The Embryonic Artist and the Nightmare of History: In Search of a Father-Guide in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

A. Nicole Hartley

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Introduction

While James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* begins with birth as Stephen the infant filters the world around him through his senses, *Ulysses* begins with death as Stephen the embryonic artist struggles to accept and overcome the artistic infertility created by his mother's death. Still desiring to become "Bous Stephanomenous," Stephen's artistic ideal of himself as immortal artist, the Stephen of *Ulysses* resists his own mortality as embodied in the ghost of his mother; for Stephen, maternity appears as both the death and silencing of the embryonic artist trapped within the womb.

Ulysses opens with Stephen in the Martello Tower witnessing Mulligan's mockery of the Catholic Mass and enduring taunts about his artistic infertility; sundering Stephen from the artistic ideal of his namesake Daedalus, the "old artificer" he invokes in *Portrait*, Mulligan proclaims, "The mockery of it! . . . Your absurd name, an ancient Greek!."[1] Stephen's inability to produce more than a "capful of light odes" (339), however, originates in his inability to accept and overcome the death of his mother that continues to haunt him. As the "source of all life, from the origins of humankind in the evolution of species to the amniotic salt water of individual life," the sea often represents the maternal power of creation.[2] While Mulligan recognizes the sea as "our great sweet mother" and associates the "snotgreen sea" with artistic creation as the "new art color for our Irish poets," Stephen only associates the sea's maternal force with the grotesque death of his own mother. The sea "hailed as a great sweet mother by the wellfed voice beside him" appears to Stephen as "a dull green mass of liquid" that recalls the "green sluggish

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[1]James Joyce, *Ulysses,* ed. Hans Gabler (New York: Random House, 1986) 3. All further references to this text will be noted in parentheses in the body of the paper.

[2]Jeanne Perreault, "Male Maternity in *Ulysses*," *English Studies in Canada* 8.3 (1987): 305.

bile" his mother "had torn up from her rotting liver" (5). Although Mulligan suggests that Stephen "look to the sea. What does it care about offences?," Stephen views the sea and his mother as vengeful entities entrapping him within the womb; as "memories beset his brooding brain," Stephen admonishes the ghost of his mother, a "Ghoul! Chewer of corpses!" and begs her to "Let me be and let me live" (9).

Although Stephen's visions of his mother reveal his guilt over her death, he also understands that praying at her deathbed would have required a submission to Catholicism, the law of the father that he must reject in order to fulfill his own artistic purpose. Maintaining that "someone killed her" (5), Stephen partially blames his father for his mother's death:

> Hurrying to her squalid deathlair from gay Paris on the quayside I touched his hand. The voice, new warmth, speaking. Dr. Bob Kenny attending her. The eyes that wish me well. But do not know me. (170)

Called back to Dublin, the paralytic city that isolates Stephen and prevents his artistic birth, in order to attend his mother at her death, Stephen is greeted by his father who first appears to offer a reconciliation with Stephen's family and birthplace. Following his recollection of Simon's greeting, however, Stephen recalls Dr. Kenny, a surgeon at the Dublin charity hospital.[3] Blaming his father for the family's poverty that contributed to his mother's death, Stephen portrays Simon as a well-meaning father incapable of recognizing him as embryonic artist. Considered by Stephen to be a cause of the death of May Dedalus that renders him artistically infertile, Simon Dedalus contributes to the nightmare of history that Stephen seeks to escape. Stephen, however, realizes that a "father is a necessary evil" and strives throughout *Ulysses* to

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[3] Don Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated* (California: University of California Press, 1988) 240.

either find a father-guide to artistic creation or father himself as God through Christ and Shakespeare through *Hamlet*.

"Oxen of the Sun" reveals Stephen's need to find a father-guide in order to accept the past and overcome his artistic infertility. As Joyce's rendering of English prose history, the episode suggests the importance of recapitulating the past and then transforming it into artistic creation. Unable to confront the past, for Stephen history becomes a burden that sterilizes his artistic creation by recalling the grotesque death of his mother and his own desire to achieve artistic immortality. Rather than recalling and valuing the past as Joyce does through the style of the episode, Stephen flees the past as the embodiment of maternity and mortality, of the *amor matris* represented by the Virgin Mary and the ghost of May Dedalus. Depicting May Dedalus as a loving mother rather than a vengeful ghost intent on entrapping Stephen within the womb, Leopold Bloom emerges as the potential father-guide to the past that Stephen requires to overcome his artistic infertility. Although Stephen's utterance of the word "Burke's!" suggests an artistic potentiality, his fate remains unclear. Joyce, however, brings forth his literary offspring as Bloom and Stephen become a stage in Joyce's recapitulation of the past; transforming the literary styles of his forebears, Joyce creates a new language based on action and common experience.

Unlike Joyce the progenitor artist who confronts and transforms history, Stephen prevents his artistic birth by retreating into his aesthetic vision of immortality, isolating himself from the common experience that his artistic birth requires. Prior to meeting Bloom in the maternity hospital of "Oxen," Stephen seeks a father-guide within the National Library in "Scylla and Charybdis." As the embodiment of Stephen's isolation and need for a father-guide,

Stephen's Shakepeare theory reveals his desire to enter the Dublin literati by figuring John Eglinton as his father-guide. Depicted as both a castrating seductress and a saving grace to Shakespeare's art, Ann Hathaway becomes the origin of Shakespeare's sundering from his birthplace that he attempts to overcome by writing *Hamlet*. Like Shakespeare, Stephen has been sundered from his birthplace by the death of his mother; as *Hamlet* reconciled Shakespeare with his family, Stephen hopes his Shakespeare theory will earn him a place within the Dublin literary world. Stephen looks to Eglinton as his potential father-guide, yet his ahistorical aesthetic approach and belief in the immortal otherness of the artist reinforce the ideals from which Stephen must escape. Although Stephen also looks to Shakespeare as a potential father-guide that could erase the role of maternity in creation, the ghost of King Hamlet as representative of Shakespeare demands submission to the law of the father that Stephen cannot accept. Seeking instead to father himself, Stephen attempts to eliminate the role of maternity and the law of the father in creation; fathering himself, however, would still leave Stephen isolated and artistically infertile by preventing interactions with others who could guide him through the past. Rather than reinforcing Stephen's pursuit of immortality like Eglinton and demanding submission to the law of the father like Shakespeare, Bloom appears as a "patient silhouette" and a sea-faring guide to reconciliation with the past and home.

Bloom appears briefly at the conclusion of "Scylla and Charybdis;" in "Circe," however, Bloom and Stephen merge in the phantasmagorical realm of Nighttown. Uniting with Stephen and Shakespeare's beardless image in the mirror of the brothel, Bloom appears to fulfill the role of father-guide that Eglinton and Shakespeare cannot. Although Bloom seeks to become both a father-guide and maternal force, Stephen fails to recognize him as a facilitator of his

reconciliation with the past. Confusing Bloom with Simon Dedalus, Stephen instead clings to his desire to father himself in order to escape submission to the law of the father and the mortality embodied by the ghost of May Dedalus. Confronted by the ghost of his mother, Stephen fails to recognize her offer of *amor matris* that could end his isolation; instead, he becomes consumed by her call of "love's bitter mystery," the reality that conflicts with his aesthetic vision of the immortal artist. Demanding Stephen's repentance, May Dedalus grasps her son with the hand of the *dio boia*, the hangman God that damns him for his call of "*Non Serviam!*." Fulfilling his Luciferian proclamation, Stephen shatters the chandelier of the brothel in an attempt to bring about an apocalypse that would destroy the history from which he seeks to escape. Instead, Stephen's action becomes one of futility and he flees the ghost of his mother by retreating into the intellectual imagination, abandoning his resolution to "Act. Be acted on" in "Scylla and Charybdis." Rather than fleeing the past through intellect, Bloom integrates it into his fantasies in Nighttown, accepting and valuing the moly of mnemotechnic offered by his parents. Bloom's vision of his son Rudy reveals his ability to evoke and value the past; although Rudy does not answer Bloom's call, he offers Bloom a reconciliation with his deceased father. Unlike Bloom, Stephen does not accept the gift of mnemotechnic, failing to recognize Bloom as a potential father-guide. Instead, he assumes a fetal position in preparation to destroy the womb in an unnatural artistic birth. Transforming "love's bitter mystery" into Stephen's union with another, Bloom prevents Stephen from completely denying the reality of common experience and destroying his maternal origin.

As a guide through the past to the maternal force of Molly, Bloom may offer Stephen the reconciliation with the nightmare of history that he so desperately needs in order to become a

progenitor artist. Joyce, however, leaves it unclear if Stephen awakes from the nightmare of history to fulfill his artistic potentiality or if he remains trapped within the past by his aesthetic vision of immortality and denial of maternity.

Recapitulation and Creation in "Oxen of the Sun"

As Joyce's rendering of English prose history, "Oxen of the Sun" suggests the role of recapitulation within the embryonic phase of artistic creation but also insists upon the need to escape the burden of the past by evoking and then transforming it. While depicting Stephen's struggle to become a progenitor artist, Joyce reveals the true origin of Stephen's entrapment within the embryonic stage; Stephen's denial of the past sterilizes his artistic creation by causing a desire to reject his maternal origin in order to achieve an artistic immortality that leads to a fear of both the Virgin Mary and the ghost of his mother. Bloom, as a potential father-guide for Stephen, aids the young artist in his struggle to accept the past by depicting May Dedalus as a loving mother rather than a vengeful ghost intent on trapping the embryonic artist within the womb. Although "Oxen" suggests Bloom as a potential father-guide for Stephen, Stephen's fate as an artist remains unclear; however, his utterance of the word "Burke's" instigates a rush of language as the medical students leave the maternity hospital and suggests an artistic potentiality that Stephen may or may not bring to fruition. Unlike Stephen, however, Joyce succeeds in bringing forth his literary offspring; Stephen and Bloom become a stage in Joyce's own artistic recapitulation of the past as he transforms the literary styles of his forebears into the language of action and common experience.

The first paragraph of "Oxen of the Sun" contains the entire episode in embryonic form: "Deshil Holles Eamus. Deshil Holles Eamus. Deshil Holles Eamus. Send us bright one, light one, Horhorn, quickening and wombfruit. Send us bright one, light one, Horhorn, quickening and wombfruit. Send us bright one, light one, Horhorn, quickening and wombfruit. Hoopsa boyaboy hoopsa! Hoopsa boyaboy hoopsa! Hoopsa boyaboy

hoopsa! (314)

Modeled after the Arval Brethren's 218 A.D. incantation that honored the Roman goddess of fertility[4], the first paragraph of "Oxen of the Sun" invokes the artistic process of recapitulation and rebirth. Invoking the "bright one, light one," the passage calls upon the sun God Helios, the god of fertility and poetry and the owner of the oxen slaughtered by Odysseus' men as depicted in Homer's *Odyssey.* Odysseus begins the telling of his journey on Helios' island; similarly, the evocation of Helios in "Oxen of the Sun" indicates the artistic conception and the birth of language that will follow. Joyce modeled *Ulysses* on Homer's work, recapitulating the art of history by evoking and then transforming the story of Odysseus (Bloom) and his son Telemachus (Stephen). Maternity, as a form of recapitulation, unites with artistic creation as Helios the "bright, one, light one" becomes Horhorn, a reference to both the horns of Helios' oxen and Dr. Andrew Horne, one of the masters of the National Maternity Hospital in which the episode takes place. Repeating the call for a "quickening and wombfruit," the passage suggests a "time of suspended animation, a time of stasis"[5] that must be quickened in order to escape paralysis and bring forth the "wombfruit" of artistic creation. By "Oxen of the Sun," the world of *Ulysses* is in a state of paralysis and infertility; in addition to Stephen's inability to "bring forth" more than a "capful of light odes," the land of Ireland "is experiencing a severe drought, Mrs. Purefoy a fruitless labor.[6] Unable to escape the burden of the past, Stephen and all of Ireland must struggle

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[4]Gifford 408.

[5] Lindsey Tucker, *Stephen and Bloom at Life's Feast* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984) 97.

[6]Tucker 97.

to remedy, as Joyce suggests, the "crime against fecundity by the act of coition."[7] By exclaiming "Eamus," Latin for "Let us go," the first paragraph embodies the desire to be freed from the burden of the past by a "quickening and wombfruit." Spanning from the action of turning toward the sun to pray for fertility, "Deshil," to a midwife's cry at the birth of a child, "Hoopsa, boyaboy, hoopsa!", the first paragraph, an embryo within the process of recapitulation, embodies the episode's style of evoking and transforming the past as a means of artistic creation.

In a now famous letter to Frank Budgen, Joyce claimed that "Oxen of the Sun" centered upon "the crime against fecundity by the act of coition."[8] Based upon Joyce's explanation, many critics suggest that Joyce associated the abundance of prose styles in his "history of English prose" with the "crime against fecundity." According to Leslie McDowell, critics often suggest that the use of contraception that "sterilizes the act of coition" functions "just as the profusion of styles similarly masks a lack of content in the chapter; it would appear to be all style and no substance."[9] (110). Patrick Parrinder describes the tone of the episode as a "balance between antiquarian glee and a reductive, even dismissive view of the past."[10]

By focusing too heavily on Joyce's description of the "crime against fecundity," many critics have overlooked the style's symbiotic relationship with its thematic content; the evolution of the "history of English prose" suggests the acceptance and transformation of the literary debt to the past rather than a form of artistic contraception. In fact, the abundance of prose styles is a

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[7]Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) 475.

[8]Ellmann 475.

[9] Leslie McDowell, "Just you try it on: Style and Materinity in 'Oxen of the Sun,.'" *Re:Joyce Text Culture Politics*, ed. J. Brannigan, G. Ward, and J. Wolfreys (New York: St. Martin's, 1998) 110.

