new mode for working creatively with language" (60), whereby he "looks at language from the outside, with another's eyes, from the point of view of a potentially different language and style" (60). As a result, A Portrait "parodies other genres (precisely in their role as genre); it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and reaccentuating them" (Bakhtin 5). In parodying the claims made by realism and naturalism, Joyce finally makes his novel come

into contact with the spontaneity of the inconclusive present; this is what helps the genre [in our case, the modes of realism and naturalism], from congealing ... the underlying, original formal author ... appears in a new relationship with the represented world. Both find themselves now subject to the same temporally valorized measurements for the depicting authorial language now lies in the same plane as the depicted language of the hero, and may enter into dialogic relations and hybrid combinations with it. (Bakhtin 27)

In the end, Joyce does not allow for a retreat into realism any more than he does for an escape into romance. He sets up a dialectical tension between both systems of beliefs, both languages, to displace each of them, to expose their inescapable relativity. Both are relatives which Joyce wanted to expose, and with which he was extremely contentious. In this, A Portrait approaches the postmodern direction Joyce will take in Ulysses, moving away from the nineteenth-century genres so many critics take as its matrix.



### The Posing Artist: Joyce's Parody of Aestheticism

Joyce's displacement of romanticism and realism might lead to the assumption that he leaves the way open for Flaubert's own solution: an ultimate cult of art. For "Only art is saved from Flaubert's pessimism about sensation and the sublimating mechanisms of social life. The Flaubertian cult of art explains Flaubert's severity toward inferior art" (Bersani 313). Yet, as the present chapter will show, Joyce is also displacing aestheticism, the whole faith in a cult of art as a way of transcending life, or of preserving fleeting impressions.

Madame Bovary (1857) is one of the first novels of its time to explore the aesthetic attitude and the possibilities of aestheticism, that "nineteenth-century literary and artistic movement celebrating beauty as independent from morality and praising form above content; ART FOR ART'S SAKE" (Frye Harper 5). Its roots are "in Kant's concept of 'purposiveness without purpose' in art. Keats's 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty' may be understood as an expression of it" (5). In fact, the problem for Madame Bovary is that she seeks in art a purpose which it cannot have: "I hate to read about low-class heroes and their down-to-earth-concerns, the sort of thing the real world's full of," she says to her prospective lover Leon Dupuis. The clerk agrees: "Writing like that doesn't move you: it seems to miss the whole true aim of art. Noble characters and pure affections and happy scenes are very comforting things. They're a refuge from life's

disillusionments" (95). Emma, however, wants to find more than a refuge in art, an idealizing hedge against disappointment; she wants it to be a blueprint for sensation, for living out her own passionate protest against conventions of bourgeois morality. And so she is seduced by the sentiments of Rodolphe Boulanger, cynically offered with an "artistic" purpose of his own: "Our duty is to feel what is great and love what is beautiful--not to accept all the social conventions and the infamies they impose on us ... Why preach against the passions? Aren't they the only beautiful thing in this world, the source of heroism, enthusiasm, poetry, music, the arts, everything?" (163). But this confusion of the arts with sensual passion is precisely the point of Flaubert's critique of his little country wife for trying to make her life imitate art: she worships the wrong kind of art; she fails to see that the only artistic passion worth having is for an art that is solely for art's sake. In Madame Bovary, Flaubert purifies his own art of all the wrong desires, exposing bad art for that desire it provokes for something more than a disinterested love of beauty.

Walter Pater would later offer the definitive statement in English of this same aesthetic attitude which he learned from Flaubert. In his celebrated "Conclusion" to the first edition of The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (1873)--so influential among the undergraduates of Oxford such as Oscar Wilde that Pater felt the need to suppress it in a second edition--he proclaimed that

we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of

indefinite reprieve ... we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among 'the children of this world,' in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love ... Only be sure it is passion--that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake, has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.

(238-9)

The poetic passion, not the passion for life itself, is what links Pater with Flaubert and distinguishes him from his own disciple, Wilde, in recommending the aesthetic attitude as a religion of art.

Pater's own exploration in fiction of this aesthetic attitude would lead him, however, to realize that the "poetic passion," even in one whose perceptions were far more discriminating and sophisticated than those of Emma Bovary, could not "expand the interval" of mortal existence in practice as it had promised to do in theory. In Marius the Epicurean (1885), Pater manages to evoke a truly disinterested poetic passion in Marius who seeks only "the discovery of a vision, the seeming of a perfect humanity in a

perfect world--through all his alternations of mind ... he had always set that above the having, or even the doing, of anything" (II, 218). In this refusal of possession for himself of the beauty he seeks in the world, Marius proves to be the contrary of Flaubert's Emma, wanting not the doing, but "The being something," the devotee of a pure beauty, apprehended for its own sake. And yet this quality of vision cuts him off from any immediate contact with life, isolating him in the position of an exquisitely refined voyeur: "Marius remains suspended between his optical way of living and his dissatisfaction with it. He only gains in distinctiveness through the clash between the two, but since a resolution demands a developing action, and since no such action ever takes place, the novel remains static and the hero undefined" (Iser 133). This stasis of the aesthete--this aesthetic "arrest" in optical impersonality--serves as a critique of Pater's own idea in The Renaissance that "if we continue to dwell in thought in this world, ... the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind" (235).

Flaubert's own aesthetic theories, expressed largely in letters, were much more sanguine about the possibilities of such artistic impersonality. For example, in his letter of 18 March 1857 to Mlle Leroyer de Chantepie, Flaubert proclaims that "The artist in his work must be like God in his creation--invisible and all-powerful: he must be everywhere felt, but never seen" (Steegmuller 230). This idea of the artist as the god of his creation--impersonal but not detached, not cut off from life like

Pater's aesthete--is precisely the target of Joyce's parodic citation of the letter in A Portrait of the Artist. As Stephen Dedalus puts the doctrine:

The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.

- Trying to refine them also out of existence, said Lynch. (215)

As Marguerite Harkness observes, "In Stephen's mouth, Joyce placed a paraphrase of Flaubert, but Joyce refined away the limits Flaubert recorded in his analogy. For Flaubert did not speak of purifying life, nor did his artist become 'refined out of existence.' Art was 'une seconde nature' and the artist proceeds by analogy always present in his work, rather than, as Stephen suggests, 'within or behind or beyond or above' a sequence of possibilities that moves the artist out of his work and into a superior, or heavenly, location" (98-99).

David Williams suggests that Joyce, in this image of the artist as a deus absconditus, offers a parodic version of "Flaubert as proto-aesthete," since Stephen "wants to be like God himself, transcending the whole creation. So, instead of merely separating art from life, or of making life itself into another art form, Dedalus seeks a way to make his life 'outlive' his art" (21). Here, the removal of God at one end of the Creation leads to the artist as God at the other. Thus Joyce exposes the aesthetic

cultivation of art as an attempted appropriation of divinity, as Lynch's mocking response resituates Stephen's lofty claims on a more proper, "human" level. For, despite Stephen's desire to be "as a God," he cannot even refine his own fingernails, symbolizing his mortality, out of existence.

