Pharmaconomy:
Stephen and the Daedalids

Alberto Moreiras

When the moon of mourning is set and gone.

James Joyce, Finnegans Wake

In a 1984 paper on Joyce, Julia Kristeva considers the return of the repressed in a literary text to be the "unveiling of intrapsychic identifications."\(^1\) Freud's Imaginary Father of Individual Prehistory, "a primitive form that possesses the sexual attributes of both parents,"\(^2\) is the site of a primary identification that would rule, from a distance, the development of a style of writing. The very decision to become a writer involves not only identity processes but, in particular, what Kristeva calls "the identificatory symptom,"\(^3\) perhaps playing with the etymological meaning of *symptom* as "event." But a symptom can also mean in English a trace or vestige and in that sense it would be the sign of a disappearance.

For Kristeva, Joyce's insistence on father-son transubstantiation in *Ulysses* signals what she rather surprisingly calls "the real presence of a complex masculine sexuality. Without any repressions

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This essay is dedicated to Laurence MacSheain.

2. Ibid., 172.
3. Ibid., 172.
whatsoever." Repression would be completely breached in the Joycean text through a clear welcoming of paternal identification. I do not think that Kristeva is suggesting that any writing can be reduced to the function of expressing or imitating the writer's unconscious. She seems in fact to be claiming the opposite: the unveiling of the identificatory symptom through the return of the repressed in writing releases writing into its own. Writing guards the trace of the writer's unconscious, but, as Jacques Lacan put it, a work "insofar as it is written, does not imitate the effects of the Unconscious... It is real, and, in this sense, the work imitates nothing. It is, as fiction, a truthful structure."5

Jean Kimball, in her article on Joyce's use of Freud's essay on Leonardo da Vinci, quotes Freud's statement, in the context of his investigations of parental influence on the artist's development, that "the nature of the artistic function is... inaccessible along psycho-analytic lines."6 Kimball's article shows how Joyce incorporated Freudian insights in order "to affirm the freedom and the power of the artist as self-created creator."7 Such an affirmation, according to Kimball, necessarily passes through a release from the power of the phallic mother, which involves not so much an identification with the father as an identification with the mother's Other: "This release of the son from the power of the mother is... signaled by the replacement of Mut, the vulture-headed mother goddess of Freud's analysis of Leonardo, by the bird-headed Egyptian god Thoth," who was "self-begotten and self-produced."8

This essay questions the idea of artistic self-production as a struggle against the mother. Kimball's arguments, as well as the arguments of other scholars who have maintained that such a notion is dominant in Joyce's text, are certainly compelling. One of the most obvious reasons for the critical consensus is succinctly explained by Bernard Benstock:

Joyce's mother, May Murray Joyce, suffered the decline of the family

4. Ibid., 171.
7. Ibid., 69.
8. Ibid.
into poverty and her husband's drunkenness shored by her Catholic faith and her expectations that her eldest son James would find his vocation in the priesthood. Her counterpart in *A Portrait* expresses her disappointment and resentment as she watches her son go off to his lectures at the National University. . . . The May Goulding Dedalus of *Ulysses* is even more memorable as the ghost haunting her profligate son whom he attempts to exorcise from his guilt-ridden consciousness. . . . It was May Joyce's terminal cancer that brought her son back from his first attempt at self-exile in Paris when he was twenty-one.9

Although there is ample textual evidence to support the notion that the struggle against the mother is crucial for Stephen's constitution as a writer, such an interpretation tells only half the story. There is another possibility for interpretation, which is not as clearly suggested in the text because it remains largely encrypted, buried in the textual unconscious. It is this: artistic creation in

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9. Bernard Benstock, *James Joyce* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1985). 9. Frances Restuccia, in *Joyce and the Law of the Father* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], has studied Joyce in the light of Gilles Deleuze's notion of masochism and has proposed a very productive version of the Joycean game of parental identification. According to Restuccia, Joyce's becoming-a-woman is a function of his attempt at subverting what she calls "the law of the fathers/Father." Restuccia claims that "what is effected under the aegis of Father/Son consubstantiality seems finally to be claimed or taken over by femininity" (123) and then concludes that Joyce's turn to woman is the ploy of a Deleuzian masochist to exclude and completely nullify the father (140). Inevitably, then, woman returns in Joyce as a fetishized phallic Mother/Virgin. I have no quarrel—except perhaps at the level of unstated if implied conclusions—with Restuccia's fascinating argument, which my summary radically simplifies. This article in a sense supplements her book by locating an alternative, but not necessarily contrary, possibility of interpretation. Patrick McGee's *Paperspace: Style as Ideology in Joyce's Ulysses* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988) also disagrees with the largely consensual position that Stephen's self-constitution occurs primarily in opposition to his mother. In Chapter 2 ("Between: A Name of the Mother"), on "Scylla and Charybdis," McGee concludes: "Stephen writes his abjection; he subverts the law of the father not by standing in the place of its imaginary opposition but by standing on the edge of the symbolic, by pushing the law to its limit, where it displays the folds in which we glimpse not the void but the infinite series of other possibilities" (68). For McGee these other possibilities are given by the name of the mother: "As a unitary signifier, a unitary law of value or a feminine logos waging eternal war against a male logos, there is no symbolic Name-of-the-Mother beyond Mother . . . ; there are only the names of the mothers—proper names that, in a sense, lack the proper, that is, a relation to property and legal constraint. . . . A name of the mother that has no place is dissemination itself, not the negation of the father's name but its situation, its circumcision" (61). McGee's argument is forceful and seductive, but I would hesitate to subscribe totally to his implied conclusions in this chapter, as they seem, like Restuccia's, not to advance beyond the symbolic coordinates of the identificatory symptom even when questioning them (see also the "Epilogue," esp. 187–89, 195–97). Many things in McGee's book, however, are of great value to me, for instance: "Stephen's discourse is perhaps the discourse of a lack, but a lack that from the beginning has been a temporal fiction of the subject-in-process which effaces the boundary between subject and object, self and other, father and mother. The subject-in-process is between" (61).
the Joycean text depends on a recognition of the undecidability of parental identification. Textual constitution goes through a radical negation of the mother as well as a no less radical assumption of the maternal name. Conversely, the paternal name, even if mediated and sustained by the idea of self-begetting, must also be negated, not just in parricide but also in what I call the suspension of maternal displacement. A strange logic obtains here: the logic of the identificatory symptom, as both event and vestige, unveiled.