[10]Patrick Parrinder, *James Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 175.

literary rendering of the evolutionary process of recapitulation that leads to artistic conception, not contraception. According to biologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, early embryonic development involved the process of "repeating, or 'recapitulating,' the adult stages of evolutionary forebears."[11] Evolutionary theories at the time suggested that ontogeny, the organism, recapitulates phylogeny, the evolutionary history of the species. C.H. Peake most clearly describes the link between recapitulation and artistic conception found in *Ulysses*:

> As the human embryo, developing in its environment, passes through phases corresponding to earlier evolutionary adaptations before being born into the world . . . so the embryonic literary artist, developing according to the constant traits of his nature, is in part shaped by the literature of the past . . . his task is to create a new adaptation of language to experience.[12]

Described as a "substructure of the womb through which we travel historically on a plane of language,"[13] "Oxen of the Sun" emphasizes a writer's literary debt to the past but also offers a means of escaping the burden of the past by transforming it. As Stephen suggests in his own thoughts on art, conception, and history, "Assuefaction minorates atrocities" (322); the repetition of atrocities allows one to become accustomed to them and diminish their crippling effect.[14] According to the theory of recapitulation, conception can only occur following an

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[11]M.A. Hofer, *The Roots of Human Behavior: An Introduction to the Psychobiology of Early Development* (New York: Freeman, 1981) 16.

[12]C.H. Peake, *James Joyce: The Citizen and the Artist* (California: Standford University Press, 1977) 254.

[13]Susan Bazargan, "Oxen of the Sun: Maternity, Language, and History,"*James Joyce Quarterly* 22.3 (1985): 272.

[14]Gifford 419.

evolutionary repetition; true artistic and physical creation is "history repeating itself with a difference" (535).

Joyce's evocation and transformation of his literary forebears has been described as "inspired cribbing,"[15] suggesting a form of repetition of the past that leads to conception; the term "crib" connotes both an act of plagiarism and an infant's bed. As a form of evoking the past, plagiarism or "cribbing" suggests a stage in the recapitulation of artistic creation prior to the rebirth of the work through the present artist; as the embryonic artist still fearful of and entrapped by the past, Stephen has "Cribbed out of Meredith" (347) in a telegram to Mulligan. Plagiary also originally connoted the act of kidnapping; Mark Osteen suggests that prior to transforming their prose styles, Joyce "kidnaps the literary offspring of his forebears and places them in his own textual crib."[16] The act of "cribbing," however, suggests an artist's embryonic stage; unlike Stephen, Joyce the progenitor artist accepts and then transforms the literature of the past.

Joyce described "Oxen of the Sun" as "linked back at each part subtly with some foregoing episode of the day;"[17] Susan Bazargan suggests that the whole episode "congregates hosts from the past, all present, all altered."[18] As the site of convergence for Bloom and Stephen, the episode recapitulates not only Joyce's literary phylogeny but Stephen's role as embryonic artist. As Joyce suggests, "Bloom is the spermatazoon, the hospital the womb, the

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[15]Mark Osteen, "Cribs in the Countinghouse: Plagiarism, Proliferation, and Labor in 'Oxen of the Sun,'" *Joyce in the Hibernian Metropolis*, ed. M. Beja and D. Norris (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996) 237.

[16]Osteen 238.

[17]Ellmann 475.

[18]Bazargan 272.

nurse the ovum, Stephen, the embryo;"[19] "Oxen" evokes the history of *Ulysses* in an attempt to give birth to Stephen the artist. For Stephen the artist to be born, however, Stephen the embryo must first reconcile his desire to produce the immortal word with the burden of the past that traps him in the embryonic stages of artistic evolution; he must confront the "repetitive nightmare of history which has frustrated his attempts to reach artistic originality."[20]

Stephen's art originates in a desire to produce an immortal word, to achieve the Godlike power of "creation from nothing" (32) and displace his own mortality with a divine phylogeny: "Wombed in sin darkness I was too, made not begotten" (33). As the agent through whom God's immortal word became mortal, the Virgin Mary and the physical maternity she embodies oppose Stephen's artistic desire:

> Mark me now. In woman's womb word is made flesh but in the spirit of the maker all flesh becomes the word that shall not pass away. This is the postcreation . . . she is the second Eve and she won us, saith Augustine too, whereas that other, our grandam, which we are linked up with by a successive anastomosis of navelcords sold us all, seed, breed and generation, for a penny pippin. But here is the matter now. Or she knew him, that second I say, and was but creature of her creature, . . . or she knew him not and then stands she in the one denial or ignorancy with Peter Piscator. (320)

In his refusal to "die like the rest and pass away" (324), Stephen seeks to create an artistic "postcreation" that unlike the mortal "word made flesh" by the Virgin Mary will "not pass away." Stephen rejects Mary's maternity because once the word has been born it becomes

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[19]Ellmann 475.

[20]Bazargan 277.

separate from God: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."[21] Stephen strives instead to father his art as God creates the word, the "glory" of "the only begotten Father:""Given birth to, the word will pass away, will become absent. Fathered, however, the word will not pass away, will be eternally present."[22] In order to reject Mary's maternity, however, Stephen must diminish the infusion of the Virgin with Christ through the word of God. Although he acknowledges Mary as the "second Eve" that draws out the original mother's "poisonous thorn most effectively to blot out the decree of sin,"[23] he links the two women by the "anastomosis of navelcords" that unites Eve, the grandmother, and Mary, the mother, with the evolution of all men. Desiring to be outside of the maternal and mortal phylogeny of Eve and Mary, Stephen rejects Mary's agency in the birth of Christ. He suggests that she either "knew" a man and was not impregnated with the Holy Spirit or that she was simply the "unwitting vessel of flesh" who, like Peter who said he did not know Christ, did not recognize that the word was made flesh within her womb.[24]

Attempting to overcome his own mortality by comparing himself with Christ and asserting a divine power over the word, Stephen participates in a mock-Pentecost: "Now drunk we, quod he, of this mazer and quaff ye this mead which is not indeed parcel of my body but my soul's bodiment" (320). Paraphrasing Christ's command at the Last Supper for His disciples to

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[21] John 1: 1-14.

[22] McDowell 112.

[23] Gifford 415.

[24] Gifford 416.

eat the bread as "this is my body" and to drink the wine as "This is my blood,"[25] Stephen associates himself with the "word made flesh" prior to Christ's divine resurrection. By comparing himself to Christ, Stephen invokes the Pentecostal feast that celebrates "the birth of the church" and a "deliverance out of the bondage of the past."[26] Prior to the Pentecost, the Shabout of the Old Testament celebrated the "birth of the covenant between God and the Israelites;" similar to Stephen's struggle for a freedom from the past, the feast of the Shabout offers the firstfruits to God because of the belief that "the new was dangerous until brought into contact with the old."[27] According to Lindsey Tucker, "the old becomes the generator of the new; out of the old language the new is born; out of the Shabout came the Pentecost." Although Stephen desires to escape the burden of the past in order to bring forth the immortal word, he participates in merely a mock-Pentecost that concludes with his boasting about the money he collected after selling a poem; the Promised Land of "milk and honey" becomes "the land of milk and money" (393).

In addition to Stephen's desire to create the immortal word, his rejection of the Virgin Mary's maternity also originates in his inability to escape another type of history, the ghost of his mother. Lindsey Tucker rightly suggests, "Stephen's discussion of postcreation, where he separates female creation, the word made flesh, from the masculine, hence spiritual and immortal creation . . . indicates that Stephen is trying like the fetus struggling to be born, to

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[25]Matthew 26: 26-28.

[26]Tucker 108.

[27]Tucker 109.

establish independence from his mother."[28] Stephen's desire to reject his mortality as "made not begotten" (32) hinges on a rejection of his own mother as the force that binds him to the mortal female phylogeny. Similar to his belief that Mary's "word made flesh" must pass away, Stephen associates maternity with both physical and artistic death. When he sees midwives, Stephen immediately describes death as silence of the word, associating it with midwifery and the umbilical cord that links a fetus to its maternal history; he believes the sack the midwives carry contains "a misbirth with a traveling navelcord, hushed in ruddy wool" (33). While in the maternity hospital during Mina Purefoy's labor, Stephen describes the nurses as both violently sundering a fetus from the womb and watching over it in death: "The aged sisters draw us into life: we wail, batten, sport, clip, clasp, sunder, dwindle, die: over us dead they bend" (322).

As the embodiment of maternity for Stephen, the ghost of May Dedalus encompasses Stephen's fear of the mortality associated with the female womb:

> Silently, in a dream she had come to him after her death, her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, that had bent upon him, mute reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes. . . A bowl of white china had stood beside her deathbed holding the green sluggish bile which she had torn from her rotting liver by fits of loud groaning vomiting. (5)

The ghost of his mother appears to Stephen as life in death. Although appearing as a dream, May emits the odor of the "ashes" of the funeral mass that travel throughout the novel. Like the midwives carrying a "hushed" (33) misbirth and the maternity nurses who "over us dead they bend" (322), Stephen's mother appears "silently" and "mute" while her breath causes the silence

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[28]Tucker 101.

of death to be "bent upon him." Unlike Stephen's words that struggle to be associated with "light, inspiration, immortality,"[29] the words of May Dedalus are mute or shrouded in "love's bitter mystery" (8), the reality from which Stephen seeks to retreat through his art. Originating in Yeats' "Who Goes With Fergus?", the line "love's bitter mystery" embodies the reality of life's disorder; the fairies tempt mortals into death by offering escape from this reality. In Yeats' poem, the aesthetic vision triumphs over the "bitter mystery" of life, a goal toward which Stephen struggles as his mother reminds him of its impossibility Although he begs his mother to give birth to language, to tell him "What is the word known to all men?" (41), she dies "groaning;" unlike the nurses who "draw us [infants] into life" (322), May now brings forth only "green sluggish bile."

Consumed by his desire to beget the immortal word and his association of maternity with death, Stephen remains trapped by the burden of the past; Leslie McDowell rightly suggests that "Stephen's feeling of repugnance, expressed through his almost tangible relationship with his mother, causes his inability to let go of her, and the nature of the memory he has of her."[30] Bound to the past by the memory of his mother, Stephen pleas for the disappearance of his mother's ghost that would allow for the birth of both his own life as artist and the birth of his art itself: "No mother! Let me be and let me live!" (5).

While struggling to overcome the burden of the past by asserting his control over the dead, Stephen is reminded of his embryonic state by the invocation of May Dedalus' memory:

You have spoken of the past and its phantoms, Stephen said. Why think of them? If I call

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[29]Tucker 103.

[30]McDowell 116.

them into life across the waters of Lethe will not the poor ghosts troop to my call? Who supposes it? I, Bous Stephanoumenos, bullockbefriending bard, am lord and giver of their life. He encircled his gadding hair with a coronal of vineleaves, smiling at Vincent. That answer and those leaves, Vincent said to him, will adorn you more fitly when something more, and greatly more, than a capful of light odes can call your genius father All desire to see you bring forth the work you meditate, to acclaim you Stephaneforos . . O no, Vincent, Lenehan said, laying a hand on the shoulder near him. Have no fear. He could not leave his mother an orphan. The young man's face grew dark. All could see how hard it was for him to be reminded of his promise and of his recent loss. (339)

Invoking Homer's tale of the shades of the dead trooping to Odysseus' call in Hades,[31] Stephen asserts his own ability to call upon and then master the past. Crowning himself with a "coronal of vineleaves" emblematic of poetic inspiration and achievement, he proclaims himself "Bous Stephanoumenos," the bull-soul of Stephen (245). Asserting his artistic power, Stephen evokes the moment in *Portrait* when his friends called him "Bous Stephanoumenos" following his decision to reject the priesthood and pursue the life of an artist. In *Portrait,* Stephen views his pursuit of the immortality of art as a fulfillment of a divine prophecy, the culmination of his own history and mythic legacy as Daedalus the ancient artificer: "a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being."[32] By calling upon "Bous Stephanoumenos" in *Ulysses*, Stephen

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[31]Gifford 434.

[32]James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Viking, 1977) 169.

attempts to regain the artistic potency he believed himself to wield prior to his mother's death and his transformation into Icarus, the mortal son who falls to earth. However, the "sluggish matter" he had once hoped to transform through his art has remained the "green sluggish bile" (5) his mother vomits at her death; Stephen's memory of his mother's death halts his artistic creation as the "sluggish matter" trapped by the burden of the past cannot be transformed into an "imperishable being."

In response to Stephen's proclamation of his artistic potency as master over the past, Vincent reminds Stephen of his artistic mortality by suggesting his offspring are only "a capful of light odes." As Stephen's only ode rendered in the novel, the vampire poem illustrates Stephen's inability to escape the past and emerge from his role as embryonic artist. The "souped-up version of the last stanza of Douglas Hyde's 'My Grief on the Sea,'"[33] Stephen's vampire poem first seems to suggest a movement away from the embryonic action of direct cribbing into a transformation of the past by a fertile artist. Evoking Hyde's stanza of "And my love came behind me / He came from the South; / His breast to my bosom, His mouth to my mouth," Stephen's poem reads "On swift sail flaming / From storm to storm / He comes, pale vampire, / Mouth to my mouth" (109). Although it appears that Stephen has mastered the past and transformed it for the present, his poem remains bound by the ghost of his mother. May Dedalus is the "pale vampire" that will not let her son live; her mouth that produces only "green sluggish bile" suffocates him with its smell of "wetted ashes" (5). Stephen emphasizes the power of his mother's memory and its ability to render him forever in the darkness of the womb, forever an embryonic artist: "But thou hast suckled me with a bitter milk: my moon and my sun

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[33] Gifford 62.

thou hast quenched for ever. And thou hast left me alone for ever in the dark ways of my bitterness: and with a kiss of ashes hast thou kissed my mouth" (322). As he associates his mother with death, Stephen recalls his vampire poem in the terms of death in maternity by linking it with the Virgin Mary who made the immortal word mortal and Lilith, the patron of abortions: "Then spake young Stephen orgulous of mother Church that would cast him from her bosom, of law of canons, of Lilith, patron of abortions . . . of potency of vampires mouth to mouth" (241). As long as Stephen remains burdened by the memory of his mother's death, he will never overcome his artistic infertility.

Following Vincent's reminder that only "a capful of light odes can call your genius father" (339), Lenehan destroys Stephen's image of himself as the potent "Bous Stephanoumenos" by evoking the death of his mother. Reminding Vincent that Stephen "could not leave his mother an orphan" (339), Lenehan suggests that May Dedalus was, like the Virgin Mary, "a creature of her creature" (320). Lindsey Tucker suggests that, "Stephen cannot yet quicken into life because he is still bound to dead images of the past, and Lenehan's unpleasant reminder of his artistic failure and memory of his mother almost cause him to leave;"[34] at the mention of his mother, Stephen is reminded of the impossibility of fulfilling his artistic "promise" because of his inability to reconcile his "recent loss" (339).