In another way, too, Stephen's claim is more absolute than Flaubert's: where Flaubert merely suggests that the artist "be like God in his creation," Stephen fully equates the two ("the artist, like the God of the creation"), and consequently sets up the artistic work as a rival creation. Flaubert's more modest poetics of impersonality is therefore exaggerated by the self-authorizing Stephen; whereas the former proposes the artist "be" like God, the latter believes that he is already God. But the rebellious "attempt to become like the gods led Adam and Eve not to the paradise of Paris, but out of the paradise of Eden. Stephen, insofar as he chooses this kind of artisthood, chooses death because it offers an escape from time and flux, from the mire and blood of human experience, an escape to purity" (Harkness 99).

This self-sanctioned deity trying to refine himself "out of existence" also parodies the "inaction" which Wolfgang Iser sees as undermining Pater's entire theory of aesthetic arrest. David Williams has already pointed out that Stephen is "indebted to aestheticism ... for ideas about stasis in art," inasmuch as Pater "sought to arrest the stream of sensations in the aesthetic image" (22). He cites as an example Stephen's definitions of pity and terror: "Pity is the feeling which arrests the mind in the

presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human sufferings and unites it with the human sufferer. Terror is the feeling which arrests the mind in the presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human sufferings and unites it with the secret cause" (221). The repetition of "arrest" and "constant" implies Stephen's faith in the Paterian notion that we can "expand that interval" of our existence through "the poetic passion" of tragedy. But Stephen's repeated emphasis on "grave" is a reminder of the morbidity of such aesthetics. For even "Pity is an emotion which drains away kinetic passions which, while they may be painful, constitute the vital springs of the average sensual man's basic motivations, particularly his ability to relate to and love objects and people. Joyce undoubtedly recognized the dangers to the artist of this aesthetic" (Sharpless 106). The refinement out of existence proposed by Stephen in fact presupposes a kind of death, wherein "sensual reality becomes less and less real, falling contemplatively into a lifeless formality ... where everything is perfect and passionless, where the bird sings only to a drowsy emperor and to bored lords and ladies looking on in objective detached stasis" (329). Stephen's repeated emphasis on "mind" is also fitting for one who would exist in the abstractions of the mind itself; only those "feelings excited by improper art" (Joyce 222) are truly kinetic, and so we are left with a futile form of apprehension and a portrait of the artist as an overdeveloped brain.

Joyce's theory of the epiphany, first stated in Stephen Hero

and then removed from the novel that became A Portrait, suggests that the younger artist had once been committed himself to a similar aesthetics of apprehension. Similarities between the theory of epiphany and Pater's theory of aesthetic arrest abound. Deriving from the Greek verb for "to show," "By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself" (Stephen Hero 211). Even those who would define the term turn to Joyce: "for Joyce, art was an epiphany..." (Frye Harper 174). Stephen experiences one such "epiphany" while watching a bird-like girl on the beach: "he felt above him the vast indifferent dome and the calm processes of the heavenly bodies; and the earth beneath him, the earth that had borne him, had taken him to her breast" (187). The reaction characterizes the spiritual illumination of the epiphanic moment, or of the moment of aesthetic arrest in mental apprehension.

The interval of mental apprehension becomes expanded, moreover, in Stephen's recollection of the incident:

He closed his eyes in the languor of sleep. His eyelids trembled as if they felt the vast cyclic movement of the earth and her watchers, trembled as if they felt the strange light of some new world. His soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings. A world, a glimmer, or a flower? Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening



flower, it spread in endless succession to itself, breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than the other. (186)

This recollection echoes Pater's description of the process of Marius's aesthetic perceptions: "... he lived much ... by a system of reminiscence. And his eager grasping at the sensation ... the main point of economy in the conduct of the present was the question: 'How will it look to me, and what shall I value it, this day next year? ... One's main concern was its impression for the memory' (II 154). But Joyce does not glorify the "frozen moment" to the same extent as Marius and Stephen; rather, he exposes its underlying flux. Stephen is made to savour the moment to such an extent that he experiences an unexpected physical response: what has been "flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes" turns out to be "the rapture of his sleep" (186). Dozing on the beach, the static Stephen has nonetheless responded kinetically to the image of the bird-girl. The "truth" of his epiphany leaks out in a wet dream.

The extent of Joyce's parody is more far-reaching still, as Stephen's apparent "epiphany" overflows with action and motion, from the "cyclic movement of the earth and her watchers" to his swooning soul "traversed by cloudy shapes and beings" to the glimmering, trembling, unfolding, and opening flower (a metaphor for his erection), which then breaks in full crimson and unfolds,

"wave of light by wave of light," (a pointed parody of Pater's pulsations), to flood all the heavens. The erotic drama of Stephen's epiphany recalls the sexual and physical repression of Pater's Marius, on whom "The abundant sound of water" (I 171) made the deepest impression. Left alone on the beach, Stephen is only conscious of the tide "flowing in fast to the land with a low whisper of her waves, islanding a few last figures in distant pools" (187). Both Stephen and Marius are haunted by the life sources that their theories of art attempt to suppress.

However, there remains a stasis at the heart of Stephen's dream--a stasis which undercuts the concept of aesthetic arrest even further. For "As Stephen conceives his villanelle, he is in a trance, the moment of vision comes as he is half asleep and half awake" (Harkness 103). In this condition, Stephen resembles the often swooning and ecstatic subjects of Pre-Raphaelite art. In an effort to replace action with poetry, Stephen unwittingly parodies these static subjects. His desire is left "spreading in endless succession to itself" as he awakens again and again to find himself alone on a damp beach or a wet bed. Near the end of the novel, a chance encounter with E. C. even leads him to another wet dream: "Towards dawn he awoke. O what sweet music! His soul was all dewy wet" (235). But rather than admit his longing for the girl, he "arrests" his emotion in beautiful words that ring as false as his pose of renunciation: "Are you not weary of ardent ways, / Lure of the fallen seraphim? / Tell no more of enchanted days. The verses passed from his mind to his lips and, murmuring them over,

he felt the rhythmic movement of a villanelle pass through them" (236). Language, in other words, sheathes him from experience, creating a sort of emotional condom.

Stephen has obviously changed little from the child who "wet the bed" on the first page of the novel. As such, he parodies Pater's own dismissal of the accumulative self, his belief that "Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us,--for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end" (Renaissance 236). In fact, it is experience which Stephen avoids through wrapping himself in poetry.

