The subject of the novel's first three chapters is Stephen Dedalus, whose life from infantile sense perception to rebellion and presumed expatriation was the subject of Joyce's first novel. Hugh Kenner's excellent study of the Portrait describes in detail the manner in which "each chapter . . . gathers up the thematic material of the preceding ones and entwines them [sic] with a dominant theme of its own." This very same practice informs the two groups of three chapters which, I have said, are devoted to the representation of Stephen and of Bloom respectively. The major theme of one chapter becomes a contributing element to the major theme of the next until, by the end of the third chapter in Stephen's case and the sixth in Bloom's, the situation, the personality, the attitude, and even the thoughts about his destiny of the character have been fully revealed. The two groups of chapters have similar thematic development and other similarities, such as the roles of Malachi Mulligan and Blazes Boylan. Each of the novel's two chief antagonists is shown to be the specific cause of the problems confronting the protagonists in their introductory chapters, and they both begin to function (Boylan through his letter) immediately. In their case, the Homeric analogy is a distinct enrichment; both correspond to Antinous, the chief suitor—Mulligan in
Antinous' relation to Telemachus as mocker and as usurper of his rightful patrimony, Boylan in his suit of Penelope. The novel begins at about eight o'clock on the morning of June 16, 1904, just ten days short of a full year from the burial of Mrs. Mary Dedalus. It begins on the parapet of a "Martello" tower on Dublin Bay, built by the English to frustrate a French expedition in aid of the Irish rebellion of 1798: a monument of Ireland subjected.

1 the tower

The first chapter has two principal themes, and "stately, plump Buck Mulligan" is the initiator of both. He introduces the first when the banter with which he begins the novel takes Dublin Bay ("the sea") as its subject:

—Our mighty mother, Buck Mulligan said.
He turned abruptly his great searching eyes from the sea to Stephen's face.
—The aunt thinks you killed your mother, he said. That's why she won't let me have anything to do with you.
—Someone killed her, Stephen said gloomily.
—You could have knelt down, damn it, Kinch, when your dying mother asked you, Buck Mulligan said. I'm hyperborean as much as you. But to think of your mother begging you with her last breath to kneel down and pray for her. And you refused. There is something sinister in you. . . . (7)

In response, Stephen "broods" about his mother's illness, death, and visit to him in a dream, "her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath . . . mute, reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes."
Stephen's combination of mourning and self-reproach is interrupted by Mulligan's insistence that he disclose what he has "up your nose against me." When Stephen says that the offense was his remark that Mrs. Dedalus was "beastly dead," Mulligan offers an apology after some preliminary comments on death:

—And what is death, he asked, your mother's or yours or my own? . . . It's a beastly thing and nothing else. . . . Her cerebral lobes are not functioning. . . . I didn't mean to offend the memory of your mother.

He had spoken himself into boldness. Stephen, shielding the gaping wounds which the words had left in his heart, said very coldly:

—I am not thinking of the offence to my mother.

—Of what, then? Buck Mulligan asked.

—Of the offence to me, Stephen answered. Buck Mulligan swung around on his heel.

—O, an impossible person! he exclaimed. (10)

Stephen does not deserve Mulligan's angry response to his statement. In the first place, he is speaking with an assumed bravado, "shielding the gaping wounds which the words had left in his heart," so that he apparently is concerned with the offense to his mother. Secondly, it is not he but Mulligan himself who is "an impossible person." He has called Stephen "poor dogsbody." He holds not that Stephen's body is related to that of a dog, but that Stephen himself is similar to a dog because he is no more than a body. Mulligan is a complete materialist, believes humans to be only highly developed animals. It is his denial of the existence of the soul that he had expressed in "O, it's only Dedalus whose mother is beastly dead," so that Stephen is fully justified in speaking of an offense to himself.

Appeasingly, Mulligan tells Stephen to follow him down for breakfast with their English guest:

—Don't mope over it all day, he said. I'm inconsequent. Give up the moody brooding.