Stephen's desire to avoid the mortality of the "word made flesh" by escaping the maternal burden of his past suggests a rejection of maternity in favor of a Godlike paternity, a "creation from nothing" (32) that "will not pass away" (320). Although the word of the father offers the immortality Stephen seeks, it is also the word of religion that he rejected in *Portrait* at

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[34]Tucker 108.

the first invocation of "Bous Stephanoumenos" when he realized that "his destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders.[35] As Leslie McDowell rightly suggests, "for Stephen, the word of the Father is troublingly double: it is the word of the creator, but it is also the word of law."[36] Although at his mother's death Stephen attempts to reject the word of the mother and the father by refusing to kneel in prayer, he succeeds in reinforcing both. Stephen's guilt for not praying for his mother continues to haunt him and fortifies his bond to her; his refusal to pray also reinforces the law of the father by revealing "his fear of the potency of Catholic rhetoric."[37] He rejects both the maternal word made flesh that assures "he must one day die as he was like the rest too a passing show" (324) and the word of the father that requires him to obey the laws of Catholicism. Although it would allow him to escape maternity and enter the immortal realm where "there is no death and no birth neither wiving nor mothering" (324), Stephen refuses to find "again as in his youth the bottle Holiness that then he lived withal" (323).

Rather than rejecting the maternal origin for the word of the father, Stephen unites them as a dual burden of the past through his fear of thunder. Occurring in the fourth month of the episode's gestation as dictated by Joyce, the thunder reinforces Stephen's fear of his mother's presence; as the month when the heart is formed in an embryo, the fourth month of gestation brings the fear of *amor matris* to Stephen. His mother's "bitter milk" (322) that traps him as an embryonic artist becomes associated with the "spike called bitterness" (323) that causes his fear of the thunder. Believing the thunder to be the "voice of the god Bringforth," Stephen fears the

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[35] Joyce, *Portrait* 169.

[36] McDowell 112.

[37] McDowell 101.

"black crack of noise in the street" (323) as the wrath of God. Recalling his earlier abandonment of the priesthood and his blasphemous claim to be "the eternal son and ever virgin" (321), Stephen interprets the burden of his sinful history as the wrathful thunder, the "anger awful of the hammerhurler" (323): "Here, orthodoxy is allowed its revenge, culminating in a thunderstorm."[38] In order to become the progenitor artist capable of confronting and transforming the past, Stephen must reconcile both the bitter burden of his mother's death and the fear of God's vengeance against his rejection of the religious order: "He must wean himself from Catholicism which he has taken in with his mother's milk."[39]

As Stephen struggles to escape his history as a Catholic, his battle with the past becomes inextricably linked with Ireland's religious and political history; both Stephen and Ireland are forced into a state of paralysis by the burden of the past. In the satirical style of Jonathan Swift, Joyce presents Catholicism as a bull that causes the artist and Ireland's infertility:

> It is that same bull that was sent to our island by farmer Nicholas . . . He had horns galore, a coat of cloth and gold and a sweet smoky breath coming out of his nostrils so that the women of our island . . . followed after him . . . so that maid, wife, abbess, and widow to this day affirm that they would rather any time of the month whisper in his ear in the dark of a cowhouse . . . than lie with the finest strapping young ravisher in the four fields of all Ireland . . . and the end was that the men of the island seeing no help was toward . . . put to sea to recover the main of America. (327-8)

Recapitulating Homer's account of Helios' fertile oxen, Joyce alters the image of the bull to

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[38]Parrinder 176.

[39]Vivian Heller, *Joyce, Decadence, and Emancipation* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995) 101.

describe the infertility caused by the Catholic religion. He invokes figures from Ireland's past including Nicholas Breakspear, the Pope who granted Henry II of England the overlordship of Ireland that led to the invasion of 1169.[40] As the bull of Catholicism seduces the women of Ireland, the fertility of the island diminishes because the women go to confession in the "dark of a cowhouse" instead of copulating with Irish men. Vivian Heller suggests that Ireland's betrayal that forced her great men to "put to sea" is a "sin against the light, a crime against the fecundity of a nation" (103). For Stephen, the bull as a "fetishized beast"[41] that forces Ireland to commit the "crime against fecundity" becomes associated with both his mother and Catholicism. As his mother's ghost haunts him, Helios' sacred oxen become the "ghosts of beasts" (338) that haunt Odysseus and his crew after they are slaughtered.[42] The bull's "smoky breath" recalls May Dedalus's "kiss of ashes" (322); the fear of the wrath of the "bull" of Catholicism prompts Stephen's exile.

Although Odysseus' men die for slaughtering the sacred oxen of fertility in *The Odyssey,* Joyce transforms the oxen as symbols of infertility, a threat to both Stephen and all Ireland. As the embodiment of the ghost of May Dedalus and the Catholic religion, the sources of Stephen's artistic infertility, the oxen in *Ulysses* must be slain in order to remedy the "crime against fecundity." Within the catalogue of the history of English prose, the oxen become the prose styles of history that must be evoked but also transformed: "In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus's men die for slaying the oxen; in *Ulysses,* where old styles are excavated only to be abandoned again,

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[40]Gifford 424.

[41]Heller 110.

[42]Gifford 433.

literary creation depends upon disobedience."[43] Rather than the act of slaying the oxen, the true "crime against fecundity" in *Ulysses* originates in the "passive acceptance of the burden of history"[44] that prevents Stephen from moving beyond the state of embryonic artist and imprisons the Irish people within a state of paralysis.

Unlike the consuming law of the father that generates paralysis, Leopold Bloom may serve as a father-guide who facilitates Stephen's acceptance of the past rather than entrapping him in the nightmare of history. Like the ghost of May Dedalus that haunts Stephen, the memory of Bloom's son Rudy remains with Bloom throughout the novel. The ghost of Rudy, however, does not appear as a threatening force; Bloom mourns the loss of his son but confronts and accepts the past in his final vision of Rudy in "Circe." Unlike Stephen, Bloom recapitulates the past without being burdened and sterilized by it; he moves past the embryonic stage of "ruminating, chewing the cud of reminiscence" (337) toward an "emergence as father, a fertilizer/creator, possibly of a new Stephen."[45]

Accepting of the past, Bloom does not denounce maternity out of fear for his own mortal birth as Stephen does. Free from the fear of childbirth, Bloom sympathizes with Mina Purefoy's labor, depicting the process of creation as "most sacred and most worthy to be sacred. In Horne's house rest should reign" (321). Unlike Stephen the young "Boasthard" (323) who substitutes the reality of Mina's childbirth for his own artistic ideology, Bloom remains always "woman's woe with wonder pondering" (321). Bloom's sympathy for the process of creation

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[43]Heller 99.

[44]Heller 101.

[45]Tucker 97.

extends to both Mina's labor in physical birthing and Stephen's struggle to become a progenitor artist; Mina and Stephen's struggle to "bring forth exposes them to indifference and mockery, while Bloom's concern and goodwill extend to each of them."[46]

Viewing maternity as a life force rather than a source of inescapable mortality, Bloom sympathizes with the process of creation, understanding Stephen's desire to deny the past but also recasting May Dedalus as a loving mother rather than a threatening ghost:

> There are sins or (let us call them as the world calls them) evil memories which are hidden away by man in the darkest places of the heart but thy abide there and wait. He may suffer their memory to grown dim, let them be as though they had not been . . . Yet a chance word will call them forth suddenly and they will rise up to confront him in the most various circumstances, a vision or a dream . . . or at the feast, at midnight, when he is now filled with wine. Not to insult over him will the vision come as over one that lies under her wrath, not for vengeance to cut him off from the living but shrouded in the piteous vesture of the past, silent, remote, reproachful. (344)

Bloom understands the terror of the past for Stephen, the "evil memories" that he struggles to conquer. After Stephen hears the thunder and fears the wrath of his mother, Bloom explains that the thunder is a scientific phenomenon rather than the manifestation of May's ghost or a vengeful God: "Master Bloom spoke to him calming words to slumber his great fear . . . how it was no other thing but . . . the order of natural phenomenon" (323). After witnessing Stephen's reaction to Lenehan's reminder of his "promise and recent loss" (339), Bloom sympathizes with the power that the burden of the past wields over Stephen. Rather than the ghost that Stephen

[46]Peake 255.

begs to "Let me be and let me live!" (5), the ghost of Stephen's mother as depicted by Bloom does not appear as a vengeful, threatening entity that desires to prevent him from living. Filtered through Bloom, Stephen's mother becomes a woman to be pitied for her silent death that prevents her from offering artistic life to her son by providing the answer to his question, "What is the word known to all men?" (41).

Following the image of Stephen's mother donning the "piteous vesture" of silence, Bloom's memory of May Dedalus at Roundtown suggests her role as eternal and merciful mother rather than a threatening cause of mortality and artistic infertility. Stephen interprets the "mute, reproachful" (5) look of his mother's ghost as one of wrath; Bloom's memory of May Dedalus describes the "faint shadow of remoteness or of reproach" as a "glad look" offered to her young Stephen, a "lad of four or five in linseywoolsey" (344). Invoking the final chorus of Goethe's *Faust*, the phrase *alles Vergangliche* meaning "All that is transitory" follows the depiction of May's remote and reproachful look.[47] Linked by the allusion to the "Mater Gloriosa" who speaks from above in *Faust*, Stephen's mother regards her son as the potential embodiment of artistic creation. Rather than an entity that desires to haunt her son after death, May realizes her own mortality as a transitory being but seeks to offer a guide to artistic creation in the "eternal feminine" that Stephen rejects; the passage alluded to in Bloom's description suggests that "All that is transitory / Is only an image; / The insufficient / Here becomes an event of importance / The indescribable / Here is achieved; / The eternal-feminine / Draws us upward."[48]

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[47]Gifford 439.

[48]Gifford 439.

As a figure capable of sympathizing with Stephen's fear and recasting his mother as a comforting matrix, Bloom guides Stephen past the burden of the past and desires to become a father to Stephen the boy and the artist. Recapitulating his past as a "young Leopold" (337), Bloom recalls his own role as a son. Unlike Stephen who feels threatened by the "mute, reproachful" (5) look of his mother from when he was a "lad of four or five" (344), Bloom evokes the past and then transforms his role as son into one of father: "the young knighterrant recedes, shrivels, dwindles to a tiny speck within the mist. Now he is himself paternal and these about him might be his sons" (337). Like Stephen who "murdered his goods with whores" (320), Bloom recalls his sterile encounter with Birdie Kelly as a masturbator with a desire for "illicit intercourse" (334); Stephen the "son" recapitulates the actions of Bloom the "father." With the death of his son, Bloom seems doomed to the same sterile burden of the past as Stephen: "No Leopold! Name and memory solace thee not. That youthful illusion of thy strength was taken from thee—and in vain. No son of thy loins is by thee. There is none now to be for Leopold, what Leopold was for Rudolph" (338). However, free from the "youthful illusion of thy strength" that seems to plague Stephen as the origin of his desire for immortality, Bloom accepts and then moves beyond the "name and memory" of the past toward a new role as father-guide to Stephen: "Leopold that had of his body no manchild for an heir looke upon him his friend's son" (320).

Stephen's future as an artist depends upon Bloom's emergence as his father-guide through the embryonic stage of recapitulating the past. Bloom seems to ameliorate some of Stephen's fear of remaining trapped within his mother's womb as embryonic artist. The mother's "bitter milk" that Stephen fears will imprison him "for ever in the dark ways of my

bitterness" (322) becomes the "milk of human kin . . . the honeymilk of Canaan's land . . . hot and sweet and fattening" (346). However, as Vivian Heller suggests, "artistic procreation is a laborious and uncertain process."[49] Stephen himself realizes the uncertainty of his artistic future; he alters the indicative command, "The Scriptures will be fulfilled" to the subjective "*Ut implerentur scripturae*" (349) meaning "The Scriptures might be fulfilled." Some critics suggest that Stephen's proclamation "Burke's!" (345) toward the end of "Oxen" is no more than the birth of an impotent, meaningless word: "as a progenitor he produces no more than an abortion."[50] (Peake, 255). By revealing that the word "burke" implies the suppression of a book before publication, Mark Osteen suggests that Stephen practices a form of "artistic contraception" when he says "Burke's!."[51]

Although Stephen's first truly artistic word is merely the name of a pub, his utterance occurs at the moment of the birth of Mina's Purefoy's child and inspires the "birth" of the group of medical students from the womb of the maternity hospital; Lindsey Tucker rightly suggests that "Mrs. Purefoy has given birth; Bloom has dreamed dreams that have freed him from bondage to the past . . . Stephen has uttered the Word, even if it is only "Burke's!."[52] Despite its appearance as a meaningless utterance, Stephen's proclamation of "Burke's!" instigates the rush of language that occurs as the medical students leave the maternity hospital for Burke's pub: "At the birth of Mina Purefoy's child, words are propelled from the maternal body; in a chaotic and

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[49]Heller 111.

[50]Peake 225.

[51]Osteen 255.

[52]Tucker 108.

sudden rush of language."[53] According to Vivian Heller, as the medical students leave the maternity hospital an "infant language is born" that suggests a "raw potentiality that may or may not be actualized by Stephen."[54]

The end of the episode reveals a literary birthing in which Stephen and Bloom seem to be merely a stage in Joyce's own literary recapitulation; although "Oxen of the Sun" does not render their complete disappearance from the novel, their lack of language in the ending suggests Joyce's inevitable movement away from the voices of the two characters during "Penelope."[55] Although Stephen's future as a progenitor artist remains unclear, Joyce himself has succeeded in bringing forth his literary offspring. Like Mina Purefoy who remains "in throes now full three days" during a "hard birth" (114), Joyce described the process of writing "Oxen of the Sun" as a difficult labor; he worked 1000 hours on the episode by his own account and described it as "the most difficult episode in an odyssey, I think, both to interpret and to execute."[56] Recasting the ending of the episode in the modern forms of language born from the prose of the past, Joyce proposed that "Oxen of the Sun" ends "in a frightful jumble of Pidgin English, nigger English, Cockney, Irish, Bowery slang and broken doggerel" (475). Accepting his literary forbears, Joyce recapitulates their prose styles and then transforms them into the

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[53]McDowell 118.

[54]Heller 112.