Such "arrested" seeds of experience--whether in dewy epiphanies like Stephen's or in Marius's passing joys--do point ironically to the lack of any issue from the aesthete's experience. Marius's growing disillusion, however, with the aesthetic attitude leads him to contemplate an alternative to his solipsistic, and barren, experience:

Yes! through the survival of their children, happy parents are able to think calmly, and with a very practical affection, of a world in which they are to have no direct share; planting with a cheerful good-humour, the acorns they carry about them, that their grandchildren may be shaded from the sun by the broad oak-trees of the future. That is nature's way of easing

death to us. It was thus too, surprised, delighted, that Marius, under the power of that new hope among men, could think of the generations to come after him ... In the bare sense of having loved he seemed to find, even amid this foundering of the ship, that on which his soul might 'assuredly rest and depend.' (II 221-22)

As Williams has pointed out, "The moral test of the author's aesthetic philosophy thus ends in an admission of art's dependence on life; neither art nor the artist can ever be truly autonomous" (17). Marius's final insistence upon art's dependence upon life reveals the barrenness of Stephen's own forlorn seed. Nor could Joyce hold fast to the theory of aesthetic arrest any more than could Pater; clearly, both would-be aesthetes ultimately understood that "The abstract realm of ideas is a 'hollow land,' which needs contact with concrete experience in order to come to life" (Iser 89).

The aesthete's position as a voyeur likewise suggests that the "young artist" and his art cannot escape their dependence upon life. Marius, who "conceived[d] of himself as but the passive spectator of the world around him" (102), is the very type of the aesthetic voyeur which Stephen becomes. But Joyce has also learned something of the dangers of conceiving of the artist as voyeur from George Moore's sequel to Marius, his Confessions of a Young Man (1885), which "attempts to show how the spiritual problem of Pater's novel is his unacknowledged confusion of art with life in his demand that art should somehow make up in intensity for the

brevity of human existence" (Williams 17). For Moore's novel attempts to separate art from life in painting a portrait of the artist as a god-like spectator who is wholly removed from the realm of human activity and values. Confessions thus becomes one of the early manifestoes for a decadent movement in art which makes art a substitute for life.

The Latin term for "falling away," decadence refers to a "decay of values or decline in literary excellence after a period of major accomplishment" (Frye Harper 137), "a rejection of respected values in art and a documentation of spiritual and moral uncertainty in life." After his father's funeral, Moore's aesthete enacts precisely such a "falling away:"

My father's death freed me, and I sprang like a loosened bough up to the light. His death gave me power to create myself--that is to say, to create a complete and absolute self out of the partial self which was all that the restraint of home had permitted; this future self, this ideal George Moore, beckoned me, lured like a ghost; and as I followed the funeral the question, Would I sacrifice this ghostly self, if by so doing I should bring my father back? presented itself without intermission, and I shrank horrified at the answer which I could not crush out of mind. (196)

The decadent artist is willing to sacrifice other lives on the altar of his creation; but his ultimate creation, it seems, is his own self-contained aesthetic persona. The only life begotten by

the godlike artist is the written "life" of the artist himself.

As Williams has already noted, the "unusually long and precise title of Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (as compared to his customary one- or two-word titles) ... is an ironic inversion of Confessions of a Young Man" (20); "Stephen's own aesthetic ambition parodies Moore's attempt to make his life into a self-existent work of art." Now we can see how the passage from A Portrait cited earlier where Stephen proclaims that "The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails" (215) parodies Moore as much as it does Flaubert and Pater. For Moore's third-person narrator convicts the reader of hypocrisy too in judging the self-absorbed aesthete: "You, hypocritical reader, who are now turning up your eyes and murmuring 'horrid young man'--examine your weakly heart, and see what divides us; I am not ashamed of my appetites, I proclaim them, what is more I gratify them; You're silent, you refrain, and you dress up natural sins in hideous garments of shame, you would sell your wretched soul for what I would not give the parings of my finger-nails for--paragraphs in a society paper" (185). Stephen, paring his fingernails in utter indifference to his audience, much less the world, proves to be more decadent than even his predecessor.

Yet Moore himself may have been engaged in a parody of sorts which Stephen does not recognize. In his Preface, Moore refers to his Confessions as "the story of an art-tortured soul," an

interesting reply to St. Augustine's "story of a God-tortured soul." Instead of a "confessor" who reveals his sins and finds spiritual consolation, Edward finds a consolation in art which makes him reminiscent of, but superior to the lesser project of a mere reader like Emma Bovary: "[T]he life of the artist should be a practical protest against the so-called decencies of life" (Moore 139).

The "birth" of the artist in Confessions typifies the aesthete's attempt to separate the artist from the rest of humanity: "I came into the world apparently with a nature like a smooth sheet of wax, bearing no impress, but capable of receiving any; of being moulded into all shapes. Nor am I exaggerating when I say I think that I might equally have been a Pharaoh, an ostler, a pimp, an archbishop, and that in the fulfilment of the duties of each a certain measure of success would have been mine" (49). A blatant contradiction to the Naturalist belief that human beings are fated at birth, Edward proclaims that he is a 'tabula rasa,' free from any biological preconditions, whatsoever.

Such conspicuous freedom from family or nature or society is reiterated in Stephen's desire to separate himself from his father, as he reveals in his explanation of his own spiritual "conception:" "The soul is born, he said vaguely, first in those moments I told you of. It has a slow and dark birth, more mysterious than the birth of the body. When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by

those nets" (220). According to James T. Farrell, "A Portrait is the story of how Stephen was produced, how he rejected that which produced him, how he discovered that his destiny was to become a lonely one of artistic creation" (175). The seriousness of such a "discovery," however, is called into question by the ensuing ball game, wherein the ball "rebounded twice or thrice to his hand and [Cranly] struck it strongly and swiftly towards the base of the alley", after which Cranly exclaims of the errant ball, "Your soul!" (221). This exchange might symbolize the opposition between an aesthete and his opponent: that it takes the form of a trivial game of ball, however, indicates the lack of seriousness to which the narrator attributes Stephen's theory, and its outcome is perhaps a foreshadowing of Stephen's own fate.

Not only is Stephen as errant as the ball, but he is also as pliable, linking him perhaps to the waxen nature of Moore's narrator, who attests to his ability to take any shape. Moore's awareness of the difficulties inherent in such malleability is apparent in his narrator's self-portrait: "I was as covered with 'fads' as a distinguished foreigner with stars. Naturalism I wore around my neck, Romanticism was pinned over the heart, Symbolism I carried like a toy revolver in my waistcoat pocket, to be used in an emergency" (148). In this sense, Edward is the precursor of Joyce's Stephen who also wears the badges of naturalism, romanticism, and aestheticism to parodic effect. The difference between them, however, is that Moore's parodies of the literary languages of his era are not sustained; ultimately, he takes his



aesthetic self-creation much more seriously than Joyce who seems in his treatment of Stephen to be exorcising his own literary demons.