His head vanished but the drone of his descending voice boomed out of the stairhead:

And no more turn aside and brood
Upon love's bitter mystery
For Fergus rules the brazen cars. (11)
The lines are from a short lyric by Yeats, printed under the title “Who Goes With Fergus?” and included in the first version of The Countess Cathleen. Joyce heard it sung by Florence Farr during the famous controversial premiere of the play in 1899, “set the poem to music and praised it as the best lyric in the world.” Mulligan’s recitation recalls to Stephen his singing the song to his mother during her last illness, after which “Silent with awe and pity I went to her bedside.” Ironically, Mulligan’s lyrical advice that Stephen “no more turn aside and brood” further intensifies his brooding. And the word from the song is precise. The chapter shows how Stephen’s mind sits on his refusal to obey his mother’s last wish that he pray for her and on related thoughts about her: “Memories beset his brooding brain” (11). After Mulligan’s exit he thinks again of the dream in which she had come to him and reproached him. Then he thinks of her death-bed and “Her glazing eyes, staring out of death, to shake and bend my soul. On me alone. . . . Her eyes on me to strike me down” (12). He utters a protest (“No, mother. Let me be and let me live”), then joins Mulligan and Haines for breakfast and turns his thought to present problems. The treatment of the first of the chapter’s principal themes ends with the introduction of the second: usurpation.

The significance of the theme of Stephen’s “brooding” depends upon the fact that the “mother” whose reproach evokes his alternating guilt and protest is more than the dead Mary Dedalus. Mulligan refers to Dublin Bay as “Our mighty mother” (7), and Stephen then associates the Bay and his mother in his thoughts:

The ring of bay and skyline held a dull green mass of liquid. A bowl of white china had stood beside her deathbed holding the green sluggish bile which she had torn up from her rotting liver by fits of loud groaning vomiting. (7)

The association of Dublin Bay with Stephen’s mother seems to relate her to Ireland, motherland. In The Countess Cathleen, Cathleen says that Fergus’ song was sung to her by the bard to comfort her; and the similarity with the situation
in which Stephen sang, and with Stephen's conception of himself, is apparent.

Stephen's mother is also (though more fully in later chapters) associated with the Church. She has always been thoroughly devout, she remains for Stephen the one example of pure love, and she reproaches him, in his brooding, for refusing to pray for her—an offense less to Mary Dedalus than to the God and Church of the Roman Catholics, for he spurns not his mother but the action he is asked to perform. Mary Dedalus represents for her son another Mary, symbol of love and holiness, and the Church so largely devoted to her worship. Stephen is brooding not only about his mother, but also about his "mother country" and his "Mother Church"; for not just one but all three bore him and nurtured him, and he has been an unfaithful son to all three. Stephen's guilty brooding about country and religion may have been catalyzed by his mother's death; it certainly was not prominent in the Portrait. But however it came about, the sense of guilt bound up in the word "mother" is complex and is to be with him through much of the day.

A very different feeling about a complementary symbolic parent is also to be with him; and persistent, although slight, hints of it run through the chapter. The first of these is Mulligan's recitation from "Who Goes with Fergus." The nature of Fergus in Yeats' poem is ambiguous. In his other poem about him, "Fergus and the Druid," Yeats identifies the warrior of the Red Branch cycle of Irish legends ("king of the proud Red Branch kings"), Fergus mac Roig, and portrays him as relinquishing his kingdom to become a wizard; Yeats is known to have seen Fergus as a powerful wizard in a séance, apparently combining him in his imagination with one of the gods in the oldest Irish cycle (the Tuatha de Danaan), Fergus leth-derg. However, Fergus mac Roig was said to have risen from the grave to restore one of the ancient epics to Ireland, and to have given up his kingdom either for the mother of his successor or for poetry; and another namesake is a poet-prophet of the third (Finn) cycle, Fergus True-Lips.

The ambiguity of "Fergus" is an enrichment in Ulysses, of course, but the focus in the present context seems to be
on the lord of the heaven and the earth, not of the poetic imagination: Mulligan's three lines counsel Stephen to resign himself to God's will. They also portray the subject of Yeats' poem inaccurately:

Who Goes with Fergus?

Who will go drive with Fergus now,
And pierce the deep wood's woven shade,
And dance upon the level shore?
Young man, lift up your russet brow,
And lift your tender eyelids, maid,
And brood on hopes and fear no more.

And no more turn aside and brood
Upon love's bitter mystery;
For Fergus rules the brazen cars,
And rules the shadows of the wood,
And the white breast of the dim sea
And all dishevelled wandering stars.

The plainly distorted, severe masculine deity of the lines "boomed out" by Mulligan corresponds to the God who took Stephen's mother ("—Someone killed her, Stephen said gloomily"). And although Fergus is not called "father," Mulligan's recitation initiates a "father" motif in the chapter. His announcing to Haines that Stephen has a theory that "he"—the ambiguous pronoun can refer to either Hamlet or Stephen—"himself is the ghost of his own father" (in essence has no father) is the first recurrence of the motif. Haines is explicitly (and obviously) "bemused," for he mentions a theological interpretation of the play as representing "The Son striving to be atoned with the Father." His erudite stupidity serves to associate with the two Hamlets: the Father akin to Fergus, and His Son. Mulligan's response is to sing the "Ballad of Joking Jesus," which asserts the non-paternity of "Joseph the Joiner." Stephen remains silent on the subject, but he thinks of heretical views of Christ, especially those of the Arians and
the Monarchians (the school of Sabellius) which are the two principal heresies concerning the relationship of the Father and the Son.