[55] Bernard Benstock describes the end of "Oxen of the Sun" as a "ten paragraph portion of almost all dialogue in which the two most prominent characters of *Ulysses* are unusually silent, and the eight minor characters . . . carry most of the talk in relatively undistinguishable voices." While Stephen's voice only occurs when he speaks in mock-Chinese and black dialects or when he parodies the prayer of the mass, Bloom has been "reduced to a couple of two-word utterances that could have been spoken by anyone."
Bernard Benstock, "Decoding in the Dark in 'Oxen of the Sun,'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 28.3 (1991): 640.

[56]Ellmann 475.

modern language of common experience, the everyday slang of common men. Fulfilling Stephen's resolution in "Scylla and Charybdis" to "Act. Be acted on"(173), Joyce transforms the styles of his forebears into the language of action, of a rush of men and language leaving a maternity hospital.

Isolation and the Shakespeare Theory in "Scylla and Charybdis"

Unlike Joyce the progenitor artist, Stephen has yet to confront reality and accept the past, preventing his artistic birth by isolating himself within his aesthetic vision of immortality. Prior to the meeting with Bloom in the maternity hospital, Stephen reveals his Shakespeare theory, the embodiment of Stephen's isolation and need for a father-guide, in "Scylla and Charybdis." Suggesting that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was written as an attempt at reconciliation with his birthplace and family following a sundering instigated by Ann Shakespeare, Stephen depicts Ann as both a castrating seductress and a saving grace that facilitates Shakespeare's artistic creation. Like Shakespeare, Stephen has been sundered from his family and birthplace by the death of his mother and remains isolated and artistically infertile among the Dublin literati of the National Library. In order to realize his artistic potentiality, Stephen must overcome his isolation and move toward others through experience; he must "Act. Be acted on" (173). Believing that entrance into the Dublin literary world will end his isolation, Stephen looks to Eglinton as a potential father-guide to artistic creation. Eglinton and the Irish revivalists, however, assume an ahistorical approach to literature and emphasize the separateness of the artist from common experience; Stephen requires a father-guide to escape these principles, not to reinforce them. Looking instead to Shakespeare as a potential literary father, Stephen attempts to eliminate the role of maternity in creation. Ultimately, however, even Shakespeare demands the submission to the law of the father that Stephen cannot accept. Struggling to overcome the law of the father embodied in both the Catholic Church and Shakespeare, Stephen seeks to father himself through art, thus eliminating the role of maternity and paternity at once. Fathering himself, however, would further isolate Stephen from common experience and prevent

the confrontation of the past his artistic creation requires. Appearing as a "patient silhouette"(165), Bloom emerges at the conclusion of the episode as the potential father-guide Stephen requires. Although he only momentarily passes Stephen, Bloom leads the way to the maternity hospital of "Oxen of the Sun," the setting of Stephen and Bloom's first meeting in *Ulysses* and Stephen's pregnant exclamation, "Burke's!"

In "Scylla and Charybdis," Stephen finally unveils his Shakespeare theory that Mulligan first describes in Telemachus: "It's simple. He proves by algebra that Hamlet's grandson is Shakespeare's grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father" (15). Basing his reading of *Hamlet* on Shakespeare's departure and return from Stratford and Ann Hathaway's alleged infidelities, Stephen suggests that Shakespeare appears in the play as the ghost of King Hamlet rather than the son Hamlet. Absent from Stratford, Shakespeare becomes a ghost in his own birthplace: "What is a ghost? Stephen said with tingling energy. One who has faded impalpably through death, through absence, through change of manners. Elizabethan London lay as far from Stratford as corrupt Paris lies from Virgin Dublin" (154). According to John Hunt, Stephen's Shakespeare theory suggests that Shakespeare was replaced in Stratford by his wife's lovers and thus attempted through the writing of *Hamlet* to reconcile with his family and birthplace: "Shakespeare identified the hero of the play with his lost son Hamnet, finding in the young prince a symbolic expression of his longing to return to the familial world in which he had lost his place."[57] As the ghost of King Hamlet, Shakespeare reconciles with his family through his art; as Shakespeare the man, he returns to Stratford prior to his death: "He returns after a life

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[57] John Hunt, "Sundering and Reconciliation: The Aesthetic Theory of Joyce's 'Scylla and Charybdis,'" *Modern Language Quarterly* (1986): 303.

of absence to that spot of earth where he was born, where he has always been, man and boy, a silent witness there, his journey of life ended" (175).

For Shakespeare to write himself as the ghost of King Hamlet, he must first have been estranged from his family and birthplace: "Where there is a reconciliation, Stephen said, there must first have been a sundering" (159). As the adulterous wife that replaces Shakespeare with her lovers, Ann Hathaway becomes the "shrew" that estranges Shakespeare from Stratford while simultaneously serving as his "portal of discovery" (156). Although "the world believes that Shakespeare made a mistake [marrying Ann] . . . and got out of it as quickly and as best he could" (156), Stephen insists upon Ann's influence over and presence throughout Shakespeare's writing. Rather than leaving Ann behind in Stratford and forgetting her, Shakespeare "carried a memory in his pocket" of his wife and had "no truant memory" (156). Stephen suggests that Ann appears as Gertrude, as Cleopatra, but most prominently as Venus in *Venus and Adonis*: "The greyeyed goddess who bends over the boy Adonis, stooping to conquer, as prologue to the swelling act, is a boldfaced Stratford wench who tumbles in a cornfield a lover younger than herself" (157).

Although Stephen's theory clearly states his belief in Ann Hathaway's influence on Shakespeare's life and work, he depicts Ann as both a seductive older woman that castrates Shakespeare and a saving grace that facilitates the birth of his artistic creation. Proposing that Ann's "way of finding revenge is a little extramarital activity of her own,"[58] Stephen proclaims, "If others have their will Ann hath a way" (157). Although Stephen's reading depicts Ann as a

[58]James Michels, "'Scylla and Charybdis': Revenge in James Joyce's *Ulysses,*" *James Joyce Quarterly* 20.2 (1983) 188.

calculating seductress, he draws upon a 1792 poem that praises Ann as a saving grace from heaven: "Angels must love Ann Hathaway; / She hath a way so to control, / To rapture the unprisoned soul."[59]

Citing Stephen's claim that it was Ann's "original sin which darkened his understanding weakened his will and left in him a strong inclination to evil" (174), Christine Froula suggests that "Ann Hathaway's seduction and betrayal inflicted the sexual wound that decided his life fate."[60] Although Shakespeare assumed a "dongiovannism" in London, Stephen insists:

> Belief in himself had been untimely killed. He was overborne in a cornfield first (a ryefield, I should say) and he will never be a victor in his own eyes after nor play victoriously the game of laugh and lie down . . . No later undoing will undo the first undoing. (161)

Seduced and then castrated by Ann's "invisible weapon" of sexual infidelity, Shakespeare is driven "away from innocent Stratford to the city of London, and out of naive self-confidence into a tortured introspection."[61] Experiencing an "absence" from Stratford and a "change of manners"(154), Shakespeare becomes a ghost in Stratford following Ann's seduction and betrayal.

Although Ann as a castrating figure renders him a ghost in Stratford, Shakespeare's sundering from his birthplace and family spurs him to artistic creation; he writes *Hamlet* and inhabits the ghost of King Hamlet as an act of reconciliation. Maria DiBattista suggests that

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[59]Gifford 209.

[60]Christine Froula, *Modernism's Body: Sex, Culture, and Joyce* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) 212.

[61]Hunt 299.

Stephen views Ann not as a castrating seductress, but as a saving grace that facilitates Shakespeare's development as an artist; through the "grace of first love," Ann allows Shakespeare to "enter into the new and transfigured world" of artistic creation.[62] As Shakespeare's first love, Ann facilitates his birth into his artistic vocation and his reconciliation with his birthplace and family prior to his death: "She saw him into and out of the world. She took his first embraces. She bore his children and she laid pennies on his eyes to keep his eyelid s closed when he lay on his deathbed" (156).

Following the description of Ann Hathaway attendant at Shakespeare's deathbed, Stephen recalls his own mother's death when "who brought me into this world lies there, bronzelidded" (156). As Ann Hathaway sundered Shakespeare from his birthplace and family, the death of May Dedalus renders Stephen an isolated, artistically infertile figure. Although her death causes Stephen's return to Dublin from Paris, it also arouses a guilt for refusing to pray for her and a fear of maternity and mortality that haunts Stephen throughout the novel and spurs his retreat to artistic isolation in "Circe." With the hope of achieving artistic creation in spite of the isolation that arises from his denial of the past, Stephen formulates his Shakespeare theory; he aspires to unite his artistic ontogeny with Shakespeare's while also "remaking Shakespeare to portray himself."[63] Stephen struggles against his alienation and artistic infertility, yet he will never escape his "mind's bondage" (174) to become the "Bous Stephanoumenos" of his artistic ideal until he, like Shakespeare, experiences the grace that "delivers the spirit from its own

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[62]Maria DiBattista, *First Love: The Affections of Modern Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 170.

[63]Peake 138.

renegade isolationism;"[64] following his description of the "boldfaced Stratford wench who tumbles in a cornfield a lover younger than herself," Stephen pleas, "And my turn? When? Come!" (157).

For Stephen to move past his artistic infertility toward conception and birth, he must move toward experience and reconciliation as Shakespeare does through *Hamlet*. The precursor for reconciliation and artistic development involves an active interaction with the world. Like Shakespeare who is "all in all . . . he acts and is acted on" (174), Stephen attempts to engage the world through active experience: "Speech, speech. But act. Act speech. They mock to try you. Act. Be acted on" (173). Invoking his call to the "old artificer" in *Portrait*, Stephen struggles with his youthful belief that an artist must strike out in isolated genius and desires, like the lapwing, to transform his alienation into experience:

> Fabulous artificer. The hawklike man. You flew. Whereto? Newhaven-Dieppe, steerage passenger. Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus. *Pater, ait.* Seabedabbled, fallen, weltering. Lapwing you are. Lapwing be. (173)

As Dedaelus's son Icarus who pridefully flew toward the sun and fell to his death, the youthful Stephen "flew" to Paris but returned to Dublin and his mother's deathbed, the roots of his artistic infertility. The older Stephen of *Ulysses* envisions his alienation from literary Dublin as similar to the exile of Lapwing, Daedalus's nephew who was turned into a bird after Daedalus became jealous of his inventive potential and threw him from the Acropolis "with a lying tale that the boy had fallen."[65] Like the lapwing who flies close to the ground for fear of flying too

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[64]DiBattista 172.

[65]Gifford 245.

high like Icarus, Stephen must learn that artistic creation originates in experiencing the life "low to the ground" rather than the lofty, isolated realm of the "fabulous artificer." C.H. Peake suggests that overall, Stephen's Shakespeare theory is "expressive of a development in Stephen toward a recognition of the necessary interaction between the artist's true self and the world around him."[66] However, despite Stephen's desire to overcome his isolation from the world that renders him artistically infertile, he continues to retreat into artistic isolation as a means of escape from the nightmare of history embodied in the ghost of his mother.[67]

Striving to overcome the sundering from his birthplace and alienation from Dublin life that he blames for his artistic infertility, Stephen presents his Shakespeare theory to the literati of Dublin within the National Library, the seat of the Irish Revival. Describing literary Dublin as "a common culture, founded upon a reverence for artistic genius and a humanistic belief in literature as individual expression," Lindsey Tucker portrays Stephen's presentation of his theory as an attempt "to emulate and outdo his predecessors by a display of biographical erudition."[68] Although Stephen's biographical reading of Shakespeare has "foundations of sand,"[69] he purposefully constructs Shakespeare's biography to fit his theory, simultaneously emulating and

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[66]Peake 206.

[67] As will be discussed in part three of this paper, Stephen most clearly retreats into artistic isolation when he smashes the chandelier in response to his mother's ghost in "Circe."

[68]Tucker 138.

[69]William Schutte, *Joyce and Shakespeare: A Study in the Meaning of Ulysses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) 54.

mocking the Dublin literati: "It cannot be said that his remarks amount to (or even aim at being) an informative study of the Renaissance playwright."[70]

Although Stephen presents his "Act speech" (173) to Thomas Lyster, George Russell, Richard Best, and John Eglinton, he seeks the approval only of Eglinton, figuring him as a potential father to unite him with Dublin literary culture and guide him to artistic creation. Unlike Eglinton, Stephen belittles the other men in the library and mocks their mere paraphrasing of the works of their literary forebears rather than engaging in the "repetition with a difference" that Joyce himself masters in "Oxen of the Sun." Lyster constantly quotes Goethe, and Russell the "visionary thought by many intellectuals to be a saint and genius becomes the ridiculous 'Buddh under plantain.'"[71] Although remembered chiefly as an "embryo scholar"of Dublin, Richard Best becomes the "blond ephebe. Tame essence of Wilde" (163) who "sees all literary materials in terms of what his master, Wilde, would do with them" and whose "enthusiasms are confined to those deemed appropriate in a disciple of Pater and Wilde."[72] As the "tall, young, mild, light" (152) emulator of Wilde, Best speaks only in clichés and carries with Wilde's grace a "notebook, new, large, clean, bright" (152).

Unlike the other literati observing Stephen's performance of his Shakespeare theory, John Eglinton serves as the only "listener whose approbation Stephen is seeking . . . the Eglinton who was ever the disinterested bystander and the reliable critic of the Irish Renaissance."[73]

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[70]Hunt 294.

[71]L.H. Platt, "The Voice of Esau: Culture and Nationalism in 'Scylla and Charybdis,'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 29.4 (1992): 737.

[72]Schutte 36.

[73]Schutte 39.