After a fashion, however, Joyce's Stephen and Moore's Edward are both constructed on the model of the original artificer himself, the mythical Dedalus who constructed false wings out of wax for himself and his son Icarus in order to reach the sun. The result of Dedalus's invention is manifestly cataclysmic, ultimately causing Icarus's fatal fall into the ocean. Ovid has prepared for the fall of such artificers, in lines which Joyce chose for the epigraph to his novel: "Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes" ('and set his mind to unknown arts,' and, as the subsequent half-line has it, 'altered nature's laws'). "That Dedalus the artificer did violence to nature is the point of the epigraph from Ovid; the Icarian fall is inevitable" (Kenner Dublin's 120). But Stephen Dedalus ignores the inevitable in his desire to "fly by" the nets of country and family. Failing to foresee the true end of his Icarian career, the Stephen we meet at the start of the following chapter is having the earwax scrubbed out by his mother, who also scrubs the residue at "the interstices at the **WINGS** [emphasis my own] of his nose" (189). Clearly Joyce is parodying the artificer who does not realize that he cannot transcend the laws of nature.

Joyce's parody of the self-made artist persists in a birth description even more bizarre than that of Moore's narrator. After Stephen awakens "all dewy wet" from that reverie concerning E. C., we hear of his so-called "enchantment of the heart:" "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. O! In the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh. Gabriel the seraph had come to the virgin's chamber. An afterglow deepened within his spirit, whence the white flame had passed, deepening to a rose and ardent light" (235-36). As Seamus Deane explains, "All through this section religious images and motifs are aestheticized by Stephen in a manner characteristic of the French and English 'decadence' of the late nineteenth century" (320). So, in an ironically twisted Annunciation scene, Stephen gives birth to none other than his own work of art, the villanelle which he is about to "conceive." His "ecstasy," however, is not the momentary epiphany of the aesthete, but the sexual excitement of the would-be lover.

The passage describing the "birth" of a poem helps to pinpoint a more serious defect in his aesthetic doctrine: the apparent insignificance attached to the female. Stephen's conception and gestation of his poetic work depend upon his simultaneous imagining of "the temptress of his villanelle," as "Her nakedness yielded to him, radiant, warm, odorous and lavishlimbed" (242), and his pronounced rejection of her ("Are you not weary of ardent ways, / Lure of the fallen seraphim?"). As Karen Lawrence has noted, "The development of the Daedalean artist seems to entail flight from women, particularly the mother, as a condition of growth. She is one of the 'nets' he must fly by. In order to enter the symbolic world of language and the Father, the

boy must remove himself from the sufferings of women, the weakness of their bodies and souls'" (246). But Stephen can attempt this "escape" only by appropriating the womb as his own artistic medium. As Suzette Henke explains, "It is not enough to repudiate the female. The artist must usurp her procreative powers. Stephen seems to consider the aesthetic a kind of 'couvade'--a rite of psychological compensation for the male's inability to give birth" (70-71). Henke describes such passivity as a "strange instance of mental transsexuality" wherein Stephen

identifies with the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom the angel Gabriel announced the conception of Christ. The virginal imagination becomes handmaid to the Lord, echoing Mary's words: 'Be it done unto me according to thy word.' Stephen here suggests a fleshly embodiment of the divine word through an 'immaculate conception' in the mind of the poet. He assumes that the artist can engender 'life out of life' through an exclusively spiritual process. The imagination is impregnated by the seminal lightning of the Holy Ghost. It then gives birth to the word incarnate in art--or perhaps, as Stephen fails to understand, to a stillbirth untouched by the vitalizing forces of physical reality. So long as the aesthetic consciousness remains virginal, it fails to conceive works of art that reflect the life of the outer world. (71)

Stephen's "virginal" aesthetic consciousness turns out to have

underlain all along his visual aesthetic perception of the word, as in his "epiphany" of the bird-girl:

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 of error and glory.

On and on and on and on! (186)

In an attempt to create art out of his own "womb-like" soul, Stephen envisions the woman as a bird. He, in turn, makes himself a Leda, impregnated by the swan-like creature. Stephen appropriates the female procreative power to make "life out of life," whereby his soul spreads over everything, and he becomes the world. This metaphorical transfiguration recalls the bird-becoming pursuits of his namesake, Dedalus; in turn, the "distant pools" upon which he gazes following his "epiphany" are reminders of Dedalus's fate.

Henke observes other parodic echoes in Stephen's desire to appropriate the womb: "Despite the apparent sophistication of Stephen's aesthetic theory in A Portrait, the virgin womb of his imagination has yet to be fertilized by external experience. The artist's talents are woefully incommensurate with his idealistic conceptions" (71). In his impossible desire to "fly by" the

nets of family and race and to give birth to art, Stephen parodies Moore's narrator, who advocates a similar type of "creation:" "I, not an indifferent spectator, but an enthusiast, striving heart and soul to identify himself with his environment, to shake himself free from race and language and to recreate himself as it were in the womb of a new nationality, assuming its ideals, its morals, and its modes of thought, and I had succeeded strangely well, and when I returned home England was a new country to me; I had, as it were, forgotten everything" (129). Mutually obsessed by wombs and birth, both Moore's narrator and Stephen Dedalus seek an aesthetic "creation" that is impossible due to their sterility, to their monk-like sequestration in the cloisters of art.

Having refused the feminine body and the physical world, the aesthete resorts to an asexual, solitary creation. Stephen, for example, seems to equip himself, imaginatively at least, with both male and female sex organs. In this, he much resembles a flower, since flowers often contain both stamen and pistil, or male and female sex organs, in order to reproduce. It is no wonder, then, that in Stephen's wet dream mentioned earlier, his soul is compared to a "glimmering flower" spreading "in endless succession to itself" (187), or that he has a "roselike glow" (236). Stephen's frustrated "creation," the "dull white light [which] spread itself east and west, covering the world, covering the roselight in his heart," outdoes Moore's narrator, who, despite all his theorizing, sadly exclaims that "if you have not brought children into the world to suffer your life has been as vain and as harmless as mine

has been" (180). The hermaphroditic Stephen who dreams of bearing a new incarnate Word thus parodies the fruitlessness to which an aesthete like Moore must ultimately concede.