In this essay I examine a particular identificatory phenomenon within the Joycean text in order to clarify the way “primary identification” is mediated in artistic expression. In part I am following Kristeva’s suggestion: “The father dies in order that the son live; the son dies in order that the father be incarnated in his oeuvre and become his own son. In this labyrinth, indeed Daedalean, chercher la femme.”10 I do not attempt to prove anything concerning Joyce’s sexuality. As a matter of fact, my main point of emphasis involves the instituting function of the return of the repressed within Stephen Dedalus’s theory of writing, over and beyond this same function within Joyce’s writing practice. By looking at some conditions of textual constitution as they are offered in Stephen’s conception of what it means to become a writer, I open a way to understanding the Joycean text’s “truthful structure,” that is, its presence as an art work. If the text’s truthful structure, in the Lacanian phrase, is dependent on the text’s being “real,” it should be noted that the Lacanian notion of the real involves that which relates to the symptom in a certain way. If the symptom is “a principle of repetition that constitutes identity,” it also undoes identity through repetition. Sheldon Brivic, in a remarkable book that intersects at many points with my arguments in this article, quotes Jacqueline Rose’s definition of the Lacanian real: “Lacan termed the order of language the symbolic, that of the ego and its identifications the imaginary. . . . The real was then his term for the moment of impossibility onto which both are grafted, the point of that moment’s endless return.”11 The real is that which returns and, returning, shakes imaginary identities and symbolic events. The real is that which, within the symptom, shows itself as the vestige of a disappearance.

I proceed in three steps. First, I give a preliminary definition of

what I call, using a Derridean notion, the pharmacological status of writing in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. Second, I study the function of the *pharmakos* within Stephen’s writing anxiety—and in the process I present my reasons for thinking that Stephen undergoes a fleeting semiconscious identification with Talos, Icarus’s brother. The third part of my argument concerns Stephen’s relation to writing itself, that is, not to the *pharmakos* but to the *pharmakon*, in the light of the Talos myth. This third part suggests that the text’s truthful structure is marked by the undecidability of its own identifications; in that sense, textual structure is done as well as undone by the deployment, or the unveiling, of the paradoxes of the text’s identificatory symptom.¹²

The Pharmacological Status of Writing

By pharmacological writing I mean first the associations evoked by Plato’s description of writing as *pharmakon*, that is, at the same time “remedy” and “poison.” In “Plato’s Pharmacy” Jacques Derrida links *pharmakon* to *pharmakos*, the latter being the Greek term to designate a particular kind of threat to the community as well as the sacrificial victim who embodies it and conjures away the danger: the scapegoat.¹³ I indicate some of the close connections between Stephen’s conception of writing as expressed in certain passages of *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, and some Greek myths about the Daedalids. The Daedalids were, as we shall see, scapegoats, *pharmakoi*. I show those connections through an analysis of Stephen’s fear of the unknown as expressed in the fear of the symbol, the fear of Daedalus, and the fear of Thoth. My hypothesis is rather modest at the level of analysis: I contend that a singular identification of Stephen with an almost forgotten pharmakic hero, Talos, is a part of the textual unconscious in both *Portrait* and *Ulysses*. As an unconscious presence, Talos is understood as plausibly in the text but never explicitly there: the identification remains a possibility, an it-just-might-have-happened, and this is all I need to

¹². See Jacques Aubert, ed., *Joyce avec Lacan* (Paris: Navarin, 1987), for a selection of Lacan’s writings on the Joycean “symptom.” I have preferred not to include in this essay either a sufficient discussion or a presentation of Lacan’s notion, in particular as it relates to the order of the real and to the task of writing. It remains to be done.

argue. This plausible identification as such would go a certain way toward illuminating Stephen's understanding of writing in relation to parentage and filiation. More specifically, this identification clarifies Stephen's understanding of writing as a passage of parentage, a taking "of" in the subjective and objective senses, in which what is decided goes beyond self-begetting toward an infinite return of parental identifications as well as their mutual cancellation.

In this infinite return an unveiling takes place in which the text shows itself at the same time bound by the identificatory symptom and radically resistant to it. The text shows itself marked by an originary constitution which is at the same time the site of its author's primary identification and of its abandonment and consequent entrance into the real. To prove this is the goal of this essay. I limit myself to some key passages for reasons of space.

In a 1964 article on Daedalian imagery in the first of Joyce's novels, David Hayman refers to Stephen's ambivalent feelings toward his father. "The Divine Father and his surrogates have been replaced by the inspiring image of the 'hawklike man' Daedalus, symbolizing for Stephen a yet undefined type of artistic creator." For Hayman, Daedalus represents "the ideals of a creative youth," while Icarus symbolizes youth's "achievements." Stephen's misgivings about his self-conception and where it may lead him are given, according to Hayman, in the image of the "lapwing Icarus," which I hope to show is not Icarus but Icarus's brother, or stepbrother, Talos. Hayman does not explicitly refer to the pharmakos. His article, however, thematizes Stephen's obsession with wings and bird symbols, which we shall see as radical pharmacological motifs, to be related to Stephen's ashplant, the augural stick, through the curious mediation of an umbrella.

Hayman shows how Stephen's fear of birds carries him to a wary acceptance of destiny. He concludes:

Stephen, who throughout his life has searched for the stability embodied in the person of a father, who has implicitly recognized that need in his Icarian cry, "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead," can solve his dilemma only by achieving the father

15. Ibid., 36.
16. Ibid., 36 and passim.
which is within him, by reconciling himself with his past, accepting his present, and thus freeing himself for the future.\textsuperscript{17}

In my opinion that conclusion must be modified to suggest that, for Stephen, reaching the father within himself can be accomplished only through a particular form of parricide, which one might call suspended parricide. For Stephen the genealogical bonding is a poisoned gift mandating the obligation both to constitute and to dissolve identity. This is for me the double meaning of \textit{Portrait}'s final words about “forging” conscience, an ending of the book which I would call not ironic but nostalgic, drawing upon the meaning of \textit{nostos} as “return home.” Penelope waits there.

The double inheritance, mother/father, which we shall see registered by Stephen has been studied by Derrida in his essay on Friedrich Nietzsche's \textit{Ecce Homo}.\textsuperscript{18} According to Derrida, Nietzsche's signature is his attempt to recover this double inheritance even at the moment when he is establishing his own legacy, the autobiographical moment. John Llewelyn puts it succinctly:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Entre}, between, in the way that the writer Friedrich Nietzsche and the writings to which he appended his name are between the father who died before him and the mother who died after him. Not only is the person who signs himself F. N. their heir, the heir of two sexes, their two laws (the civil law that Creon obeys and the law of the family followed by Antigone), but the heir of life and death.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

Inheritance and legacy: for Derrida all writing has a testamentary structure. Thus, we could raise the question of up to what point the intrapsychic identifications are also phenomena of mourning: of introjection and incorporation. Derrida writes: “Introjection/incorporation: everything is played out on the borderline which divides and opposes the two terms.”\textsuperscript{20} If \textit{introjection} characterizes “normal” mourning as the process whereby we rearrange our libidinal investments after the death of a loved one, \textit{incorporation} is the