When Eglinton challenges Stephen to prove that Shakespeare was Jewish, Stephen quickly begins "like a child in a schoolyard" to "construct through analogy a fantastic connection between financial avarice, incest, Jewish intermarriage, and cuckold-consciousness."[74] Undertaking to "Flatter. Rarely. But Flatter" (171), Stephen quotes from Eglinton in support of his own theory: "for nature, as Mr Magee understands her, abhors perfection" (171).[75]

Despite Stephen's attempt to emulate Eglinton, Eglinton and the Dublin literary world he represents cannot lead Stephen toward the reconciliation he needs to overcome his isolating artistic infertility. Eglinton openly chastises Stephen, calling his reading of *Hamlet* a ghost story with Stephen as the "fat boy in Pickwick" who "wants to make our flesh creep" (154). As a potential father-guide for Stephen, Eglinton's sarcasm becomes associated with the ghost of King Hamlet's call to his son; following Eglinton's critique of Stephen's "ghost story," Stephen inwardly recalls the words of King Hamlet: *"List! List! O list!"* (154). Hearing the "ghost of the unquiet father" calling for his son to "revenge his foul and most unnatural murder," the young Hamlet initially recoils at the imperative[76]; likewise, for Stephen whose "flesh hears him: creeping, hears," Eglinton's sarcasm spurs within him the "tingling energy" (154) of his theory that he first restrains out of a desire to enter the Dublin literary world.

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[74]Hunt 293.

[75]Similar to Stephen's desire to impress Eglinton, William Schutte suggests that Joyce's admiration for Eglinton appears in "Proteus." Published in *Anglo-Irish Essay*, Eglinton's description of a young artist's inspiration clearly foreshadows Stephen's composition of the Vampire Poem during his walk on Sandymount Strand: "Walking in the woods by the seashore or among men, it often happens that a man experiences a rising of the tide of perception . . . After such a moment of absorption into the creative spirit of the universe, this waif of utterance left with him seems a poor thing to him, he scribbles it down in a shamefaced kind of way" (Schutte, 47).

[76]Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 1.5.22.

With Eglinton cast as the ghost of King Hamlet, the murdering brothers (Russell, Lyster, and Best) and the Dublin literary world they inhabit stand in opposition to Stephen's movement away from alienation and toward reconciliation. Describing the discussion in the library as "*Hamlet, 1904*," James Michels parallels Stephen's alienation from literary Dublin with young Hamlet's dispossessed birthright following his father's murder: "The throne to which Stephen considers himself heir, and which has been usurped by a pack of Platonists, is the literary throne of Ireland."[77] Amid the "Elsinore-like quality in the library, a friendly innocuous surface," Stephen endures his role as exiled son and like young Hamlet begins his usurpation under cover of submission.[78] While reminding himself to "Smile Cranly's smile" (151), Stephen secretly vows to "See this. Remember" when excluded from the "gathering together of a sheaf of our younger poets' verses" (158). Feeling "Nookshotten," pushed into a corner and rendered barbarous because he is Catholic rather than Anglo-Irish, Stephen assumes his "best French polish"(158) rather than an Irish posture, rejecting the Dublin literati as they reject him. Like young Hamlet, however, Stephen at first struggles against the "*List! O, List!*"(154) that encourages him to seek revenge against Russell/Lyster/Best/Claudius; hoping that Eglinton/King Hamlet may still aid his reconciliation, Stephen wonders if he listens to him out of "courtesy" or perhaps sees his "inward light" (158).

Despite Stephen's continued desire to be guided by Eglinton, the aesthetic vision of the Dublin literary world directly conflicts with Stephen's; for the Irish revivalists, the writer of the national epic of Ireland must be "a knight of the rueful countenance here in Dublin. With a

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[77]Michels 181.

[78]Platt 741.

saffron kilt? . . . O, yes, he must speak the good old tongue (158). Desiring to gain acceptance to the Dublin literary world, Stephen has grown "tired of my voice. The voice of Esau. My kingdom for a drink" (174). Usurped by the "murdering brothers" of the Dublin literati, Stephen feels "tired" of his voice as the true heir to the literary throne of Ireland. Perhaps contemplating his own willingness to sacrifice his authentic voice by entering the Anglo-Irish Gaelic revival, Stephen wonders if he should allow the usurping brothers of the revival to claim his birthright. As Isaac identifies his rightful heir not by his voice but by his hands, Eglinton ignores Stephen's voice in favor of the written works of the young Dublin literati that may produce "our national epic" (174). At once desiring to be a member of literary Dublin but in conflict with the Irish revival, Stephen sees himself as "Cordelia. *Cordoglio*. Lir's loneliest daughter" (158). Like Cordelia, Stephen refuses to subvert his beliefs and flatter the revivalists by becoming their ideal of an Irish writer.

Clinging to their dream of the Gaelic artist, the revivalists remove art from linear time but also remain trapped in the past. Describing the purpose of art as revealing "formless spiritual essences" (152) and denouncing the modern world of "the sixshilling novel, the musichall song" (153), George Russell and the Irish Revival in general dismiss the question of history: "Despite its general retrospectiveness and apparent synchronicity with an ancient past, the Revival was utterly ahistorical in its approach to literature."[79] The only listener in the library to whom Stephen addresses his theory, John Eglinton disagrees with the other revivalists and

[79]Platt 745.

criticizes their ahistorical approach: "Our bards and prophets have never learned to . . . dispense with traditional methods and traditional themes."[80]

Although Eglinton rejects the Revival's ahistorical approach, he remains unable to serve as a father-guide for Stephen because he too becomes entrapped by the past through his artistic isolation from common experience; sundered from his "rugged roughheaded" father, Eglinton retreats to Wordsworth in order to vicariously experience the reality of life outside of the library that his father, the man with "nether stocks bemired with clauber of ten forests" (170) experiences firsthand. Within *Ulysses*, Joyce portrays Eglinton as a man detached from common experience and insistent upon adherence to a literary tradition that entraps him within the past; Eglinton warns Stephen, "Do you mean to fly in the face of the tradition of three centuries?" (156).

For Stephen, whose artistic conception insists upon the influence of history but who also needs a guide to help him confront the past that renders him artistically infertile, the ahistorical approach of the Revival prevents his artistic development; Eglinton's entrapment within the past nullifies him as the father-guide Stephen seeks. Unlike the Platonic view of time as an illusion held by the literati in the library, Stephen adheres to Aristotelean theory that gives definition to time: "Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past" (153). According to Stephen's view of art, all creations "derive their meaningful organization of reality from the author's perception of how patterns in his past experience influence his present existence."[81] At the moment of artistic creation, time collapses:

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[80]In Schutte 43.

[81]Hunt 308.

> 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. So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now but by reflection from that which then I shall be. (160)

The imagination allows the past to inform the present that in turn leads to a creation that will exist in the future. According to Stephen, all time is "repetition with a difference," a recapitulation of the past within a present that forms the future: "Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves (175).

Because of his belief that art exists as a present interpretation of the past, Stephen insists upon the "interaction between literature and the historical conditions of its making."[82] Unlike George Russell who believes, "What is it to us how the poet lived? . . . We have *King Lear* and it is immortal" (155), Stephen suggests that Shakespeare and all artists create out of their own past experience rather than an "impersonal genius" that creates "characters out of sheer inspiration."[83] Rather than aiding Stephen in accepting the past and overcoming the desire for artistic immortality that leads to his isolation, the revivalists reinforce the notion that the "artist is greater in soul than other men"[84] in order to generate reverence for the "formless spiritual essences" of the idealized "dreams and visions in a peasant's heart" (153). Rather than depict Ireland as a realistic representation of the artist's own experience, the revivalists insist that "the

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[82]Platt 746.

[83]Hunt 293.

[84]Gifford 195.

national literature should make Ireland, as Ireland and all other lands were in ancient times, a holy land to her people."[85]

Because "all future plunges to the past" (153), it follows that "any control which an individual has over the future course of his life comes from his ability to confront the past."[86] Repeatedly confronted by the past through the ghost of his mother, Stephen views the past as an inescapable burden rather then the starting point for his own artistic creation. Through his Shakespeare theory, Stephen attempts to overcome the burden of the past by formulating an artistic creation independent of the female force that entraps him. Sundered from his wife and family, Shakespeare "took up artistic procreation, transubstantiating the biological phenomenon of self-reproduction into the making of dramatic characters, artistic worlds."[87] By identifying himself with Shakespeare, Stephen hopes to recapitulate his own past experience and escape the maternal burden as "an androgynous angel, being a wife unto himself"(175).

In order to escape the burden of his mother, Stephen figures himself as the inheritor of Shakespeare's "mystical estate" (170) of fatherhood. Depicting biological fatherhood as merely "an instant of blind rut" (171) and remembering that his mother received charity medical care because of the poverty created by his biological father, Stephen identifies with Shakespeare who "is the father who is himself his own father. He has no precursor and no successor."[88] Although Stephen believes that a father "is a necessary evil" (170), he also realizes that regarding

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[85]Platt 745.

[86]Hunt 308.

[87]Hunt 306.

[88]Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: Books and Schools of the Ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994) 418.

Shakespeare as his father will not offer the escape from the burden of the past he seeks; instead, Shakespeare will demand a submission to the law of the father. Patrick McGee proposes, "The law of the father, the command of the ghost, leads to the nightmare of history . . . the ghost of the father can only act through the son, by binding his son to his rule . . . in submitting to the ghost of the father, the son becomes a ghost."[89]

Although McGee correctly depicts a Shakespearean fatherhood as leading to a ghost-hood for the son, he overlooks Stephen's desire to father himself, thus escaping the law of the father and the submission it demands. If the commanding father is actually the son's potential self, then rather than leading to the "nightmare of history," the father's action through his son is the movement through the past toward the future. As Shakespeare is "himself his own father,"[90] Stephen hopes that by fathering himself he will escape the burden of the past and achieve an artistic immortality similar to Shakespeare's:

> Loss is his gain, he passes on towards eternity in undiminished personality . . . He is a ghost, a shadow now, the wind by Elsinore's rocks or what you will, the sea's voice, a voice heard only in the heart of him who is the substance of his shadow, the son consubstantial with the father. (162)

Stephen suggests that Shakespeare's ghost lives within his son; desiring immortality and an escape from maternity and the law of the father, Stephen believes he may father himself through art as Shakespeare fathered young Hamlet. Struggling to escape the burden of the past as

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[89]Patrick McGee, *Paperspace: Style as Ideology in James Joyce's Ulysses* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988) 53.

[90]Bloom 418.

embodied in the death of his mother and the inability to find a father-guide within the Dublin literati, Stephen hopes to remedy his artistic infertility by embracing his isolation. Seeking to father himself, he eliminates the role of maternity and a father-guide in his artistic creation, favoring an isolated creation and debasing the union with another in human procreation: "What links them in nature? An instant of blind rut" (171).

Stephen suggests both the possibility of fathering himself and that the mature father lives within the immature son:

> As we, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies, Stephen said, from day to day, their molecules shuttle to and fro, 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. (160)

For Stephen, the artist develops through his immature sonhood into the maturity of fatherhood that in turn allows him to father his artistic creation out of the history of his own experience. Desiring his own maturity so he can become the "father of all his race" through art, Stephen wonders when his sonhood will end and fatherhood will begin: "Am I a father? If I were?" (171).

Attempting to father himself to escape the threat of maternity and the submission to the father, Stephen ironically models his self-fathering on God's fathering of Christ as depicted in Catholicism, the law of the father:

> He Who Himself begot middler the Holy Ghost and Himself sent Himself, Agenbuyer, between Himself and others. Who, put upon by his friends, stripped and whipped, was

> nailed like bat to barndoor, starved on crosstree, Who let Him bury, stood up, harrowed hell, fared into heaven and there these nineteen hundred years sitteth on the right hand of His Own Self but yet shall come in the latter day to doom the quick and dead when all shall be dead already. (162)

Stephen's depiction of God's fathering of Christ draws upon a parody of the Apostles' Creed written by Johann Most that characterizes the "God of Jewish-Christian theology" as a "Godly Charlatan who created himself through the Holy Ghost" and used Christ as a mediator between himself and the world.[91] Although Stephen uses the mocking language of Most, he truly believes in his ability to father himself and refers to Most only as another member of the "brood of mockers" like "pseudo Malachi" (162) or the other usurping brothers in the library.

For Stephen, God's creation of Christ epitomizes the negation of motherhood and the ability to father onself by turning "the paternal void into a symbolic male womb."[92] Stephen suggests that the Virgin Mary and thus the iconic worship of maternity were merely "flung to the mob of Europe" by the "cunning Italian intellect" (170); the true foundation of Catholicism remains the "conception that Jesus the man of flesh was mystically one with the Father."[93] Distinguishing between the common paternity that may be a "legal fiction" and God's begetting of Christ, Stephen laments that he was "Wombed in sin darkness I was too, made not begotten" (33) and desires to father himself as God fathered Christ. Indeed, during the mock-Pentecost in "Oxen of the Sun," Stephen depicts himself as Christ, a "creation from nothing" (32) in the state

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[91]Gifford 224.

[92]Froula 109.

[93]Hunt 304.

of sonhood that will eventually lead to his own Godlike fatherhood. As Christ was begotten by God and endured the crucifixion only to rise again "consubstantial with the father," Stephen believes that the artist begets his own image that endures the hostility and isolation from others (as Stephen from the Dublin literati, as Lapwing from Daedalus) but ultimately attains immortality through creating the "conscience of his race." Stephen's desire to father himself and attain a Godlike immortality, however, stifles his artistic development by furthering his alienation from common experience; the "mystical estate" of conscious begetting is "unknown to man" (170) and thus isolates the artist from the world of common men.

Stephen's desire to father himself leads to his isolation, prevents him from confronting the past, and negates the role of maternity so crucial to artistic creation as depicted in "Oxen of the Sun." Rather than continuing to deny the past by fathering himself, Stephen must seek a father-guide other than Eglinton to lead him away from his isolation and toward the reconciliation with his birthplace and the past that Shakespeare achieved through *Hamlet*. Proclaimed "Hamlet, I am thy father's spirit" (125) in the episode preceding Stephen's presentation of his Shakespeare theory, Leopold Bloom emerges in "Scylla and Charybdis" as the ghostlike "patient silhouette" (165) of the potential father-guide sought by Stephen. Suggesting that "Poldy has a Shakespearean inwardness," Harold Bloom identifies Leopold Bloom as Joyce's version of "the ghostly Shakespeare himself, at once everyman and no man . . . not Shakespeare the poet but citizen Shakespeare, wandering about London as Poldy wanders about Dublin."[94] Rather than appearing as the vengeance-seeking ghost of King Hamlet, Bloom resembles the ghost of Shakespeare the man who, rendered ghostlike by his absence in Stratford,

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[94]Bloom 420.

seeks to reconcile with his wife following the death of his son Hamnet; instead of demanding "*List! O, List*!" (154), Bloom appears as a "patient silhouette waited, listening" (165). Unlike the ghost of King Hamlet who imposes the law of the father upon his son, Bloom does not make commands upon Stephen. Because the "law of the father, the command of the ghost, leads to the nightmare of history,"[95] Stephen seeks to father himself; as a patient father who only waits and listens, Bloom may become a father-guide without imposing the law of the father that entraps Stephen within the past.