Stephen's explanation of his aesthetic theory to Lynch more covertly extends his aspiration to bear the Word in himself, to lay claim to the Virgin's exalted power:

In order to see that basket, said Stephen, your mind first of all separates the basket from the rest of the visible universe which is not the basket. The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn about the object to be apprehended. An esthetic image is presented to us either in space or in time. What is audible is presented in time, what is visible is presented in space. But, temporal or spatial, the esthetic image is first luminously apprehended as selfbounded and selfcontained upon the immeasurable background of space or time which is not it. You see it as one whole. You apprehend its wholeness. That is 'integritas.' (230)

Ian MacArthur notes a second meaning to the word "basket" in Partridge's Dictionary of Slang: "with a kid in the basket = pregnant" (269). MacArthur also identifies a second meaning of "bull's eye" which Lynch throws in twice following Stephen's explanation: "Lynch's previous contributions have been generally directed toward female sexuality so we are invited to read 'Bull's eye,' listed in Slang and Its Analogues (New York: Farmer and Henley, 1965), under the heading 'monosyllable,' as meaning cunt.

Lynch again uses the word in Ulysses (U14.584) where only this slang interpretation makes sense" (268-269). Such hints of female genitalia and pregnancy, however, work to undercut Stephen's theory of 'integritas.' The aesthete's notion of a "selfbounded and selfcontained" image is exposed as a covert attempt to supplant the power of the mother, or, in the words omitted from the Ovidian epigraph, to "alter ... nature's laws" (Melville 177). The narrator's careful interjections remind the reader of Stephen's ineffectuality as a creator; despite his desire for wholeness, harmony, and radiance, he has relegated himself socially to a lonely, barren existence. For, as he confesses to Lynch, "when we come to the phenomena of artistic conception, artistic gestation, and artistic reproduction I require a new terminology and a new personal experience" (227).

Stephen's attitude towards women is in keeping with the Pre-Raphaelite artists, another class of late nineteenth-century decadents. The "temptress of his villanelle" (242)--"radiant, warm, odorous and lavishlimbed"--is the same type of woman who fascinated the Pre-Raphaelites--sinuous, usually pale, sultry, and seductive. That Stephen calls her a "temptress" suggests she is the "femme fatale" to whom the Pre-Raphaelites were attracted. Stephen's desire to obliterate or replace the female likewise recalls the narrow treatment of women by the Pre-Raphaelites, who depicted them as either virgins or whores, but always alluring to men. Such treatment is only another indication of Stephen's unrelenting dependence on stereotypes and artistic codes.

A further link between Stephen and the Pre-Raphaelites is the villanelle itself, "A poetic form that very few other English poets use, except those of the nineties. And through his creation of symbol the nineteenth-century Aesthetic movement is 'explained' or 'analyzed' dramatically. Stephen writes out of a pattern of fear, a pattern that often concurred with homosexuality, and a pattern that bequeathed to the twentieth-century one of the more damaging visions of women as devouring seductresses, necessary and necessarily evil" (Harkness 68). Stephen is thus as bound by codified languages as are the words of the villanelle form itself, words which are painstakingly contorted to conform to the poem's elaborate form. For the villanelle, "with its intricate rules, forces a clearly identifiable, artificial scheme on the writer within which he is free to create; and ... particularly in English, [is] more confining than, say, the sonnet" (70). It "provides ordering principles as complex as the ritual of the Church and fulfils Stephen's recurrent need for order," but offers no more than the unnaturalness to which the aesthete lays claim.

The hypocrisy resulting from the aesthete's departure from nature--the hypocrisy of desire denying its existence--recalls the more obvious hypocrisy of the decadent aesthete in Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891). In his Preface, Wilde declares that his aim is "To reveal art and conceal the artist" and that "No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style." In effect, Wilde erases the dividing line between art and life, for as Dorian remains



frozen in aesthetic beauty, his sins become reified in his self-portrait. However, in Dorian Gray, Wilde wound up largely disproving his own aesthetic beliefs--his notion that "We might make ourselves spiritual by detaching ourselves from action, and become perfect by the rejection of energy" (Intentions 182). For Dorian Gray, whose soul is in fact put on display in his picture, forces the reader to acknowledge the presence of sin and its ramifications upon the individual. Although morality is simply irrelevant for Dorian, although he repents simply "For curiosity's sake" (262), his facade of amoral beauty is finally undercut by the artist Basil Hallward's living portrait of his hideous immorality, until the mask collapses into the portrait, and art comes to imitate life. Even Wilde himself insisted that Dorian Gray is a "story with a moral," that "Art is a passion, and, in matters, of art, Thought is inevitably coloured by emotion, and so is fluid rather than fixed, and, depending upon fine moods and exquisite moments, cannot be narrowed into the rigidity of a scientific formula or a theological dogma. It is to the soul that Art speaks, and the soul may be made the prisoner of the mind as well as the body" (Intentions 195), despite the claims in the Preface of Dorian Gray for a separation between art and life.

Such a proposed separation between art and life is further undercut by Dorian Gray's proliferation of autobiographical details. Many critics have identified Wilde as Lord Henry Wotton, due to the similarities in their aesthetic views, though in a letter to Ralph Payne, Wilde remarked that "Basil Hallward is what

I think I am: Lord Henry what the world thinks of me: Dorian what I would like to be--in other ages, perhaps" (Ackroyd 265). Such a concrete identification of Wilde certainly undermines his claim that "the real artist is he who proceeds, not from feeling to form, but from form to thought and passion" (Intentions 207). For Wilde himself proceeds, not from a concept of form, but from his own experience and surroundings, to aesthetic form. Many of his settings and characters, for example, seem to be drawn directly from life: the Grosvenor (24) has been identified as a Pre-Raphaelite art gallery of the 1880's, Agnew (33) as Sir William Agnew (1825-1910), a local art dealer, White's (46) as a gentlemen's club in St. James, and the Albany (55) as a bachelor apartment off Piccadilly (Ackroyd 265).

Far more importantly, however, Wilde's identification of himself with the artist Basil Hallward, rather than with the art connoisseur Lord Wotton, suggests that the artist cannot remain immune to his own creation. Lord Wotton, the type of "the critic as artist" who sees life only as a spectator sport and refuses to hear his protege Dorian's confession of murder because he sees him only as a beautiful objet d'art, is exposed as nothing more than a corrupt voyeur, refusing any responsibility for Dorian's actions. On the other hand, Hallward who painted the portrait of Dorian's ideal beauty, is finally murdered by his own creation. There can never be the safe barrier between life and art that Wilde sought in his critical pronouncements, no guarantee, as he claimed in Intentions, that it is "through Art, and through Art only, that we

can shield ourselves from the sordid perils of actual existence" (174).

Joyce seems to have been aware of the relevance of Wilde's use of both masks and autobiography for his own portrait of the artist. As Hugh Kenner has observed, the name Stephen Dedalus "seems to have been modeled on a pseudonym. It combines a Christian martyr with a fabulous artificer, and was very likely based on another name constructed in the same way, a name adopted by a famous Irishman, in fact the most lurid Dubliner of them all. During the brief time of his continental exile, Oscar Wilde joined a Christian martyr's name with a fabulous wanderer's, and called himself Sebastian Melmoth" ("Cubist" 175). The "truth of the mask," to borrow Wilde's phrase for Stephen Dedalus, is that there can be no shield in art "from the sordid perils of actual existence." Dedalus is Joyce's parody of Wilde, a young artist arming himself in enough of the decadent's aesthetic doctrines to make us realize that his own flight from "nature's laws," or from the perils of existence, will lead him to a similar fall as Wilde.