In the words of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*:

the genuine doctrine of Arius . . . denies that the Son is of one essence, nature, or substance with God; He is not consubstantial . . . with the Father, and therefore not like Him. . . .

The view of the Sabellians was directly opposite, that “the Father and the Son” are “but one Person; . . . God the Father appears on earth as Son”; yet Stephen turns impartially from “Arius, warring his life long upon the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father” to “the subtle African heresiarch Sabellius who held that the Father was Himself His own Son” (22). He can do so because the antipodal heresies both deny the Sonship of Christ. Therefore, they deny the corresponding Fatherhood of God. And his own theory about the two Hamlets is the Sabellian religious doctrine of the-Father-His-own-Son in its obverse form—with the stress placed where he wants it.

The difference between Stephen’s “parents” is plain and that in his attitudes toward them is equally so. Through most of the book the thought of “father” provides a complement and contrast to his “brooding” about “mother.”

Awaiting Stephen at the breakfast table in company with Mulligan is Mulligan’s friend, Haines, down from Oxford to see the wild Irish in their natural habitat. The “stranger” is superficial, hypocritical, sententious, prim, and stupid. However, although Stephen does not detect it, he has one virtue which redeems him from condemnation along with Mulligan: he is completely free of malice. Haines’ rubber-necking Hibernophilia seems compounded of equal parts of Sassenach guilt and spiritual kinship with those cultured Englishmen who in the late eighteenth century discovered Ossian, the noble Omai of the South Seas, and Ann Yearsley, the poetical milkmaid. Mulligan hopes to exploit him.
Stephen is frightened of him at night, and disapproves of his presence for nationalistic reasons and because he is, in Mulligan's words, "dreadful," "ponderous," and "Bursting with money and indigestion."

The introit with which Mulligan the mock priest opens the novel features a bowl of lather and a razor and mirror crossed on its rim. The razor and mirror are in the pocket of Mulligan's dressing-gown. The bowl of lather remains on the parapet, however, and Stephen, before descending to join Mulligan and Haines, debates whether or not to take it down with him:

He went over to it, held it in his hands awhile, feeling its coolness, smelling the clammy slaver of the lather in which the brush was stuck. So I carried the boat of incense then at Clongowes. I am another now and yet the same. A servant too. A server of a servant. (13)

Stephen takes the shavingbowl down. At Clongowes Wood the servant served was the celebrant, the master, the Church. Now the servant is the jester Mulligan, the master, Haines, delineating the relationship of the English and those Irish who "sell much more than she ever had and do a roaring trade," as Stephen says of a prostitute later in the book. That Stephen should in turn serve this subtle traitor is strange, but no less true. Mulligan constantly gives him orders: "Kinch, wake up. Bread, butter, honey" (13), "Kinch, get the jug" (15), "Fill us out some more tea, Kinch" (16). This fact, and Mulligan's humiliating discussion of cast-off clothing he has given and "must give" to the impoverished Stephen, suggest that a power struggle has been going on; it is about to reach its conclusion. The struggle is for rule of the Martello tower, the common home of the poet and the scientist, like the bay it overlooks a representative of Ireland. The symbol of control is, quite properly, the key. Ancient tradition held that the poet rules Ireland, that he sits on the right hand of the king in council, and that his wisdom prevails. Correspondingly, Stephen possesses the key. But today it changes hands. Stephen reflects that the critical point in their unacknowledged struggle has been reached:
He wants that key. It is mine, I paid the rent. . . .
He will ask for it. That was in his eyes. (21)

The poet-prophet has not lost his traditional powers, for minutes later:

Stephen turned away.
—I'm going, Mulligan, he said.
—Give us that key, Kinch, Buck Mulligan said, to keep my chemise flat.
Stephen handed him the key. (24)

Stephen walks away resolving, "I will not sleep here tonight," determined not to live in his own house (he paid the rent) subservient to a master who is himself a servant. Mulligan calls to Stephen from the water of Dublin Bay, in which he swims so easily, and Stephen waves. He calls again and Stephen's unexpressed judgment ends the chapter: "Usurper" (24).