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\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 54.
\end{itemize}
"aberrant" phenomenon by means of which we manage to keep the dead alive inside, encrypted. In other words, incorporation implies the rejection of the loss: we have not lost anything. Writing, once accomplished, cannot claim one or the other without claiming both: like memory, writing resists loss; like memory, it can function only in loss. Between Scylla and Charybdis: there we have the passage into writing. It cannot be a cure without being at the same time a poison: it happens in life/death, and it happens as a curious form of survival, of resurrection. It is an impersonal resurrection which the suffering subject has given out while simultaneously giving up: the task of the writer.\footnote{Julia Kristeva writes in \textit{The Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia}, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989): "The work of art that insures the rebirth of its author and its reader or viewer is one that succeeds in integrating the artificial language it puts forward... and the unnamed agitations of an omnipotent self that ordinary social and linguistic usage always leave somewhat orphaned or plunged into mourning. Hence such a fiction, if it isn't an antidepressant, is at least a survival, a resurrection" (SI).} For Llewelyn again:

Not that the text speaks with the "voiceless voice" of what Levinas calls the \textit{il y a} or of what Blanchot calls "nothingness as being, the idling (désœuvrement) of being." The voice is a middle voice, neither simply active nor simply passive, that is incomprehensible within the categories of nothingness and being. It does not even belong to a person, and the personage through which the voice speaks has no selfconsciousness.\footnote{Llewelyn, "Derrida," 103.}

This passage into writing is what is at stake in Stephen's pharma-kic, borderline position. The "truthful" structure of the artistic text is here represented. Parental identification gives way to double inheritance. Writing enacts the task of mourning in that in it the mother-father identification must be radically introjected in a process of unveiling. But in a sense, writing will remain haunted: an always failed, disastrous introjection will become aberrant and will constitute the body of writing as an incorporated, alien body where the symptom reigns. From another perspective, however, the reign of the symptom in writing means that incorporation has abandoned the unconscious and is now a part of the real: for all to see, no longer a secret. By constituting itself as a passage between, writing gives itself over to primary identification at the very same moment that it withdraws itself from it. This is the signature effect, if you
will, and we shall see that Stephen calls it so. It is also the effect through which the structural truthfulness of the work of art announces itself. *Finnegans Wake* partially names it: “So why, pray, sign anything as long as every word, letter, penstroke, paperspace is a perfect signature of its own?”23 In other words, why sign anything if everything is already incorporated, if nothing has ever been given up?

Pharmacik Anxiety

In this section I address the function of the *pharmakos* within Stephen’s writing anxiety. It leads us into an exploration of the pharmacik characteristics of the Daedalian family, in the process unveiling the plausible presence in the textual unconscious of a rarely noted but important member of the family, Talos, also called Perdix.

Near the end of *Portrait* Stephen thinks of becoming a writer. The narrative includes these words:

> And for ages men had gazed upward as he was gazing at birds in flight. The colonnade above him made him think vaguely of an ancient temple and the ashplant on which he leaned wearily of the curved stick of an augur. A sense of fear of the unknown moved in the heart of his weariness, a fear of symbols and portents, of the hawklike man whose name he bore soaring out of his captivity on osierwoven wings, of Thoth, the god of writers, writing with a reed upon a tablet and bearing on his narrow ibis head the cusped moon.24

Placed at the temple, at the threshold of his inauguration into the theoretical or contemplative life of the writer, Stephen experiences three fears: of symbols and portents, of Daedalus, and of Thoth as the god of writing. This does not seem a transitional or progressive series, leading from one thing to the next.25 There is a certain simul-

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25. In my opinion Roberto González Echevarría insufficiently interprets this series in a transitional sense, “desde los símbolos al dios de la escritura” (from symbols to the god of writing) in “BdeORridaGes [Borges y Derrida,]” in *Isla a su vuelo fugitiva* [Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1983], 209. About the function of the temple in Stephen’s theory of writing, there is a splendid paper by Murray McArthur focusing on the “Library” chapter in *Portrait* and studying the temple as a *parergon* or frame in the Derridean sense: “The
taneity, a stasis, between the three fears or the three terms of the fear. These three fears are three versions of the same anxiety: the inaugural anxiety of writing. It comes to Stephen from the future: the future is anticipated as danger. Danger is at the heart of the portent, the portent of writing—of the inscription which the "Scylla and Charybdis" chapter in Ulysses calls "the intense instant of imagination, when the mind, Shelley says, is a fading coal, [and when] that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be."^26

This ecstatic union of temporality in the supreme moment of creative vision is dangerous because it has to do, as production, with reproduction, with self-production, and therefore with parentage, with parental ghosts, and with mourning: "Through the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unliving son looks forth" (U, 9.380–81). Freud remarks in his Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis that the act of birth is the prototype of all effects of anxiety. He then points out that it is "highly relevant that this first state of anxiety arose out of separation from the mother."^27 Stephen’s association of anxiety with the decision to become a writer indicates not only the recognition of this separation but also the fact that in the new becoming, in the new birth, anxiety returns as a symptom of the essentially repressed, the primal separation. Writing, as a defense against anxiety, as an "anticathexis," will involve the transformation of the affect accompanying the separation into its opposite: it will seek the canceling out of the primal separation. Stephen’s inaugural decision, as an act of birth, is also an antibirth, a defense against separation which takes place not only in the symbolic order but also in the order of the real. We can begin to see how and why the primary identification radically involves the negation of the mother. Freud’s bisexed "Imaginary Father of Individual Prehistory," with whom intrapsychic identification takes place, is a function of this negation, an originary repression that makes of writing a task of essential mourning. In Stephen’s anxiety we glimpse the *femme* that the father-son transubstantiation hides in the apparent liquidation of secondary, or "normal," repression.


Thus, in the mother's negation, not dialectically but disastrously, a fundamental affirmation holds sway.

Let us examine carefully the paragraph just quoted. Stephen's association of symbols and portents needs to be noted. A portent is not only something prodigious but also whatever foreshadows a coming event. Hans-Georg Gadamer gives a good explanation of what is to be understood by symbol [even within its psychoanalytical definition]:

Originally [symbol] was a technical term in Greek for a token of remembrance. The host presented his guest with the so-called tessera hospitalis by breaking some object in two. He kept one half for himself and gave the other half to his guest. If in thirty or fifty years' time, a descendant of the guest should ever enter his house, the two pieces could be fitted together again to form a whole in an act of recognition.28

Stephen's fear of the coming event is a fear of the symbolic: a paranoid fear of encounter and recognition. He fears the return, in writing, of an identification with the (masculine) father, now projected as "the hawklike man whose name he bore." Kristeva points out that "whatever the variants of identification as a generic term, it presupposes the tendency inherent in the speaking being to assimilate itself symbolically and in reality to another entity separate from itself."29 Stephen's reluctance to accept the paternal symbol in writing, although it proves nothing in itself, should be interpreted as an indication that for him, the paternal symbolic identification must be consummated; but this also means assumed and, therefore, transgressed. This double, self-contradictory mandate is not the origin of Stephen's anxiety; rather, it constitutes itself as


an (anxious) resistance to anxiety in the form of a symptom. Primal anxiety doubles itself in the inaugural passage of writing.\(^3\)