According to John McGowan, Wilde himself was "torn from the start between a belief that the self is a fiction that can be reinvented in each successive moment and more traditional notions of destiny and identity that were grounded on a belief in an essential character of soul possessed with its persistence over time linked to imperatives of consistency, sincerity, and responsibility" (426). In his novel, Wilde expresses this dichotomy by having Dorian Gray trade places with his portrait,

whereby he becomes the work of art, and the portrait is condemned to living out the fate of his degenerate soul. That Dorian might become a work of art, an ageless face immune from morality or the decay of time is, of course, the aesthete's ultimate hope. But Dorian is split as well between the static objet d'art and the degenerate spectator who seeks to "find my wife in Shakespeare's plays" (104), who finds acting to be "so much more real than life" (107). After he rejects Sybil for wanting to be more than an aesthetic creation, Dorian is reassured by Lord Wotton that there may occasionally be "real tragedy" in life, but "we are not the actors, but spectators" (130). Stephen adopts much the same position when in Chapter Five he uses the death of the girl in the hansom to illustrate his theory of tragedy. But Dorian's split condition actually allows him to be the spectator of his own and other peoples' lives, until his own portrait, mirroring his corruption back to him, urges him on to an act of murder.

Joyce is likewise concerned to portray his young artist as the spectator of his own life. As a "martyr" to the villain Wells, Stephen imagines his own funeral (also parodying Emma Bovary's dual role as spectator and imminent corpse in her own death): "How beautiful the words were when they said Bury me in the old churchyard! A tremor passed over his body" (22). In his vision of his tryst with his Mercedes, he imagines that "He would fade into something impalpable under her eyes and then in a moment he would be transfigured" (67). As a penitent, he watches how "his prayers ascended to heaven from his purified heart like perfume

streaming upwards from a heart of white rose" (157). In every case, he is in the scene without being in it, watching himself being watched or otherwise acted upon. So the temptation to enter the priesthood is almost too much for him, when it comes, since it affords him the opportunity to watch himself apart from the rest, performing

the minor sacred offices, to be vested with the tunicle of subdeacon at high mass, to stand aloof from the altar, forgotten by the people, his shoulders covered with the humeral veil, holding the paten within its folds, or when the sacrifice had been accomplished, to step below the celebrant, his hand jointed and his face towards the people, and sing the chant Ite, missa est. (172)

What attracts Stephen in the "proud address" of the director on the office of the priesthood is not "the awful power of which angels and saints stood in reverence." It is not "the power of the keys, the power to bind and to loose from sin," nor even "the power, the authority, to make the great God of Heaven come down upon the altar and take the form of bread and wine" (172) which fascinates him nearly so much as the image of himself aloof from any centre of power beyond the spell of a beautiful chant. He seeks no higher power, in other words, than the formal beauty of language. As the narrator of A Portrait tells us, "The world for all its solid substance and complexity no longer existed for ... [Stephen's] ... soul save as a theorem of divine power and love and universality. So entire and unquestionable was this sense of the divine meaning

in all nature granted to his soul that he could scarcely understand why it was in any way necessary that he should continue to live" (162). Now the Wildean dictum that "Life imitates art" is parodically emptied of its first term, until "art", or a "theorem" of the beautiful, is all that remains in existence, no longer needful of any life beyond itself.

This desire of the "priest of eternal imagination" for "a church without worshippers" (172) is none the less contrary to the entire purpose of the Mass, which has as its focus the rite of Communion. For if there is no Communion of believers, no sharing of life which is common to God and humanity alike, then the Mass is an elaborate, but empty, work of art. Stephen would like to "transfigure" the Mass into an object of beauty, with himself as the aesthetic priest. In this, he resembles Oscar Wilde, who was often referred to as the "high priest of aesthetics" because of his undue reverence for the beautiful and the ornate. Ultimately, however, this Wildean religion of art is revealed in A Portrait as a form without a content.

The Dean of Stephen's college is quite clear on his rejection of such empty formalism. As he remarks of his own simple handicraft, "There is an art in lighting a fire. We have the liberal arts and we have the useful arts. This is one of the useful arts" (200). But his distinction between the "liberal arts" and the "useful arts" does not lead him to Wilde's conclusion that "All art is quite useless" ("Preface," Dorian 21). In the earlier version of Stephen Hero, Joyce more explicitly enumerates some of

the traditional uses of art, according to "the 'antique' theory" which Stephen rejects: "the theory, namely, that the drama should have special ethical aims, that it should instruct, elevate, amuse." More explicitly still, the Dean identifies Stephen's position with "Art for Art's sake" (Hero 100), defining all too clearly the outmoded language of the young aesthete and leaving no room for the reader to consider whether "art is quite useless."

Observing the Dean, Stephen can only retort mentally that he resembles a "Levite of the Lord," that

His very body had waxed old in lowly service of the Lord  
 --in tending the fire upon the altar, in bearing tidings  
 secretly, in waiting upon worldlings, in striking swiftly  
 when bidden--and yet had remained ungraced by aught of  
 saintly or of prelatic beauty. Nay, his very soul had  
 waxed old in that service without growing towards light  
 and beauty or spreading abroad a sweet odour of her  
 sanctity--a mortified will no responsive to the  
 thrill of its obedience than was to the thrill of love  
 or combat his aging body, spare and sinewy, greyed with  
 a silverpointed down. (200)

What Stephen dismisses in the devout old priest is his lack of grace for "aught of saintly or of prelatic beauty." Beauty is grace, grace beauty, Stephen seems to say, as he judges entirely by appearances. But the Dean is quite the contrary of Wilde's young aesthete, who laments, "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful" (49), and so prays instead for a timeless

beauty instead of eternal grace. For the Dean, who concedes that "The object of the artist is the creation of the beautiful," observes that "What the beautiful is another question" (200). His question reminds us that the aesthete, like the romantic, realist, or naturalist, is quite capable of worshipping a false deity.

Stephen's attempt to placate the old Schoolman with a pat answer from Aquinas turns back on him all the same: "Pulcra sunt quae visa placent," he says. ('We call that beautiful which pleases the sight') (201). Based as much on an optical relation to the world as Pater's aesthetics, Stephen's answer remains static, divorced from any sense of consequence, as he himself admits: the fire might be beautiful, "In so far as it is apprehended by the sight, which I suppose means here esthetic intellection ... But Aquinas also says Bonum est in quod tendit appetitus. In so far as it satisfies the animal craving for warmth fire is a good. In hell however it is an evil" (201). By his own admission, "esthetic intellection" must include more than formal considerations; the context of what is seen, let alone its consequences, must determine the beauty of a form. The fire in a grate is morally different from the fire of hell; but a fire in which one stood would also be evil; the context of seeing is all.