Although Joyce identifies Bloom as a potential father-guide, it remains unclear if Stephen recognizes him as such. Alienated from his father whom he blames for the family's poverty and his mother whose death entraps him within the nightmare of history, Stephen still acknowledges that he needs a father-guide to enable his artistic development; he understands that a "father is a necessary evil" (170). As he exits the library with Buck Mulligan, Stephen envisions himself as the rock on which Scylla dwells and Mulligan as the whirlpool of Charybdis, divided by their roles within literary Dublin as evidenced in the response to their Will Shakespeare theories: "My will: his will that fronts me. Seas between" (178). Similar to his appearance as a "silent ship" (42) in "Proteus," Bloom becomes a seafaring guide for Stephen; Bloom "passed out between them, bowing, greeting" (179). As Joyce's language at the end of "Scylla and Charybdis" becomes "serene, almost passively content" following Bloom's passage through Stephen and Mulligan,[96] Bloom appears to offer a guide for Stephen through the

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[95]McGee 53.

[96]Mark Wollaeger, "Reading *Ulysses*: Agency, Ideology, and the Novel," *Joyce and the Subject of History*, ed. M. Wollaeger, V. Luftwig, and R. Spoo (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996) 120.

nightmare of history. Rather than seek to deny the past, Stephen must "Cease to Strive" (179) against the ghost of his mother as Circe counseled Odysseus to do when confronted by Scylla: "That nightmare cannot die, being eternal / . . . no power can fight her."[97] The nightmare of history will not die, but Stephen can awake from it by confronting the past and then transforming it in his art.

Although Bloom serves as a potential guide through the past, "Scylla and Charybdis" concludes with a portion of a prophecy fulfilled but with Stephen still an embryonic artist isolated and entrapped by the past. Although still unrecognized by the Dublin literati, Stephen ceases his desire to cast off the voice of Esau and reaffirms his belief in himself as the true inheritor of the literary throne of Dublin. Repeating the concluding lines of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline,* the ending of "Scylla and Charybdis" suggests the fulfillment of the prophecy of the "Peace of the druid priests of Cymbeline" (179) as embodied in the recognition of the rightful heir to the throne. Although Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* concludes with the restoration of the rightful heir, however, the play's resolution occurs only after Cymbeline's Queen and her offspring have been exiled from the play; negating the role of the mother in creation, Cymbeline expresses his fantasy that only he has given birth to his three children: "A mother to the birth of three? / Ne'er mother / Rejoiced deliverance more."[98] Joyce omits the concluding line of *Cymbeline*: "Publish we this peace / To all our subjects." Unable to escape the past and striving to negate maternity by fathering himself, Stephen remains unable to prove his right as heir to the throne by publishing the national epic of Ireland.

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[97]Gifford 256.

[98]Shakespeare, *Cymbeline* 5.6.370-1.

The Moly of Mnemotechnic in "Circe"

"Scylla and Charybdis" concludes with Bloom leading Stephen, still rendered artistically infertile by the past, to the maternity hospital of "Oxen of the Sun;" although Stephen and Bloom meet in "Oxen," they do not merge until they arrive in the Nighttown of "Circe." As Stephen and Bloom combine into the image of Shakespeare in the brothel's mirror, Bloom has the potential to fulfill the role of father-guide that Shakespeare and Eglinton cannot. Although Bloom desires to facilitate Stephen's artistic birth, he seeks to become both a father-guide and a maternal force, the womanly man capable of giving birth to Stephen. Stephen, however, fails to recognize Bloom as a potential father-guide, instead clinging to the desire to father himself that renders him artistically infertile and fearful of mortality. As the embodiment of mortality for Stephen, the ghost of May Dedalus appears within "Circe;" although she may offer the "word known to all men" that could alleviate Stephen's isolation, Stephen hears only his mother's call of "love's bitter mystery," the reality that prevents his retreat into his aesthetic vision of immortality. Cloaked in *amor matris*, the ghost of May Dedalus demands her son's repentance, insisting upon his submission to the law of the father by grasping him with the clawlike hand of the *dio boia*, the God of destruction and damnation. When confronted by his mother's ghost, Stephen smashes the chandelier of the brothel with his asphlant, attempting to bring about an apocalypse that will destroy the nightmare of history by fulfilling Lucifer's call of "Non serviam!." Stephen's apocalypse becomes an act of futility rather than destruction, however, and he once again flees the ghost of his mother by retreating into the intellectual imagination. Although the ghost of May Dedalus does not reappear in the novel after "Circe," Stephen's vision of the Black Mass reveals his continued anxiety over mortality and female fertility.

Unlike Stephen who uses the intellectual imagination to flee the past, Bloom rejects the ethereal nymph he envisions in Nighttown for the reality of experience. Tortured by Bella for his forgetfulness, Bloom seeks to regain his memory by invoking his mother's potato, his own moly to protect against Circe, and his father's mnemotechnic, the art of memory. Bloom's vision of his son Rudy, however, truly restores his memory, reconciling him with the death of his father and son by allowing him to recall and value the past. Although Bloom offers Stephen the gift of mnemotechnic, Stephen fails to recognizes Bloom as a potential father-guide and resists the past that confronts him. As Stephen lies on the streets of Nighttown, he assumes a fetal position and, like a black panther, desires to destroy the womb in an unnatural artistic birth. Bloom, however, prevents Stephen from completely denying "love's bitter mystery" and destroying his maternal origin. Transforming Stephen's threat to destroy the womb into a reconciliation with the mother, Bloom delays Stephen's utter retreat into artistic isolation until he can meet with Molly Bloom, the maternal force that may overcome Stephen's fear of maternity and guide him to artistic birth.

"Oxen of the Sun" recapitulates the history of English prose and emerges in an embryonic potentiality; "Circe" recapitulates the episodes that precede it and prepares Stephen to encounter the maternal force that may facilitate his artistic birth. Unlike the narrator in "Oxen" who assumes the styles of his predecessors, the narrator in "Circe" recedes, and as Vivian Heller describes, "assigns most of the costume changes to Bloom . . . the spectacle that follows is a surrealistic pantomime of *Ulysses*."[99] In the realm of Nighttown, the "arranger and deranger"[100] recapitulates and develops the themes and thoughts of the novel's past, as

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[99]Heller 118.

[100]McGee 116.

"authority, religious or otherwise, emanates from the nether regions of the mind, and art becomes its blasphemous satire and negation."[101] For Stephen, the memory of his mother's dying form that haunts him throughout the novel emerges as a hallucination whose clawlike hand grasps his heart and demands repentance; for Bloom, masochistic desire transforms him into a whore and his knowledge of Molly's infidelity becomes a reenactment of her copulation with Boylan as Bloom watches through the peephole. Michael Gillespie suggests that as each character's past in the novel manifests itself within the episode, the characters also "draw freely on the experiences of other figures in the novel."[102] When helping Bloom into the brothel, a whore uses the same "Hoopsa" that the maternity nurse uses to lift a newborn in "Oxen of the Sun" (314, 409). The story about the Virgin Mary described by Buck's "Phillip Drunk" and "Phillip Sober" and remembered by Stephen in "Proteus" (34) appears in Bloom's hallucination in "Circe" (425).

As the previous episodes of *Ulysses* are recapitulated and transformed to form a new narrative out of the old, the minds of Stephen and Bloom merge in Nighttown. Uniting his past with Bloom's, Stephen suggests that time has ineluctably propelled them toward their meeting: "Moves to one great goal. I am twentytwo. Sixteen years ago he was twentytwo too. Sixteen years ago I twentytwo tumbled. Twentytwo years ago he sixteen fell off his hobbyhorse" (459). In "Circe," Stephen recalls that he "dreamt of watermelon" (466) and Bloom approaches him in mutual recollection of their shared premonition of the events in Nighttown and the return to Bloom's home that follows. In "Proteus," Stephen remembers a dream that foreshadows his

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[101]Colleen Jaurretche, *The Sensual Philosophy* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997) 105.

[102]Michael Gillespie, *Reading the Book of Himself* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989) 169.

meeting with Bloom: "That man led me, spoke. I was not afraid. The melon he had he held against my face. Smiled: creamfruit smell. . . In. Come." (39). Bloom recalls the same dream in "Nausicaa":"Come in. All is prepared. I dreamt. What?."

The most notable moment of Stephen and Bloom's unity occurs when their images merge in the mirror in which Shakespeare's face appears. Prior to meeting Stephen in the brothel, Bloom witnesses a distorted image of both his internal and external self in the shopwindow: "a concave mirror at the side presents to him lovelorn longlost lugubru Booloohoom . . . in the convex mirror unstruck the bonham eyes and fatchuck cheekchops of jollypoldy the rixdix doldy (354). Unlike the distorting mirrors that Bloom first confronts in Nighttown, the mirror in the brothel "accurately reflects the vision of the two men" and functions as "the climax of their merging minds:"[103]

Lynch

(points) The mirror up to nature. *(he laughs)* Hu hu hu hu hu!

(Stephen and Bloom gaze in the mirror. The face of William Shakespeare, beardless, appears there, rigid in facial paralysis, crowned by the reflection of the reindeer antlered hatrack in the hall.)

Shakespeare

(in dignified ventriloquy) 'Tis the loud laugh bespeaks the vacant mind. *(to Bloom)* Thou thoughtest as how thou wastest invisible. Gaze. *(he crows with a black capon's laugh)* Iagogo! How my Oldfellow chokit his Thursdaymornun. Iagogogo! (463)

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[103]Marguerite Harkness, "'Circe': The Mousetrap of *Ulysses*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 12.3 (1975): 267.

Like the "Mouse-trap" play in *Hamlet,* the mirror in the brothel accurately reflects Stephen and Bloom's vision of themselves, fulfilling its purpose to "show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."[104] Like the beardless Shakespeare, both Stephen and Bloom are emasculated; Stephen by his "woman's hand" (458) that cannot create and Bloom by the death of his son and the infidelity of his wife. Both men struggle against Dublin's paralysis; in fact, "Nighttown is rife with the literal corollary of Dublin's disease, namely syphilitic paralysis.[105] As Hamlet strives to reclaim his crown from the usurping brother, Stephen battles against the paralysis of Dublin amid the "Elsinore-like quality in the library."[106] Like Shakespeare, Bloom wears the horns of the cuckold embodied in the reindeer antlered hatrack; Bloom imagines that Boylan "*hangs his hat smartly on a peg of Bloom's antlered head*" (461). As an Iago who tortures the Othello within himself, Bloom derives masochistic pleasure from imagining pairing Molly with "Negro servants in livery . . . Othello black brute" (362) and gazing upon her infidelity with Boylan: "Show! Hide! Show! Plough her! More!" (462).

United with Shakespeare, Stephen's literary father, and Stephen himself through the "mirror up to nature," Bloom becomes a father-guide to Stephen, hoping to facilitate Stephen's emergence from embryonic artist to creative force. After their meeting at the maternity hospital, Bloom follows Stephen to Nighttown: "What am I following him for? Still he's the best of the lot. If I hadn't heard about Mrs. Beaufoy Purefoy I wouldn't have gone and wouldn't have met.

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[104]Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 3.2.22-27.

[105]Heller 122.

[106]Platt 741.

Kismet" (369). The wife of Dublin writer Philip Beaufoy, Mrs. Beaufoy becomes confused with Mina Purefoy, a pregnant woman giving birth throughout *Ulysses*. By linking the two women, Bloom reveals his understanding of the laborious process of artistic creation that Stephen experiences; he follows Stephen hoping to facilitate or perhaps merely observe his artistic birth. Although Bloom acknowledges that fate guided his meeting with Stephen, he also enacts that fate by following him. However, Bloom does not fully recognize his role as father-guide; he lectures Stephen, "Don't smoke. You ought to eat" (457), yet abruptly replies "Not I!" (388) when asked if he is Stephen's father.

Leaving the maternity hospital of "Oxen" with a "glance of motherwit" (345), Bloom views himself as more than a father-guide; he strives to become the paternal and maternal force guiding Stephen's artistic birth. As the "limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower" (71), Bloom equates his male genitals with maternity by altering the plant's description from its original "mother of thousands."[107] In "Circe," Bloom's fantasies reveal his desire to become a maternal force; he depicts himself as "a finished example of the new womanly man" (403). Imagining Mulligan describing him as "bisexually abnormal . . . more sinned against than sinning" (402), Bloom reveals his obeisance to the female power of maternity by linking himself to King Lear; as Lear confronts the female force of the storm, he masks his surrender to his own female inwardness by asserting, "I am a man. More sinned against than sinning."[108] When Bloom imagines himself as a female whore submitting to Bello, a male form of the whoremaster Bella, the androgynous encounter becomes the "exaggeration of traits supposedly typical of the

[107]Gifford 100.

[108]Shakespeare, *King Lear* 3.2.59.

opposite sex; masculine aggressiveness becomes sadism in Bello, while feminine passivity becomes masochism in Bloom."[109]

Unlike the sadomasochistic encounter with Bella/Bello, Bloom's androgynous desire to become a male mother originates in a genuine feeling of fellowship with women. Although Brenda Oded mistakes Bloom's desire to be a maternal force with an actual ability to serve as the primary maternal guide for Stephen, she correctly identifies the sympathetic component to Bloom's androgyny; she claims that Bloom is "not only the fertilizing principle that enters phallus-like . . . but even more important, he is the mother suffering the pangs of birth with Mrs. Purefoy, symbolically preparing to give birth to his new son Stephen."[110] When feeling "a bit light in the head . . . that tired feeling," Bloom explains that he must be experiencing his "monthly" (356) like Molly. Declaring "O, I so want to be a mother," Bloom imagines giving birth to "eight male yellow and white children" with "valuable metallic faces"(403).[111] Imagining Mina Purefoy's labor, Bloom thinks, "Three days imagining groaning on a bed with . . . her belly swollen out. Phew! Dreadful simply! Child's head too big: forceps. Doubled up inside her trying to butt its way out blindly, groping for the way out" (132). Bloom views the birth both from the mother's and the embryo's point of view; sympathizing with both, Bloom may be capable of facilitating the birth of Stephen the embryonic artist as a father-guide to the maternal force that Stephen requires.