Stephen calls Daedalus "hawklike." The association is at first sight enigmatic. Daedalus is of course a solar hero, and the osier-woven wings he used would seem to simulate those of an eagle, Zeus's emblematic bird, which as solar double of the king assumed the function of guarantor of the royal power for the Greeks. In Egypt, however, the hawk, or falcon, was the solar animal, the animal of Amen-Ra. It is said that at the moment of the Pharaoh's coronation a hawk descended upon him as a symbol of his investiture with divine power. Finding authority in J. H. Breasted, Freud mentions in *Moses and Monotheism* that the sun god Ra used to be represented as a hawk and a small pyramid.\(^3\) From later representations in the shape of a beam-emitting sun, it would be possible to understand the pyramid as precisely the emanation of the hawk's surrogate power. Joyce is clearly associating Daedalus with Egyptian solar divinities, and the same association will be repeated in *Ulysses*. In my opinion it has the paramount purpose of connecting Daedalus with writing, through Thoth, while at the same time subverting that association, as we shall see.

Robert Graves explains that within Greek mythology the Daedalid myths seem "to combine the ritual of burning the solar king's surrogate, who had put on eagle's wings . . . with the rituals of flinging the partridge-winged pharmakos, a similar surrogate, over the cliff into the sea."\(^3\) Pharmakos means "wizard," "magician," "poisoner." The pharmakos is someone whose function is ambiguous, double, because he can both heal and kill, a function then either benevolent or malignant, like that of the king with his paternal authority. The decision to get rid of him is cyclical and expiatory. It is a social decision through which the community, in the expulsion of what is threatening toward an abysmal outside, re-creates its identity by reconstituting an inside. Derrida has this to say about the border-instituting function of the pharmakos:

\(^30\). Within anxiety, Stephen's fear of Daedalus is not only a fear of his father. It is ultimately a fear of his name, which links father, son, and brother and makes them doubles of one another: "Daedalus . . . Talos . . . and Hephaestus are shown by the similarity of their attributes to be merely different titles of the same mythical character; Icarus . . . may yet be another of his titles" [Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, vol. 1 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 92.1].


\(^32\). Graves, *Myths*, 1:92.3.
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Intra muros extra muros. The origin of the difference and division, the pharmakos represents evil both introjected and projected. Beneficial insofar as he cures—and for that, venerated, and cared for—harmful insofar as he incarnates the powers of evil—and for that, feared and treated with caution. . . . Sacred and accursed. The conjunction, the coincidentia oppositorium, ceaselessly undoes itself in the passage to decision or crisis.33

Through his paternal name Stephen has been given the name of a pharmakos, and he fears such an inscription when his inaugural decision to become a writer radically brings into question the opposition between inside and outside, home and the uncanny. Stephen reflects that he must leave forever “the house of prayer and prudence into which he had been born and the order of life out of which he had come” (P, 225) but that he must not do so at the price or in the manner of a mere abandonment; rather, he must leave as birds do, whose flight eternally recurs. Stephen’s reading of his destiny, the augury from the temple, says precisely that: “What birds were they: He thought that they must be swallows who had come back from the south. Then he was to go away for they were birds ever going and coming, building ever an unlasting home under the eaves of men’s houses and ever leaving the homes they had built to wander” (P, 225).

Stephen understands that his disruptive mission as a writer, like that of the pharmakos, will be the displacement of the dwelling place. As pharmakoi do, he will threaten the economy of inside and outside, and might therefore have to be sacrificed. Stephen is a Daedalid. Daedalus, Icarus, and Talos, artificers, are surrogates of the sun king, aquiline beings whose solar symbol will cost them their lives. All three are members of the Athenian royal family of Erechtheus, whose totemic emblem is the snake. Taking his cue from an old tradition, Nietzsche symbolized recurrence in the eagle and the snake. The realization of the recurrence of displacement in the home, and of home in the displacement, is one of Stephen’s fears, a heavy burden indeed, “das grösste Schwergewicht,” as Nietzsche calls it in The Gay Science. Stephen’s version of the Eternal Return of the Same will be the price, as in Nietzsche, of the “intense instant of imagination,” Augenblick, the blink of an eye.

33. Derrida, “Pharmacy,” 133.
(Augenblick is Luther’s translation of the “twinkling of an eye,” or ecstatic moment of salvation).  

Talos is Daedalus’s surrogate son and therefore Icarus’s brother. In Ovid’s version of the myth, which Joyce certainly knew, we find that Daedalus had killed Talos because he was jealous of his reputation as an artificer. Graves adds that Daedalus also suspected Talos of an incestuous relation with his mother, Perdix. Daedalus made Talos accompany him to the roof of the Parthenon and there invited him to contemplate the view. He then pushed Talos off the temple, into the abyss. Ovid says that at that point Pallas, “who looks favourably upon clever men, caught the lad as he fell and changed him into a bird, clothing him with feathers in mid-air.”

Another passage in Metamorphoses tells us that this bird was a partridge (perdix). As Daedalus was burying Icarus on the beach at Samos, “a garrulous partridge came out of a muddy ditch [garrula limoso prospext ab elicet perdix], flapped its wings and crowed with joy.” But Perdix is Talos’s mother’s name. Talos is metamorphosed by Pallas into a bird in the form of his mother’s name. Because of Daedalus’s radical act of disininheritance, Talos retrieves his maternal name. This must be the meaning of Ovid’s otherwise obscure verse: “Nomen, quod et ante, remansit” (his name remained the same as before; that is, as it was before he was given over to Daedalus as a surrogate son). The nineteenth-century illustration accompanying this essay calls Talos by the name Perdix. The popular etymology that associates in Latin and the Romance languages the name of the bird with the word for “losing” (perdere) is important here. It is also important to note that perdere comes from per and dare, so that we lose something when we give it up completely. Talos is the disinherited one, the one without a father’s name. And yet it was Pallas Athena, the goddess of truth, who saved him in the name of another inheritance, this time maternal, and by so doing made possible his pharmakic return, even in loss.