Stephen, like Wilde, would still prefer "to free art from any moral considerations whatsoever" (Williams 24). And yet he makes moral judgments, when they suit him, based solely on the appearance of his antagonist: "Stephen saw the silent soul of a jesuit look out at him from the pale loveless eyes. Like Ignatius he was lame



but in his eyes burned no spark of Ignatius' enthusiasm" (201). That which is pleasing to the sight is evidently not the Dean of Arts; his soul is not beautiful. As Lord Wotton would say, "It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible..." (45). And yet the Dean, speaking from a Kantian perspective, manages to stand Lord Wotton's optical aesthetics on their head: "To distinguish between the beautiful and the sublime ... To distinguish between moral beauty and material beauty. And to inquire what kind of beauty is proper to each of the various arts. These are some interesting points we might take up" (205). The fact that Stephen finds himself unable to take up such points with the Dean suggests something of his own lack of claritas at this point. In trying to separate the beautiful and the good, and in restricting his perception to the visual, he is unable to let his perception of beauty go beyond the thing itself, to see more than a superficial symmetry of form.

Stephen's refusal of moral considerations in art, however, also parodies the Wildean notion that "all the arts are immoral, except those baser forms of sensual or didactic art that seek to excite to action of evil or of good" (Intentions 183). In answer to the Dean's challenge but in the pointed absence of his real authority, Stephen offers for the benefit of his friend Lynch to distinguish between proper and improper kinds of art: "The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us

to abandon, to go from something. These are kinetic emotions. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The esthetic emotion (I use the general term) is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing" (222). The morality of didacticism is thus no more than the "morality" of pornography; both excite to action or to movement in one direction or the other. By inference, the "proper arts" thus refuse any question of consequence, or of morality. "All the arts are immoral." Except that Stephen has already admitted that the beauty of fire is a moral, and not a formal question, very much dependent upon the location of the viewer--upon whether he is in a cold or a hot place.

Stephen, who at one point in the novel makes his confession out of a terror of hell, likewise parodies Wilde's notion that "Sin increases the experience of the race. Through its intensified assertion of individualism it saves us from monotony of type. In its rejection of the corrupt notion of morality it is one with the higher ethics" (Intentions 134). Unfortunately, Stephen never does escape this "monotony of type;" instead, his fate becomes more pronounced as he continues theorizing. For example, in drawing upon Shelley's comparison of the "mind in that mysterious instant" (231) to a "fading coal," Stephen accepts the finality of physical death--a finality to which Shelley ultimately conceded. But in comparing aesthetic arrest to "that cardiac condition which the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani ... called the enchantment of the heart," Stephen unwittingly ties his theory to cardiac arrest,

since "Galvani's 'enchantment' had prompted a 'cardiac condition' in an experimental frog by inducing an electrical current between the two ends of a nerve" (Williams 24). Joyce thus infuses the theory of aesthetic arrest with the ultimate stasis of death itself, parodying the Paterian effort to achieve immortality by expanding the interval and "getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time" (Renaissance 238).

The Stephen of the final pages of A Portrait is largely a comic embodiment of the stasis to which the aesthete is ultimately relegated. His discussion of the lyrical form, which Lynch dismisses as possessing a "true scholastic stink" (232), is so far-fetched that it verges on the ludicrous:

The simplest epical form is seen emerging out of lyrical literature when the artist prolongs and broods upon himself as the centre of an epical event and this form progresses till the centre of emotional gravity is equidistant from the artist himself and from others. 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. This progress you will see easily in that old English ballad 'Turpin Hero' which begins in the first person and ends in the third person. (232-3)

"Turpin Hero" is the title of a song about Dick Turpin, the eighteenth-century highwayman who was hanged in 1739, and whose fate is perhaps an authorial indication of how the artist is bound

to "pass ... into the narration itself," brooding as he does "upon himself as the centre of an epical event." The ballad of the hanged highwayman necessarily shifts, however, from first- to third-person narrative, the inverse of the shift that takes place in A Portrait. Stephen cannot trust any audience to keep him alive on its lips; he must hold on to his position as the self-nominated centre of his own epic.

Ashplant in hand, Stephen has finally become the Wildean dandy in dress as well as in theory. Even his Luciferian statement "I will not serve" (260) parodies Dorian Gray's descent into damnation. The "priest of eternal imagination" does not even understand the question "Do you love your mother?", has no idea as to whether or not his mother had a happy life, and does not know how many siblings he has, revoking any notions of a possible redemption through his imaginative ability.

In stark contrast to the solipsism of the aesthetic dandy, we hear a truly moving address by Cranly, so poignant that Joyce may well be speaking through the artist's young friend: "Whatever else is unsure in this stinking dunghill of a world a mother's love is not. Your mother brings you into the world, carries you first in her body. What do we know about what she feels? But whatever she feels, it, at least, must be real. It must be. What are our ideas or ambitions? Play. Ideas! Why, that bloody bleating goat Temple has ideas. MacCann has ideas too. Every jackass going the roads thinks he has ideas" (263). With these words, Cranly finally dismisses the "abstract sense of beauty" (Wilde Dorian 34)

celebrated by all those who would say with the decadent, "I treated art as the supreme reality and life as a mere mode of fiction" (De Profundis 46). For one who is unaware of what a mother suffers is as far removed from the "real" and the "true" as possible; for the artist who rejects a mother's love not to mention refuses to pray by her death-bed in Ulysses is finally bound to set himself up in competition with her.

So Stephen retreats at last into the most profoundly solipsistic of forms, the journal, where he complains that Cranly is "Still harping on the mother" (272). His final exclamation in the journal, "Welcome, O life! I go 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" (275-276) is ominous at best, considering that he has never before encountered the "reality of experience." His ambition to be the creator of a conscience--especially a social conscience--is equally foreboding, considering that his is an art without morals and is militantly undidactic. Nor is his invocation to Daedalus--"Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead" (276)--any more promising, considering that Icarus fell into the ocean. So, built into Joyce's story are the stories of two falls--the fall of Dedalus (Icarus) and the fall of Wilde, who died at the age of forty-six, shortly after he was released from prison. The Stephen we encounter on the last page of A Portrait might well want the action to stop, freezing himself at the height of his flight. None the less, his end is already prefigured by the reader who knows the

conclusion of the Icarus myth. Stephen is entrapped within a narrative which is larger than he is, a predictable finale for a prisoner of the out-moded language of literary decadence.