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[109]James Fairhall, *James Joyce and the Question of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 191.

[110]Brenda Oded, "The Maternal Ghost in Joyce," *Northeast Modern Language Association* 15.4 (1985): 43.

[111]With names recalling gold and silver, Bloom's children reveal Bloom's desire to unify masculinity and femininity by producing the masculine entity of gold and the feminine silver.

Although Bloom may serve as a potential father-guide and link to a maternal force, Stephen fails to recognize him; Stephen remains consumed by his futile struggle to father himself that he proposes in "Scylla and Charybdis." Following Stephen and Bloom's mutual recollection of their shared dream, Stephen becomes overwhelmed with images of his father Simon and recoils from Bloom into his original desire to produce an immortal word, to achieve the Godlike power of "creation from nothing" (32):

> Stephen
>
> No, I flew. My foes beneath me. And ever shall be. World without end. (*he cries*) *Pater!* Free!
>
> Bloom
>
> I say, look ...
>
> Stephen
>
> Break my spirit, will he? *O merde alors!* (*he cries, his vulture talons sharpened). Hola!* Hillyho! (466)

Stephen retreats to the portion of his dream described in "Scylla and Charybdis" in which he envisions the flight of Daedalus and Icarus, recalling Icarus' cry to his father, "*Pater!"* during his fall. Ignoring the "creamfruit smell. . . In. Come. (39) portion of his dream that foreshadows his meeting with Bloom, Stephen instead focuses on the ethereal glory of the immortal word prior to his and Icarus' fall and faults his father Simon for the return to the earthly world. As Bloom attempts to comfort Stephen and perhaps reveal the similarity of their dream, Stephen confuses him with his father Simon and accuses him of breaking his spirit and causing his fall. Stephen transforms Bloom's words into the threatening demand to submit to

the law of the father; as the vulture with "talons sharpened," Stephen imagines his father Simon saying, "*Hola!* Hillyho!," the call of the falconer used to retrieve his falcon.[112]

Unable to recognize Bloom as a potential father-guide to accepting the past and the maternal force necessary for creation, Stephen becomes consumed with his inability to achieve the immortal word because of his own mortality. Following Simon's command to "Think of your mother's people" (472), Stephen enacts the "Dance of death" (472), a dance that "lacks any cerebral quality and contains instead the auditory, the visual, and the physical."[113] For Stephen, the lack of intellect and thus the inability to produce the immortal world becomes a form of death.

Stephen's dance "stops dead" (473) when the true embodiment of death appears, the ghost of May Dedalus:

> Stephen's mother, emaciated, rises stark through the floor, in leper grey with a wreath of faded orangeblossoms and a torn bridal veil, her face worn and noseless, green with gravemould. Her hair is scant and lank. She fixes her bluecircled hollow eyesockets on Stephen and opens her toothless mouth uttering a silent word. A crowd of virgins and confessors sing voicelessly. (473)

As the nightmare of history made manifest, the ghost of May Dedalus embodies Stephen's own mortality; he is unable to produce the immortal word because he was "wombed in sin darkness . . . made not begotten" (33). As mortals, May Dedalus and the confessors are rendered voiceless by death; Stephen fears that he too will never express more than a "silent word." Stephen

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[112]Gifford 514.

[113]Tucker 123.

blames both his father who kept the family in perpetual poverty and himself who refused to pray for his mother for the decay of May Dedalus that began following her marriage; using her maiden name, she announces, "I was once the beautiful May Goulding. I am dead" (473). Although Stephen attempts to deny the bodily decay of his mother and thus his own mortality, Mulligan emphasizes her grotesque bodily death and suggests Stephen's role in her murder: "She's beastly dead . . . Kinch dogsbody killer her bitchbody . . . Our great sweet mother" (473).

Appearing as a decaying corpse, the ghost of May Dedalus confronts Stephen with his own mortality yet may also offer Stephen the word known to all men. When the ghost says, "All must go through it Stephen. More women than men in the world. You too. Time will come" (473), she confronts Stephen with his own mortality while also offering hope by suggesting that love is the word known to all men. Stephen senses the possibility that his mother may offer an end to his isolation and begs her, "Tell me the word, mother, if you know now. The word known to all men;" she answers, however, "Who had pity for you when you were sad among the strangers? Prayer is allpowerful . . . Repent, Stephen" (474). Although her answer may imply a role for Bloom who offered pity to Stephen among the strangers in the maternity hospital and the brothel, May Dedalus' ghost answers Stephen's question with a demand for repentance. Vivian Heller suggests that "By glorifying guilt as his true vocation, she betrays her symbolic identity. She represents the devouring claims of the past, claims that must be thrust aside if Stephen is to triumph over parlaysis."[114]

Stephen depicts the ghost of his mother as a ghoul that cloaks itself in appeals to memories of *amor matris.* Recalling when Stephen, "sang that song for me. *Love's bitter*

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[114]Heller 129.

mystery" (474), May Dedalus both evokes a tender moment with her son and threatens him with the impossibility of retreating to his aesthetic vision to escape the reality of his mortality. Assuming the position of the Virgin Mary praying on Mount Calvary following Christ's crucifixion, the ghost of May Dedalus appeals to Stephen as the complete embodiment of *amor matris*: "Have mercy on Stephen, Lord, for my sake! Inexpressible was my anguish when expiring with love, grief, and agony on Mount Calvary" (475). The moment Stephen asks for the word and begs his mother's forgiveness, however, the ghost demands his repentance, a surrender to the law of the Catholic church: "Stephen's mother has no word of her own beyond the silence of death, which reaches out to crush Stephen and command him back to the church of the father."[115] William Schutte describes the call to repentance as an implied threat that transforms the ghost of Stephen's mother into the servant of the *dio boia*, the hangman God: "the God in whose name such threats can be made must be himself a God of destruction, a *dio boia*" (104). As Stephen "*choking with fright, remorse and horror*" proclaims, "They say I killed you mother . . . Cancer did it, not I," his mother points at Stephen's breast and threatens "Beware God's hand!" (474). When a crab "*sticks deep its grinning claws in Stephen's heart*" (475), May Dedalus fulfills her threat as her hand enacts the will of the *dio boia* by becoming the claw of a crab; the hand of the *dio boia* that killed May Dedalus with cancer attacks Stephen in the form of a crab, the symbol of cancer.[116]

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[115]McGee 139.

[116]Cancerous tumors were "named for the notion that the swollen veins around it were like a crab's limbs" (Schutte, 114).

Confronted with the demand to repent as his mother's ghost enacts the will of the *dio boia*, Stephen proclaims, "The intellectual imagination! With me all or not at all. *Non serviam!*" (475). In a final reaction to the ghost of his mother, Stephen shouts "Nothung!" and smashes the chandelier of the brothel. Calling Stephen's smashing of the chandelier a "form of heroic enterprise," Richard Ellmann suggests that the "intellectual imagination preserves him from surrender to mother Dedalus, mother Ireland."[117] However, although Stephen's reaction combats the threat of paralysis posed by his mother and Dublin, the smashing of the chandelier does not constitute a fulfillment of the "destruction-creation at the center of the artistic process" as Ellmann suggests. Rather than acting out the creative process, Stephen smashes the lamp in a desperate reaction to the fear imposed by his mother's ghost: "he has brought something to a temporary resolution . . . he has made a decision in violence. Shattering the lamp is a trivial gesture without any creative result."[118] Although Stephen believes that his shout of "Nothung" transforms his ashplant into Siegfried's sword and fearlessly restores the power that the father could not,[119] his cry also reveals the necessity of a father-guide and maternal force to facilitate his artistic birth; the word "nothung" in German means "needful."

Retreating to the intellectual imagination, Stephen regresses into the desperate cry of "Non serviam!" from *Portrait*. Early in "Circe," Stephen appears to be close to realizing the importance of a connection with others, the need to "Act. Be acted on" (173): "So that gesture,

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[117]Richard Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972) 145.

[118]McGee 141.

[119]In the second opera of Wagner's *Ring*, Siegmund retrieves a magic sword but the sword's magic power is withdrawn and he is killed. In the third opera, Siegmund's son Siegfried restores the sword's magic power because he "does not know the meaning of fear." In the final opera, Siegfried uses the magic sword to unwittingly bring about the Twilight of the Gods (Gifford, 518).

not music not odour would be a universal language (253). Following the shattering of the chandelier, Stephen proclaims "I detest action" and retreats into his intellect during his conflict with Privates Compton and Carr; when they threaten to punch him, Stephen replies, "you are quite right. Doctor Swift says one man in armour will beat ten men in their shirts. Shirt is synecdoche. Part for the whole" (480). Rather than confronting the ghost of his mother and his own mortality, Stephen is confronted by her; he reacts rather than acts. Without confronting and transforming the past, Stephen will never learn its value and will remain artistically infertile; as Marguerite Harkness suggests, "The events of 'Circe' establish Stephen's guilt over his mother's death and yet they cannot solve his real problems."[120]

As Stephen's exclamation of "non serviam" once again fixes him in the isolated realm of intellect and artistic infertility, it identifies him with Lucifer and thus "suggests that he has understood all along what his choice might imply."[121] Just as Siegfried uses his sword Nothung to bring about the "Twilight of the Gods" in the final opera of the *Ring*, Stephen's cry brings about an apocalypse, the exact opposite of creation:

> *(He lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier. Time's livid final flame leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry.)* (475)

In "Nestor," Stephen reads a description of the apocalypse that mirrors his own attempt in "Circe": "I hear the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry, and time one livid final flame" (20). As the ghost of May Dedalus becomes the "womb from which all history's

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[120]Harkness 263.

[121]Schutte 115.

nightmares spring,"[122] Stephen hopes to destroy her and the past by bringing about time's "final flame." Having "sinned against the light" (347) by smashing the chandelier, Stephen chooses to destroy the world rather than submit to it and the mortality it entails. As William Schutte suggests, "Stephen the creator is also the destroyer of light as God the Creator is also the *dio boia*."[123]

Stephen's apocalypse, however, only occurs in the realm of his imagination; following his shattering of the chandelier the gasjet goes "Pwfungg!" (476) and life is restored. Realizing the futility of his action, Stephen leaves the brothel and abandons his ashplant, the sword that he previously believed would bring about the apocalypse. Although the ghost of May Dedalus does not appear again in *Ulysses*, Stephen's vision of the Black Mass reveals his continuing anxiety over maternity, creativity, and Catholicism:

> *On an eminence, the centre of the earth, rises the fieldalter of Saint Barbara. Black candles rise from its gospel of epistle horns. From the high barbacans of the tower two shafts of light fall on the smokepalled altarstone. On the altarstone Mrs Mina Purefoy, goddess of unreason, lies, naked, fettered, a chalice resting on her swollen belly.* (489)

Locating the altar of the Black Mass in the "centre of the earth," what Dante's *Inferno* calls the "nethermost pit of hell,"[124] Stephen reverses the Christian Mass into one of "horror, of fear, of enchantment in the sense of black magic, of flowing blood and lustful flesh."[125] The Black Mass

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[122]Heller 129.

[123]Schutte 115.

[124]Gifford 527.

[125]Robert Boyle, "The Priesthoods of Stephen and Buck," *Approaches to Ulysses*, ed. T. Staley and B. Benstock (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970) 33.

uses the altar of Saint Barbara, patron saint of those in battle and the only female saint to bear the attribute of the sacramental cup and wafer.[126] Although Patrick McGee identifies Saint Barbara as "the redeemer, the feminine Christ, the artist as woman,"[127] the Black Mass does not celebrate the female as creator; Stephen's vision expresses his fear of maternity and the mortality it represents. Following her conversion to Catholicism, Saint Barbara cut a third window in her tower so that there would be a window for each member of the Trinity.[128] The Black Mass describes only "two shafts of light," recalling the "two shafts of soft daylight" (10) Stephen sees in his own Martello Tower. Rather than identifying Saint Barbara with redemption and creativity, Stephen associates her altar with the stifling Martello Tower where Mulligan parodies the Catholic Mass and Haines patronizes him about Irish art. Stephen also denies Mina Purefoy her generative labor; he ignores the childbirth she enacted in "Oxen," leaving her "fettered" with a still "swollen belly." Unlike the Catholic Mass that transubstantiates wine into blood, the Black Mass is celebrated with a "blooddripping host" (489), an image of menstruation that serves as another representation of the female fertility that Stephen fears.[129]

Stephen's hallucinations in Nighttown reveal his anxiety over the death of his mother, preventing him from confronting and transforming the "nightmare of history" into artistic

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[126]Gifford 527.

[127]McGee 147.

[128]Gifford 527.

[129] Stephen's fear of menstrual blood foreshadows Molly's menstruation in "Penelope": "I bet the cat itself is better off than us have we too much blood up in us or what O patience above its pouring out of me like the sea" (633).

creation. Stephen retreats into his isolating intellect when confronted by the past, preferring to dwell in the imaginative realm of immortal art rather than the reality of common experience. Although in his fantasies Bloom also engages the immortal aspects of the imaginary, he prefers the reality of experience. Using the moly of mnemotechnic provided by his father and embodied in his mother's potato, Bloom escapes the imaginary by recalling and valuing the past. Envisioning Rudy as the final restoration of his moly of mnemotechnic, Bloom pays obeisance to the past and may thus offer Stephen a reconciliation with his own maternal origin by encountering Molly, his potential mother-guide through the past to artistic creation.