In “Scylla and Charybdis” Stephen will ask himself, “What’s in a name?” [U, 9.927]. He is thinking about Shakespeare and artistic

35. Graves, Myths, 1:92.1.
37. Ibid., 8.236–37.
38. Ibid., 8.255.
Perdix, the Nephew of Daedalus, transformed into a Partridge. A nineteenth-century print. Gift of John Miley to the author.
creation, parentage, but he is also living through the frustration of his return from Paris. The cause of Stephen's return, as we know, is a telegram from his father with an ominous misprint: "NOTHER DYING COME HOME FATHER" (U, 3.199). All editions prior to Gabler's say "MOTHER DYING COME HOME FATHER." "Nother" is not only "mother," for any reader must consider the possibility of a misprint, but also, uncannily, "not her" and "no other." Patrick McGee suggests that the scribal lapsus "expresses Stephen's secret refusal to let his mother die." It would then be a symptom of incorporation. But if misprint there is, then it merely announces the need for normal mourning: the return home is the beginning of introjection. The telegram, written by Stephen's father, is a poignant text in which the radical ambiguity between introjection and incorporation announces itself. Is it a paternal ruse? Is his father killing him even when requesting his last return to mother?

The possibility of a paternal ruse, over and above his mother's agony, is what is worrying Stephen, who thinks about his return in terms of a meditation on his name: "Fabulous artificer. The hawk-like man. You flew. Whereto? Newhaven-Dieppe, steerage passenger. Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus. Pater, ait. Seabedabbled, fallen, weltering. Lapwing you are. Lapwing be" (U, 9.952–54). The connection between the lapwing and Stephen's relationship with his mother has not, to my knowledge, been remarked upon. In my opinion it is significant, and it helps us understand the nature of Stephen's maternal phantasm. At the time of the narration Stephen's mother is, of course, already dead. Stephen failed to reconcile with her, and the fact haunts him.

As we saw, Hayman takes the lapwing to be Icarus. I would suggest the possibility that "lapwing" refers not to Icarus but to Icarus's brother, Talos, the partridge. At first glance there is of course no reason why "lapwing" should be made to refer to a partridge, but I will shortly give some reasons for my view. Should it prove plausible, we might conclude that in this passage Stephen, frustrated, thinks of Talos, a Daedalid who is Icarus's defeated brother, his double. We know from Ovid that Talos crowed with joy when Daedalus buried Icarus after his fall. Stephen, having returned from Paris, feels defeated, a fallen Icarus, "seabedabbled, fallen, weltering." And he feels a degree of hostility toward his father.

Let me make two preliminary points: the first is that when Stephen thinks of the lapwing, he has just been thinking of himself as a pharmakos: “Autontimorumenos. Bous Stephanoumenos” [U, 9.939]. And: “Stephanos, my crown” [U, 9.47]. The sacrificial crowned ox, bous stephanoumenos, is a substitute for the human pharmakos in some rituals. The one who destroys himself, autontimorumenos, is the pharmakic king, since he is the depository of the social power that will eventually decide on the sacrifice. These connections constitute clear textual evidence of the fact that Stephen associates himself with pharmakic figures. We find these mentions only in Ulysses, to be sure, but in a passage that has powerful internal links with the “Library” scene in Portrait on which I have been commenting. The borderline position of the pharmakos vis-à-vis society is one of the strongest motifs underlying Stephen’s commitment to art: his self-definition from the quoted passage in Portrait has him forever leaving the house of prayer and prudence but also always building an unlasting home. This critical positioning of the decisive event of writing implies an impossibility of settling the question about displacement and parental murder. It is never for him only a question of taking over an inside, whatever the means and the reasons. It is never just an ethical question, precisely because the ethical—in its radical sense of ethos, the dwelling place, the familiar—is what the pharmakos first questions.

The second, minor, point is that in editions prior to Hans Gabler’s the lapwing passage reads “lapwing he” instead of “lapwing be.” “Lapwing he” certainly makes it clearer that Stephen is thinking about a third person, perhaps a brother, with whom he momentarily identifies. Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain, however, do not find this identification so momentary: “In Ulysses Stephen’s main resemblance is clearly to this third lapwinged member of the Daedalian trinity [Talos].”40 George L. Geckle calls Scholes and Kain’s explication “implausible,” although his reasons for denying the Talos-lapwing connection in the quoted passage seem arbitrary.41 (Geckle’s article goes on to examine the literary motif of the lapwing; he points out the etymological connection between lap and hléapan, and wing and winchan, which makes of the rather filthy

bird a bird capable of “leaping,” shall we say, “in the wink of an eye.” Faculties such as these open up the possibility of “intense instants of imagination”—Augenblicke in the Nietzschean sense.) I agree with Scholes and Kain.

But why the lapwing? What does it have to do with Talos? Mary M. Innes’s popular English translation of Metamorphoses does translate perdix as “lapwing,” even if in the index of contents she lists the bird as “partridge.” Innes obviously gave some thought to the issue. There is an interesting set of problems here, which I will mention briefly. Apparently Ovid’s manuscript of Metamorphoses 8.237 reads, “Garrula ramosa prospexit ab ilice perdix.” In his commentary on Book 8, A. S. Hollis calls this line “a famous crux,” given that “ab ilice ramosa” implies that the perdix would be perching on a branching holm oak. But partridges do not perch in trees. The reading also conflicts with the whole point of the story, which Ovid tells in verses 255–59, namely, that perdices have developed a fear of heights since what happened to Talos.

A third problem concerning the perdix is that, in the words of Wilmon Brewer: “Ovid described [the partridge] as jubilantly beating his wings and immediately afterwards as crowing. For a partridge, this would not be in character. Ovid may have been thinking of a pheasant.” For my purposes it is enough to indicate that clear textual problems, of which Joyce may well have been aware, have traditionally problematized the immediate translation of perdix as “partridge.” Innes renders “lapwing,” not pheasant, for reasons of consistency. Verse 237 is nowadays generally taken to read: “Garrula limosa prospexit ab ilice perdix.” “Ab ilice limosa” is translated as “from a muddy ditch.” Lapwings do dwell in muddy ditches by the sea. The next verse, “et plausit pennis testataque gaudia cantu est,” would also be consistent with a lapwing’s rather rowdy general behavior, but not with a partridge’s. My contention, in line with Scholes and Kain’s, is that Joyce also chose to translate perdix as “lapwing.” It would not in any case be out of character for him to hide the obvious and put Talos, the Perdix, under the wings of the lapwing. But, once we accept that there is some confusion between “lapwing” and “partridge” as translations of the Ovidian perdix,

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44. Wilmon Brewer, Ovid’s Metamorphoses in European Culture, vol. 2 (Boston: Cornell, 1933), 182.
there is an even stronger reason, in my opinion, to suggest that Stephen is thinking about Talas in the passage in question.45

Stephen does not directly name Talas in his thought. Barely twenty lines after his first mention of the lapwing, however, the lapwing returns, this time explicitly juxtaposed to a Daedalian, pharmakic brother: “A brother is as easily forgotten as an umbrella. Lapwing. Where is your brother? Apothecaries’ hall” (U, 9.974–77). In my interpretation Stephen is already abandoning his fleeting identification with Talas. Back in the persona of Icarus, Stephen now regards Talas as the easily forgotten brother, a distanced figure, left behind like an umbrella, or perhaps a caduceus, at the pharmacy among pharmaka. The presence in this segment of two references to a brother, coupled with two references to this pharmakic identity, point, I think, to the clear and distinct possibility that Talas is here that almost-already-forgotten presence, a withdrawing presence in the vanishing threshold of consciousness, a presence undergoing repression. The possibility that Talas is here the withdrawing presence, and that it is named as such, in withdrawal, seems to me to account better than any other for the text itself: “lapwing . . . a brother.” But we still have to see why the umbrella should indeed be a reference to the Daedalian pharmakoi.46