But, despite A Portrait's fatalistic ending, the novel does offer a "way out of the impasse of the 'verbal icon' and self-contained form" (Williams 8). That the reader is invited to formulate his/her own ending, even if such an ending is strongly hinted at, offers a way out of an artistic solipsism which would leave the world behind. The parody of aestheticism through the stultified, detached Stephen achieves what Linda Hutcheon sees as the aim of any decoder of parody--"the realization that ... the artist's parodic incorporation and ironic 'trans-contextualization' or inversion has brought about something new in its bitextual synthesis. Perhaps parodists only hurry up what is a natural procedure; the changing of aesthetic forms through time" (35). In other words, if Stephen remains frozen, the reader at least discerns the changing nature of literary styles. For the overall effect of Joyce's over-writing is "a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality" (Bakhtin 7), which brazenly opposes the death-bound theories of Stephen Dedalus.

### Conclusion

As the Scandinavian writer Georg Brandes once stated, "A literature in our day shows itself alive by taking up problems for discussion" (Becker 11). Joyce's parodic method in A Portrait takes up for discussion the sort of problems of a "living" literature to which Brandes was referring, although much of the new "life" that it inspired was unforeseen.

While Joyce's "modernism" helped to overthrow romantic and realist paradigms of the novel, Stephen's aestheticism became reified in a new school of literary criticism. The notion of the art object as "self-bounded and self-contained" would be taken quite seriously by the modernist New Critics, who celebrated the autonomy of the work of art, as well as the capacity of this "verbal icon" to order life itself through art. In his very title, The Well-Wrought Urn (1947), the New Critic Cleanth Brooks signals the independence of the work of art from the author (the "biographical fallacy"), from the reader (the "affective fallacy"), and from social history. That is because of "the very nature of the poet's language" in New Critical doctrines. As Brooks said in "The Language of Paradox" (1942), the poet's language "is a language in which the connotations play as great a part as the denotations. And I do not mean that the connotations are important as supplying some sort of frill or trimming, something external to the real matter in hand. I mean that the poet does not use a

notation at all--as the scientist may properly be said to do. The poet, within limits, has to make up his language as he goes" (9). In such a scheme, language has no referential character, only a self-reflexive one. "A Poem," in the language of Archibald MacLeish's "Ars Poetica" (1926), "should not mean / But be." Or, to cite Brooks's own source image for The Well-Wrought Urn, "The urn to which we are summoned, the urn which holds the ashes of the phoenix, is like the well-wrought urn of Donne's Canonization which holds the phoenix-lover's ashes; it is the poem itself" (20-21). Anticipating the objection that the funerary poem might itself be a dead thing, "meant for memorial purposes only," Brooks has to shift from the ultimate image of "aesthetic arrest," this poetic urn self-bounded and self-contained, to a dynamics of linguistic process: "The poem is an instance of the doctrine which it asserts; it is both the assertion and the realization of the assertion" (17). By such means, we are "prepared to accept the paradox of the imagination itself; else 'Beauty, Truth, and Raritie' remain enclosed in their cinders and we shall end with essential cinders, for all our pains" (21).

The myth of Dedalus in A Portrait also contributed to T. S. Eliot's understanding of Joyce's "mythical method" which he articulated in "Ulysses, Order and Myth" (1923), and which became one of the hallmarks of modernist aesthetics. As Eliot put it in his review of Ulysses, "the emotions and feelings of the writer himself" are "simply material which he must accept--not virtues to be enlarged or vices to be diminished. The question, then, about



Mr. Joyce, is: how much living material does he deal with, and how does he deal with it: deal with, not as a legislator or exhorter, but as an artist?" (482). A profoundly conservative politics underlies this perception of method by a poet who was to declare himself a Royalist in politics, an Anglo-Catholic in religion, and a classicist in poetry, for it binds the "anarchy" of the present to the completed "form" of the past. So Joyce, who has only latterly been identified as a social progressive and a revolutionary (Kershner Portrait 223), is co-opted to the more reactionary politics of modernists such as Eliot and Pound.

But not everyone was to take Stephen's mythic identity as the fabulous artificer and his artistic pronouncements so literally. For in addition to such unexpected, if not more progressive consequences, Joyce's parodic novel points toward a less restrictive literary future. In fact, Joyce renovates the language of the novel by offering to the reader an active role in its "creation." The structural ironies are built into the text as early as the first page. But, "Like all codes, parodic codes ... have to be shared for parody--as parody--to be comprehended" (Hutcheon 93); thus, "the reader has to decode it as parody for the intention to be fully realized. Readers are active co-creators of the parodic text." Without such collaboration between reader and writer, the novel retreats into inescapable monoglossia, no different from the self-enclosing languages that Joyce parodies.

That more critics are becoming aware, if but obliquely, of Joyce's parodic method is perhaps the reason for the latest trend

in Joyce criticism, a movement "away from the New Critical presumption of organic unity in Joyce's works, away from symbolic interpretation, and in some ways away from biography; the stress has been upon close analysis of style, a reexamination of the social and political context of Joyce's work, an intense theoretical examination of the implication of Joyce's writing project, and a questioning of previous interpretations of the entire modernist movement" (Kershner Portrait 232)

R. B. Kershner plays an important role in such questioning of "previous interpretations." In his recent study of Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Literature he addresses Stephen's "possession by the languages that surround him, and his attempts to appropriate them in turn" (154), a reading that approaches the parodic method laid out in this thesis. However, Kershner's parody is text-directed, instead of school-directed; while he acknowledges Stephen's dependence upon previous authors and particular texts, he is more concerned to situate Joyce's literary language in a dialogue with popular culture than to see it in the epochal terms of a dialogue with impoverished literary modes and historical dead-ends of high culture.

Yet studies such as Kershner's are important steps toward apprehending what Hugh Kenner calls "the showpiece of James Joyce's central technique" (Dublin's 19), "parody of the once vital to enact a null apprehension of the null." For in his attempt to counteract the "null" Joyce actually restores the novel itself to what Michael McKeon sees as its original intention: to move away

from fixed, socially-determined genres like aristocratic romance to help mediate between social instability and intellectual uncertainty (20-21). A Portrait thus works against the fixed ideologies of particular social groups and their languages; more importantly, however, it undercuts such languages by actually removing the dead weight with which the language of the novel had become burdened, by exfoliating its tired skin. In so doing, Joyce gives the novel a "facelift" of sorts; for each reader who deciphers Joyce's parodic method enters into dialogue with the author and, in turn, "the underlying, original formal author ... appears in a new relationship with the represented world" (Bakhtin 27). A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man may well indeed be "the prototype of the pivotal stage in that gradual process of development of literary forms" (Hutcheon 35). Having finished it, he was now ready to perform the plastic surgery of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake.

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