In Nighttown, Bloom envisions the picture of the nymph that hangs over his nuptial bed, juxtaposing her ethereal quality with the bodily actions she witnesses in his bedroom. Praising the nymph's "classic curves, beautiful immortal," Bloom recalls his previous worship of her ethereal beauty; she reminds him when "you kissed me in four places. And with loving pencil you shaded my eyes, my bosom, and my shame" (445). At first apologizing for the bodily realm of his bedroom that forced the nymph to witness "soiled personal linen" and the administration of enemas (446), Bloom nearly succumbs to the "mastery and inhibition of desire" embodied in the nymph.[130] However, when the nymph appears "*in nun's white habit*" and declares, "No more desire . . . Only the ethereal. Where dreamy creamy gull waves o'er the waters dull" (450), Bloom rejects the ethereal in favor of the reality of bodily experience: "You have broken the spell. The last straw. If there were only the ethereal where would you all be, postulants and novices? Shy but willing like an ass pissing" (451). As Bloom's trouser button snaps and he detects the smell of "Rut. Onions. Stale. Sulphur. Grease" (452), the physical world decimates

[130]McGee 132.

the ethereal and the nymph flees, a "cloud of stench escaping from the cracks" (451). Unlike Stephen who cannot accept his bodily existence because of the mortality it implies, Bloom rejects the ethereal, immortal aspect of his vision in favor of his bodily reality; Marguerite Harkness suggests that Bloom's rejection of the ethereal originates in the "earth-bound humanity that mundanely snaps his button instead of the cataclysmic rending of the world that attends Stephen's destruction of the chandelier."[131]

Similar to Bloom's rejection of the nymph, his confrontation with Bella/Bello reveals his ability to accept his bodily experience and escape the isolating realm of the ethereal. In the midst of the fantasy of lacing Bello's boot, Bloom acknowledges the reality of Molly's infidelity by recalling her first meeting with Boylan: "Not to lace the wrong eyelet as I did the night of the bazaar dance. Bad luck. Hook in wrong tache of her . . . person you mentioned. That night she met . . . Now!" (432). Vivian Heller suggests, "It is Bello who sees to it that he [Bloom] not only acts but is vigorously acted upon;"[132] unlike Stephen who is only confronted by the past, Bloom actively integrates it into his fantasy.

As W.B. Yeats wrote, "Hell is the place for those why deny;"[133] for Stephen who denies the past and bodily reality, he must suffer the "agony of the damned" (428) until he can confront the "maternal hell"[134] that renders him artistically infertile. Bloom, however, escapes the hell of Nighttown by accepting and valuing the past rather than denying it. In "Circe," guilt and terror

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[131]Harkness 270.

[132]Heller 124.

[133]Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* 141.

[134]Oded 43.

are inextricably linked with forgetfulness. Bello tortures Bloom by implying his forgetfulness; turning him into "Rip van Wink! Rip van Winkle!" (442), Bello taunts Bloom with an inability to remember or experience the past. Begging to be returned to the present so he may reclaim his past and future, Bloom exclaims, "To drive me mad! Moll! I forgot! . . . Let me go. I will return. I will prove" (442).

Although the "Moll!" Bloom conjures to protect him from Bello implies his connection to his wife Molly, throughout the day and even in his fantasies Bloom never forgets Molly. Instead, his call of "Moll!" most likely refers to a desire to regain his moly, the talisman Hermes gives Odysseus to protect him from Circe, as represented by the potato Bloom's mother gives to him. As his "talisman. Heirloom" (453), the "hard black shriveled potato" (388) that Bloom carries in his pocket reminds him of his mother who carried a potato, a "spud against the rheumatiz" (347). Unlike Odysseus who uses his moly to protect him against Circe, Bloom gives his to a whore; giving away the "relic of poor mamma" (453), Bloom denies his maternal origin and his past, thus engaging in the forgetfulness that Bello uses to torture him. In the midst of his sadomasochistic encounter with Bello, Bloom realizes that losing the potato, and thus his grip on reality and memory, has left him vulnerable: "I should not have parted with my talisman" (431). Following Bloom's rejection of the ethereal in favor of the reality of experience, he asks for the return of his memory as represented by the potato: "There is a memory attached to it. I should like to have it" (453).

As Bloom's mother offers the moly of the potato, Bloom's father offers mnemotechnic, the art of memory. Like Stephen's memory of his mother, however, Bloom's memory of his father originates in a guilt for abandoning the religion of his predecessors. Bloom's father

Rudolph appears with "yellow poison streaks" on his face that recall his suicide; wearing the cloak of an "Elder of Zion" (357), imaginary Jewish leaders depicted in an anti-semitic pamphlet that detailed a plot to transform the world into a Jewish state,[135] Rudolph embodies Bloom's exiled status as a Jew that led him to leave the religion. Although Rudolph faults Bloom as his "dear son Leopold who left the house of his father" (357), Bloom accepts the father's guilt rather than denying the predecessor in whom it originates; he replies in the language of his father, "*Ja, ich weiss, papachi*" (357).[136] Acknowledging and accepting his past, Bloom receives the cure for his forgetfulness that allows his escape from the paralyzing fantasy of Nighttown; when Bloom complains of the "unusually fatiguing day," Rudolph offers, "See, you have forgotten. Exercise your mnemotechnic . . . He will surely remember" (419).

Following his confrontation and acceptance of the past, Bloom receives two "antidotes to the drug that is Nighttown"[137] that prevent forgetfulness and fortify memory, the moly of the potato provided by his mother and the mnemotechnic offered by his father. Unlike Stephen whose mother's ghostly hand becomes that of the threatening *dio boia*, Bloom believes that the "touch of a deadhand cures" (419) and thus accepts the gift of memory from his deceased parents. Instead of denying the mother's offering of "love's bitter mystery" that entails both mortality and *amor matris* as Stephen does, Bloom pays obeisance to the "touch of the deadhand" (419) that offers both the knowledge of death and the loving gift of memory offered by his parents.

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[135]Gifford 456.

[136] Bloom replies, "Yes, I know father."

[137]Heller 126.

Although Bloom receives the gift of memory from his parents, his vision of his deceased son Rudy ultimately restores his moly of mnemotechnic, reconciling Bloom with the death of his father and his son:

> *Against the dark wall a figure appears slowly, a fairy boy of eleven, a changeling, kidnapped, dressed in an Eton suit with glass shoes and a little bronze helmet, holding a book in his hand. He reads from right to left inaudibly, smiling, kissing the page.)*
>
> Bloom
>
> (*wonderstruck, calls inaudibly*) Rudy!
>
> Rudy
>
> *(gazes, unseeing, into Bloom's eyes and goes on reading, kissing smiling. He has a delicate mauve face. On his suit he has diamond and ruby buttons. In his free left hand he holds a slim ivory cane with a violet bowknot. A white lambkin peeps out of his waistcoat pocket.*) (497)

Unlike Stephen who attempts to flee the ghost of his mother, Bloom beckons the vision of his son, calling "Rudy." Rudy does not answer; by his presence, however, Rudy offers Bloom a restoration of his moly as both a Hermes figure and a representation of Bloom's father. Despite the similarity between Bloom's vision of Rudy carrying a "slim ivory cane" and Stephen wielding his ashplant, Rudy appears to Bloom as a restorative Hermes figure rather than an embodiment of Bloom's desire to father Stephen. As Don Gifford suggests, the bronze helmet, ivory cane, and white lambkin fit more with a description of Hermes, whose "attributes are a hat with a wide brim. . . the herald's staff given him by Apollo . . . and a lambkin."[138] As Hermes

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[138]Hermes was frequently represented as a shepherd with a single animal from his flock (Gifford 529).

provides the moly to Odysseus to protect him from Circe, Rudy offers a restoration of the moly of mnemotechnic by reconciling Bloom to his own father. Depicted reading left to right in the manner of "a devout young Jewish scholar,"[139] Rudy evokes the image of Bloom's father who Bloom remembers reading left to right throughout the day (101, 420). As Bloom's father offers the gift of mnemotechnic to his son, Rudy offers the restoration of the art of memory to Bloom.

Evoking the past through his vision of Rudy and recognizing its restorative value, Bloom may function as a guide to confronting the nightmare of history that Stephen so desperately needs in order to reconcile mortality with maternity and overcome his artistic infertility. Stephen, however, clings to his desire to father himself; in fact, the vision of his mother's ghost in the brothel and the failed apocalypse instigate a further retreat into the isolated "intellectual imagination" that renews his desire to create the immortal word by fathering himself. Despite Bloom's plea for Stephen to "Come home. You'll get into trouble" (483), Stephen provokes Privates Compton and Carr who in turn punch him. As Stephen "*lies prone, his face to the sky*" (491), Bloom stands over him and calls him by his first name. Rather than answering the call of his potential father-guide, Stephen invokes the image of the "Black panther. Vampire" (496). In Bruno Latini's *Il Tesoro* which Stephen acknowledges reading in "Scylla and Charybdis," the image of the panther represents an "unnatural nature:"[140] "It is said that the panther, when it has grown within the mother's womb, refuses to await normal birth; instead it claws its way out, destroying the womb in the process."[141] Refusing natural artistic birth because of a desire to

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[139]Gifford 529

[140]McGee 148.

[141]Latini in Schutte 100.

create an immortal word, Stephen denies the past and seeks to destroy the mother's womb that makes the immortal word flesh. Condemning the "vampire" mother and the "vampire poem" that epitomizes the artistic infertility inflicted by the past, Stephen the embryonic artist assumes a fetal position as he prepares to destroy the mother's womb in premature birth: "*He turns on his left side, sighing, doubling himself together*" (496).

As Stephen prepares for his premature artistic birth, he quotes from Yeats' "Who Goes With Fergus?," recalling his mother's request for him to sing of "love's bitter mystery," the embodiment of the threat of mortality Stephen associates with maternity. As a father-guide to facilitate Stephen's acceptance and valuation of the past, Bloom transforms the poem that torments Stephen into an emblem of love and maternal reconciliation. Bloom mistakes Stephen's utterance of "Fergus" to be the name of a girl that could offer the love and acceptance of the female body that Stephen needs: "Ferguson, I think I caught. A girl. Some girl. Best thing could happen him" (497). Remembering May Dedalus' vulnerability, Bloom invokes her memory and reestablishes Stephen's connection with her: "Face reminds me of his poor mother" (497). As Bloom "stands guard" over Stephen, he prevents the unnatural birth of the embryo artist that would destroy the womb and leave Stephen isolated in the realm of the imaginary, still denying the common experience that his true artistic birth necessitates. Bloom prevents the denial of the maternal force, allowing Stephen to continue his gestation until encountering Molly Bloom, his potential mother-guide to artistic creation.

Afterword

"Scylla and Charybdis," "Oxen of the Sun," and "Circe"all conclude with Stephen moving toward Bloom the father-guide yet failing to recognize him as such because of a desire to produce the immortal word by self-fathering. In "Circe," however, Bloom prevents Stephen's destruction of the womb and retreat into artistic isolation; no longer in the "darkness of the brothel preparing for the discourse of light to come in 'Itacha,'[142] Stephen and Bloom walk toward Bloom's home, the realm of Molly the maternal guide to creation. Marguerite Harkness notes that in the final leg of their journey encompassed in "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca," Stephen and Bloom move toward a spiritual union following their experience in Nighttown:

> The rituals pre-Circe are obviously wrong; they do not work; they are not effective; they describe the malady of Dublin. But the rituals after Circe, the cocoa drinking and the symbolic urination of Bloom and Stephen are much truer and more symbolic of community than are the earlier rituals, the conversation in the library, the drinking at Byrne's, or the fight with the citizen.[143]

Rather than alienated figures wandering about Dublin, Stephen and Bloom move together toward home and share in the rituals of community that may aid Stephen in overcoming his artistic isolation. Through his vision of Rudy, Bloom has reconciled with his past, accepting that it cannot be restored but also understanding that it can be evoked and valued; life is merely "history repeating itself with a difference" (535). Rather than viewing Stephen as another Rudy,

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[142]Jaurretche 104

[143]Harkness 261.

Bloom knows that the past will not come alive again and seeks to act only as a guide to Stephen toward a maternal reconciliation: "Has Bloom's coin [Rudy] returned? Never" (571).

Unlike Bloom, Stephen continues his struggle with the past; however, his urination under Molly's window offers a potential movement away from his artistic infertility. Looking upward toward the moon and Molly both "constant under all her phases" (576), Stephen and Bloom urinate, an act Joyce associates in *Finnegan's Wake* with poetic creativity and the writing of *Ulysses*:[144] "first Stephen, then Bloom, in penumbra urinated . . . their gazes, first Bloom's, then Stephen's, elevated to the projected luminous and semiluminous shadow" (577). Although often depicted as a bountiful earth-goddess, Molly also appears as a bodily woman of experience who sees the beauty in the common, in her husband the commercial traveler: "I suppose there isnt in all creation another man with the habits he has" (634). Rejecting Stephen's retreat to the intellectual imagination and his aesthetic vision of the immortal artist, Molly acknowledges the need to "Act. Be acted upon" that Stephen flees: "I wouldnt give a snap of my two fingers for all their learning why dont they go and create something" (643). She insists upon the necessity of *amor matris*, "where would all of them be if they hadnt all a mother to look after them" (600), and transforms the nightmare of history into the moment of recollection and creation: "Molly's insomnia testifies that the night might once again become the time of creative reveries."[145] Looking to Molly, both the bountiful earth-goddess and bodily woman of common experience, Stephen and Bloom urinate simultaneously, suggesting a potential union that could guide Stephen through the past to artistic creation.

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[144]Gifford 585.

[145]DiBattista 168.

The act of urination, however, does not reveal a fulfillment of Stephen's artistic potentiality. Bloom has led Stephen to the maternal force of artistic creation; it remains unclear if Stephen accepts Bloom's invitation to return the next day, never meets with Molly but overcomes his artistic infertility after the simultaneous urination with Bloom, or continues his retreat into the isolating intellectual imagination that prevents him from confronting the past. Stephen clearly, however, will not overcome his artistic infertility until he reconciles with the death of his mother and the nightmare of history that she embodies; as Patrick McGee suggests, "Without a woman, the Word is only breath."[146]

As readers of *Ulysses*, our only guide to Stephen's future comes from looking back, searching the novel for clues to Joyce's providential design. When in search of a father-guide for Stephen, one must look to "Scylla and Charybdis,""Oxen of the Sun," and "Circe" as this paper has attempted; however, the role of the father and Stephen's rejection of maternity and paternity pervades the novel. A closer reading of "Nestor," "Hades," "Ithaca," and "Penelope" would offer a starting point, but ultimately it appears that Joyce leaves Stephen's future unknown in the realm of *Ulysses*; instead, he concludes his novel with a promise for Molly and Bloom, a reconciliation embodied by the "last word (human, all too human)"[147] that completes the novel but also returns us to its beginning: "Yes."

Gifford, Don. *Ulysses Annotated.* California: University of California Press, 1988.

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[146]McGee 146.

[147]Ellmann, *James Joyce* 501.

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