Daedalus threw not only his son Talas off the cliff but also, according to the Second Vatican Mythographer (a compilation of myths), another man named Sciron. As in the Talas episode, Daedalus, himself a pharmakos, takes the position of the sacrificer and not of the sacrificed. The inversion is not surprising. Given the paradoxical condition of the royal figure, the pharmakos is always, in a certain sense, his own killer. His symbolic inscription is cer-


tainly burdensome. But Sciron means *umbrella* in Greek. Graves mentions a terra-cotta in which Sciron is represented falling through the air, toward the sea, grabbing an umbrella. The umbrella represents a bird’s wings, but it is also a symbol of the house of Erechtheus, of which the Daedalids are of course members. The priest of this house, who is also chief of the Athenian cult of the snake, must carry an umbrella in the yearly procession of the Scirophoria festivals. Scirophorion was the last month of the Greek year, the month of return. Return is the goal of the *pharmakos*’s journey, after his cyclic sacrifice. It is symbolized by the ship that, in some representations, awaits the fall of the *pharmakos* to rescue him. The “Proteus” episode in *Ulysses*, in which Stephen muses over the possibility of falling “over a cliff” (U, 3.14), concludes: “Moving through the air high spars of a threemaster, her sails brailed up on the crosstrees, homing, upstream, silently moving, a silent ship” (U, 3.503–5).47 We shall see reasons for hearing in this passage resonances of the “Library” scene in *Portrait*. The ship that picks up the fallen *pharmakos* is a representation of woman, according to old iconologies. It is associated with Pallas in the Talos myth. Without mentioning either Pallas or Talos, Derrida has also associated it with woman and the Nietzschean umbrella, following hints first developed by Luce Irigaray and Sarah Kofman.48

**Fear and Truth**

Now I am ready to comment on Stephen’s third fear, the fear of Thoth, and thus to go from *pharmakos* to *pharmakon*, from the writer to writing itself. An examination of Stephen’s third fear opens the way to understanding in what sense it is possible to claim that the text’s identificatory symptom is undecidable and that it is this very undecidability that constitutes the experience of truth in which the text gives itself as writing.

The fear of Thoth is again confirmed in “Scylla and Charybdis”: “Coffined thoughts around me, in mummycases, embalmed in spice

47. For the mythological references, see Graves, *Myths*, 1:96.
of words. Thoth, god of libraries, a bird, mooncrowned. And I heard the voice of that Egyptian highpriest. In painted chambers loaded with tilebooks. They are still. Once quick in the brains of men. Still: but an itch of death is in them" [U, 9.352–57]. Writing and death: Thoth, god of writing, is also the god of death. And as a giver of death, he can also stop it, displace its power. He is the god of medicine, in charge of pharmacopoeia. Pharmakon is "drug," beneficent or malignant, medicament or poison. In the well-known myth of Thoth and Thamus, narrated in the Phaedrus, Thoth presents Thamus with writing as the pharmakon of knowledge. Thamus, who is a surrogate of the sun god Amen-Ra, if not the god himself, rejects the gift on the basis of its duplicity. Far from helping knowledge, writing supplants it, favoring only rememoration.49

Supposing that authentic memory is memory of truth, the rememoration that writing holds cannot but simulate that truth. Derrida writes:

The subtle difference between knowledge as memory and nonknowledge as remembrance, between two forms and two moments of repetition: a repetition of truth (aletheia) which presents and exposes the eidos; and a repetition of death and oblivion (lethe) which veils and skews it because it does not present the eidos but re-presents a presentation, repeats a repetition.50

Writing is a repetition stopping death and another repetition reproducing and extending it, a medicament and a poison. Still, in “Scylla and Charybdis” Stephen meditates about poison, this time with an overt reference to writing and parricide: “They list, and in the porches of their ears I pour,” Stephen thinks. “The soul has been before stricken mortally, a poison poured in the porch of a sleeping ear” [U, 9.465–67]. Thus dies King Hamlet, opening the way for the portent.

If the pharmakos finds himself at the border between the inside and the outside, displacing it, mediating between home and the uncanny and thus threatening the very economy of their relationship, the pharmakon links, and thus subverts, both presence and forgetfulness. It is a violent operation. Writing is apparently committed to a necessary parricide, for it kills its origin as soon as it

shows up, negating its original dependence on the inscriber, the father of writing, or rather claiming to have supplanted the origin, to have suppressed in itself the need for an origin. Writing supplants the spoken word, but not merely by opposing it; on the contrary, making itself pass as its perfect mimesis, it is no longer an imitation of the model but a supplanted model. Derrida summarizes Thoth's attributes: "As a substitute capable of doubling for the king, the father, the sun, and the word, distinguished from these only by dint of representing, repeating, and masquerading, Thoth was naturally also capable of totally supplating them and appropriating all their attributes." Thus Thoth, parricide god and supplanter of the sun, is also a god of resurrection who "is less interested in life or death than in death as a repetition of life and life as a rehearsal of death, in the awakening of life and in the recommencement of death." By absolutely impersonating his model, Thoth does not kill his model. It occupies its absence and thus suspends his parricide. Thoth, god of the passage between speech and writing, between life and death, god of the return of life in death and of death in life, is an uncanny god, worthy of fear.

Stephen fears his passage into writing because he fears the death operation in it. He thinks: "Through the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unliving son looks forth" \(U, 9.380-81\). The moment of the passage into writing is the moment in which the father—and Derrida reminds us that patēr is in Greek also "founder," "capital," and "good"—must be displaced by the new action of founding, the new investment of capital, the new concealing of the good which all guests presuppose. But in this displacement there is no murder, only the confirmation of a previous absence that is now filled. The father must be reaffirmed, is indeed reaffirmed at the very moment of his supplantation, of his substitution. Stephen's fear of death is the fear of this portent, the symbolic alliance of death and life, recurrent. But his answer to such fears, like Nietzsche's, is acceptance and affirmation. In it something else is also given: the passage into writing, the move toward the constitution of artistic expression as nonsecondary truth. I will attempt to show this more clearly.

If Amen is pure self-presence, light and truth for himself, to sup-

51. Ibid., 90; the key word is "totally."
52. Ibid., 93.
53. Ibid., 81.
plant Amen—to be moon, son, scribe in the solar ship—is not to gamble for absence, shadow, and lies. This would be not a supplantation but a mere inversion. We could gamble for shadow, but only insofar as shadow guards us from the very alternative presence/absence. To supplant Amen is to think the simulacrum, not as an insufficiency representing the model but as a device that ultimately lets us think the model as a ghost of itself, if the unliving son is to become a life image.

Stephen turns toward the shadow because he needs it in order to write, as the "Proteus" episode makes clear. Returned from Paris, Stephen must follow a mythic itinerary that will lead him, as it leads the gypsy, toward the land of the dead: "Across the sands of all the world, followed by the sun's flaming sword, to the west, trekking to evening lands" (U, 3.391-92). "Turning his back to the sun he bent over far to a table of rock and scribbled words... His shadow lay over the rocks as he bent, ending. Why not endless till the farthest star? Darkly they are there behind this light, darkness shining in the brightness, delta of Cassiopeia, worlds” (U, 3.406-10). The worlds in the delta: darkness shines. Toward them Stephen will trek in the garb of a pharmakos “with his augur's rod of ash,” that is, his pharmakic token, the ashplant stick (U, 3.411).

Before being the name for the alluvial deposit at the mouth of a river, and therefore before ever becoming a metaphor for female genitals, delta was the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet, the letter that initiates Stephen's paternal name. This is of course referred to in the already mentioned passage in "Scylla and Charybdis" about the name:

What's in a name? That's what we ask ourselves in childhood when we write the name that we are told is ours. A star, a daystar, a fire-drake, rose at his birth. It shone by day in the heavens alone, brighter than Venus in the light, and by night it shone over delta in Cassiopeia, the recumbent constellation which is the signature of his initial among the stars. (U, 9.927-31)

54. "Shadow" is umbra in Latin; hence "umbrella" as parasol. We can associate this trip with the trip between Scylla and Charybdis. Stuart Gilbert, in James Joyce's Ulysses [New York: Vintage, 1955], says, insufficiently, of Chapter 9: "The motifs of the sheer, steadfast rock of Scylla and the restless whirlpool of Charybdis, a sea of troubles, are utilized in a symbolic sense in this episode. The stability of Dogma, of Aristotle and of Shakespeare's Stratford is contrasted with the whirlpool of Mysticism, Platonism, the London of Elizabethan times" (224). But Gilbert also talks about "paired perils... the constraints of a dilemma" (225).
Whether Stephen’s trekking to evening lands is an attempt to deal with his mother’s death, for which he feels guilty, is open to question. It has been pointed out repeatedly that in *Ulysses* Stephen, in Jean-Michel Rabaté’s words, “feels locked in a postmortem embrace with a mother who haunts him.”55 In this passage we see that Stephen does seek his paternal name, Dedalus. But how does the delta relate to his mother?

In his *1772 Conjectural Observations on the Origin and Progress of Alphabetic Writing*, Charles Davy noted that “writing, in the earliest ages of the world, was a delineation of the outlines of those things men wanted to remember, rudely graven either upon shells or stones, or marked upon the leaves or bark of trees.”56 *Delta* is an old letter, supposedly borrowed from Cadmus from the original Hebrew or Samaritan alphabet, and thus identical to the Hebrew *daleth*, or *deleth*, meaning “door.” In a curious work, *Sign and Design: The Psychogenetic Source of the Alphabet*, Alfred Kallir studies the letter *D* and its shape in many graphic systems to conclude its association with habitation, woman, vulva, moon, offspring. According to Kallir, for instance, Saint Ambrose gives “*nativitas*” for the meaning of the Hebrew letter *daleth*. But more important are the triangular outlines that define abode and femininity in many different traditions.57 Closer to home, a delta is the siglum Joyce employed for Anna Livia Plurabelle in the *Finnegans Wake* note-books and in *Finnegans Wake* itself [*FW, 119.19–22*]. [Hayman notes the use of delta to refer to Nora Joyce in Notebook VI.B.5.]58

Both searches, for a paternal name initialed with the delta of Dedalus and for a maternal reconciliation in the trip to the evening lands, following the example of Odysseus, become one and the same, and therefore neither. One is the *pharmakon* of its other. Stephen, even in his fear of mourning, in his persistent attempt at encryption of his mother in the search for artistic self-production, is forced to recognize the mutual interdependence of parental identifications. What we have here is a rejection of the image of the artist as an accomplished Oedipus. The impossibility of deciphering

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the delta away from Dedalus is only the counterpart to the impossibility of erasing the loss in Perdix’s name. Following Stephen’s primary identifications, we will not have a consummated introjection of father and an aberrant incorporation of mother. Conversely, the introjection of the mother in the work of mourning cannot function without an equally explicit dislodging of the father. The passage into writing negotiates this difficult economy of parental mourning not by consummating mourning but by transferring it away from the unconscious into the real of expression. Joyce does not solve his problems, but Stephen does.

Stephen says: “As we, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies . . . from day to day, their molecules shuttled to and fro, so does the artist weave and unweave his image” (U, 9.376–78). There is a hesitation in the sentence which makes it almost unintelligible: Is it we, or mother Dana? Who is the artist? Where does he get his strength? Who might mother Dana be? She is a maternal divinity. It would be comforting to decide that mother Dana is the region for the parricidal battle, the site upon which all filial displacements as well as all births take place—a place, a ground at least. Talos would be happily redeemed by a maternal act of salvation. Daedalus would not have to be feared—or not much. The symbolic would be the entrance into the maternal name. Stephen’s three fears would be radically appeased once the passage into writing was consummated. Can that be Stephen’s theory, his inaugural view from the temple? It is particularly important in this context to note that Stephen’s mention of the “intense instant of imagination” in which the writer becomes one with himself, in the ecstatic moment in which past, present, and future come together, a moment of ultimate self-conception, self-parentality, comes right after this mention of mother Dana, the female divinity which is an obvious counterpart to Freud’s “Imaginary Father of Individual Prehistory”:

So does the artist weave and unweave his image. And as the mole on my right breast is where it was when I was born, though all my body has been woven of new stuff time after time, so through the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unliving son looks forth. In the intense instant of imagination, when the mind, Shelley says, is a fading coal, that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be. (U, 9.377–84)

Going back to Portrait, Stephen’s temple vision is a contempla-
tion. It gives him fear. Martin Heidegger explains how contemplari is the vision from the templum, and how the templum is precisely the place that is visible from all points, and thus also the place from which everything is visible: a site, then, of encounter between seeing and being seen, and therefore a place of passage, of crisis between both perspectives. This privilege makes of the temple the region for all inauguration and all auguries: “The Latin templum means originally a sector carved out in the heavens and on the earth, the cardinal point, the region of the heavens marked out by the path of the sun. It is within this region that diviners make their observations in order to determine the future from the flight, cries, and eating habits of birds.”

Contemplatio is the Latin translation of theoria. Contemplatio is, of course, the fearful vision that Daedalus forced on his son before killing him. Talos’s vision before his fall is a theoretical vision, at the edge of the abyss. Thorein, Heidegger explains, is thean horan, that is, “to look attentively on the outward appearance wherein what presences becomes visible and, through such sight—seeing—, to linger with it.”

Thea means “a spect, and it is related to theater. It is not just anecdotal that the Athenian theater of Dionysos, where tragedy cyclically represented the theory of the world, lies directly beneath the Parthenon in the Acropolis. But Heidegger has called attention to the fact that in theoria there is also theá, the goddess, and “it is as a goddess that Aletheia, the unconcealment from out of which and in which that which presences, presences, appears to the early thinker Parmenides.”

Daedalus, father and teacher, throws his son from the temple after he has his theoretical vision. Pallas is the goddess of the theoretical vision. As we know from Ovid, Pallas, “who looks favourably upon clever men, caught the lad as he fell and changed him into a bird.” The “Library” scene in Portrait reflects Talos’s fearful contemplation. The passages there that express Stephen’s inaugural decision, once made, read:

A soft liquid joy like the noise of many waters flowed over his memory and he felt in his heart the soft peace of silent spaces of

60. Ibid., 163.
61. Ibid., 164.
fading tenuous sky above the waters, of oceanic silence, of swallows flying through the seadusk over the flowing water.

A soft liquid joy flowed through the words where the soft long vowels hurtled noiselessly and fell away, lapping and flowing back and ever shaking the white bells of their waves in mute chime and mute peal and soft low swooning cry; and he felt that the augury he had sought in the wheeling darting birds and in the pale space of sky above him had come forth from his heart like a bird from a turret quietly and swiftly. [P, 225–26]

I would suggest that these passages be interpreted in the light of the Talos-Daedalus myth. Stephen is falling into the sea, repeating the fall of the Erechtheionid pharmakos. Stephen has become a bird; he is flying in a trance; the augury is manifested to him. Should we not associate that “lapping and flowing” with the lapwing? Of course, this passage was written years before “Scylla and Charybdis” was even conceived. And yet, that Book 8 of Metamorphoses, where the story of Talos is narrated, was clearly important for Joyce when he was composing Portrait is clearly established by the fact that the epigraph of the book (“et ignotat animum dimittit in artes”) comes from it. The source of the illustration accompanying this essay is undoubtedly a Renaissance representation, in which the background to the metamorphosis of Talos into a partridge is not the Parthenon but, precisely, a turret. The importance of the sea, and of images of liquidity and softness which hint at the maternal bosom, is also obvious in a different connection.

Jean Kimball thinks that “when Stephen . . . watches the birds outside the library, it is to escape the raw emotion of his struggle with his mother, her ‘sobs and reproaches,’ in the cool contemplation of the flight of birds, which, he reminds himself, Swedenborg links to ‘things of the intellect.’”62 I differ: in his contemplation, in his passage into the abyss, Stephen is, like Talos the artificer, phantasmatically recovering a maternal name. His identificatory symptom concerning the feminine goes well beyond what will later be implied in Ulysses: guilt before his mother’s death.

In Stephen’s pharmakic projection into the flight of birds “ever coming and going” a return begins, patterned in the flight of the swallows. The inside/outside, the remedy/poison, the paternal/maternal, the imitation/truth, the symbolic/imaginary are all sus-

pended precisely through the intrapsychic identifications that constitute Stephen in his inaugural moment as a writer. Stephen's signature is not only given in his negation of paternity, not only given in his displacement from his mother. Rather, as we have seen, both paternity and maternity return, as inheritance to be sure, but also as legacy for the reader. In this return there is nothing cyclical. It means, it figures, the textual projection of itself as a truth that has nothing to do with secondariness, with representation. The text thus announces its abandonment of the symbolic and its entrance into the real. "Wo ich war . . ."

Rabaté has developed the Lacanian theme of the Name-of-the-Father in connection with *Ulysses*. He explains very concisely what is at stake:

For Lacan, the acquisition of language is contemporary with the Oedipal stages. When first I speak, I accept a symbolic castration in that I have to renounce my intense desire for fusion with the mother: as I learn the rules of language, I accept the externality of a symbolic code which existed prior to my unique connection with the other and even predetermined it. . . . This paternal complicity explains the guilt lying within language's very foundation, the guilt of having to displace the mother and to kill the father as presence.63

It has been a habit of Joycean criticism to interpret Stephen's passage into writing in the light of this oedipal ideology, even when Lacan was not invoked. I hope to have shown, through the pharmaconomical connections, that Stephen's passage into writing, and therefore the textual conception of itself as an artistic object, is a mode of resistance to the situation explained in Rabaté's summary: a working-through, or even a reaction against, such paternal complicity whose effect is, precisely, the suspension of maternal displacement and of paternal murder. But if the symbolic is first made possible by both events, then the work of art consummates the symbolic. The logic of the symbol is broken precisely because the broken parts of the symbol no longer fit. In the impossibility of deciding the sign of primary identification, in the impossibility of understanding the relative hierarchy of the mother-father inheritance, the symbol shatters, and a particular kind of opacity shines forth. The text offers itself no longer as an effect of meaning but as

the site where meaning regresses; abandoning the symbolic, the
text reverts into the real. To that extent, the work does not imitate
the unconscious. To that extent, the return of the repressed, within
the work of art, is not a symptom but a catharsis; and all cathartic
drugs are, inevitably, poisonous remedies.

I began by quoting Kristeva’s definition of the return of the re­
pressed within the literary text as “the unveiling of intrapsychic
identifications.” We can subscribe to such a definition if we under­
stand “unveiling” in the sense in which Heidegger interprets Greek
truth, aletheia, to be an “unveiling.” The literary text unveils an
intrapsychic primordial phenomenon only to show its own truth
not as the bringing-into-light of a series of previously repressed
identifications but as the unveiling itself. In other words, its radical
importance is on the side of expression, not of manifestation. Be­
because it expresses, and not because it manifests, the literary text is
the site where the identificatory symptom meets its undoing: in
the very materiality of its presence, which outlasts manifestation
and has therefore the quality of survival. Stephen’s double inheri­
tance becomes a legacy, which is (to be) read.

To give up what in art is manifestation of intrapsychic content in
favor of art’s “truthful structure,” to use the Lacanian phrase, is to
place art on the side of whatever in ethics is fundamentally beyond
ethics: not a remedy, not a poison, not familiar, not uncanny, not
maternal, not paternal, and so on, but the very possibility of their
ruinous coincidence. This is ultimately what Stephen’s theory of
writing has to offer. If Stephen writes between, the radicality of his
position as a writer depends on the impossibility of holding fast to
subject positions created at the imaginary or the symbolic level.
Which is to say that writing, as an experience of the real, offers no
ethical or political comfort except to those who come to writing
hoping to be comforted, and who thereby negate the experience of
writing.