That the conflict is truly over Ireland and not just the lodging of two young men is confirmed during the visit of the old milkwoman. Stephen sees her as "Old Gummy Granny," symbol of Ireland, "Silk of the kine and poor old woman, names given her in olden times," and relates her to his companions: "A wandering crone, lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror and her gay betrayer. . . ." Haines speaks in Gaelic, and Stephen asks the old woman if she understands him:

—Is it French you are talking, sir? the woman said to Haines. (16)

So cut off from her traditions, it is no surprise that Ireland defers to the scientist and ignores her rightful leader:

—Are you a medical student, sir? the old lady asked.
—I am, ma'am, Buck Mulligan answered.
Stephen listened in scornful silence. She bows her old head to a voice that speaks to her loudly, her bonesetter, her medicinerman: me she slights. (16)
Stephen may seem at this point to be making a mountain of a molehill, but Joyce fully supports his symbolization. Earlier in the chapter Mulligan, the scientist, says to Stephen, the poet:

God, Kinch, if you and I could only work together we might do something for the island. Hellenise it. (9)

Even if he is only speaking of the two of them literally, Mulligan acknowledges that they represent opposing forces and that "the island" ("the old woman") is their concern.

Not only in the wooing of the milkwoman but in the larger symbolization to which he relates it, that of usurpation, Stephen is Joyce's spokesman. Three prominent historical figures bore Mulligan's Christian name, and all three seem to be associated with him. The first of these was the Hebrew prophet, author of the Book of Malachi; though not chronologically last, it is last in the Authorized Version of the books of the Old Testament, and followed only by the two books of Maccabees in the Vulgate. (Malachi is said to have prophesied about 460 B.C.) Malachy II reigned as undisputed High King of all Ireland from 980 to 1001 A.D., when he submitted to Brian Boru. Finally, Saint Malachy (ca. 1095-1148) was an Irish archbishop, the personal representative in the Irish Church of the Pope, and the chief Irish cleric of his time. The associations join with Mulligan's implicit correspondence to Antinous, the attempted usurper of Telemachus' patrimony: Malachi Mulligan, prophet of the new religion and, to its followers, the Irish people, priest and king, has dispossessed the poet-prophet of Irish tradition. Mulligan's name even recalls the key word in a phrase used by Hamlet when he is describing for Ophelia the significance of the dumb show which portrays regicide and the usurpation of a throne and a wife: "Marry, this is miching mallecho; it ["mallecho"] means mischief" (III, ii, 139).

Mulligan is much more than an abstraction endowed with a fortuitously meaningful name, however; and, as a result, readers do not easily recognize that Joyce sponsors Stephen's denunciation of the mischief-making usurper. Though most
critics think that Mulligan's character has some unsavory aspects, and that Stephen's hostility and testiness are therefore partly justified, there is nothing approaching a consensus of opinion about the witty and entertaining Buck.

The attractive elements of Mulligan's character are not easily exaggerated. He is gay, robust, and intelligent. He has saved people from drowning, and even Stephen acknowledges that he is brave. Above all, he has a gifted wit. Joyce said that Mulligan, who actually appears only four times in the whole novel, "should begin to pall on the reader as the day goes on"; he does not. Some of his funniest lines (such as the Latin oratio with the punning on "testibus ponderosis atque excelsis erectionibus") are in the fourteenth chapter (hospital) in which he makes his final appearance. His wit cannot be charged against him. It is too good.

Nevertheless, when weighed in the balance, "the exuberant Mulligan" (Hugh Kenner) is wanting, and therefore deserving of the symbolic role allotted to him. Combined as it is with his affluent ways and his humiliating discussions and promises of cast-off clothing, his constant draining of Stephen's meager resources is sinister. His taking twopence from Stephen for a pint is in no way reprehensible, and his intention of borrowing a pound of Stephen's small wages must be measured against Stephen's debt to him of nine pounds. Yet it was the impoverished Stephen who paid the year's rent on their lodgings, and Mulligan's plans for a drinking bout at Stephen's expense can only be another element in his effort to dominate Stephen, who would thereby be a month without funds. Mulligan is shown consistently to be a glutton; in the present chapter, among other things, he butters a slice of bread on both sides. And the glutton is a subtle traitor. He endeavors to exploit Haines by acting as a minstrel or jester; he provides Haines with entertainment which he hopes will be repaid with pints and hot buttered scones, is in the fullest sense the willing Irish servant of the English master. Haines owns a silver cigarette case with a green stone set like an island in the center of it. It is Mulligan's ilk that, as Stephen sees it, "allowed a handful of foreigners to subject them," and betrayed "the Emerald Isle" to the Saxon.
Mulligan is selfish, cynical, gluttonous, traitorous ("her gay betrayer"), and a devastatingly sincere materialist. Toward Stephen, he is disloyal and finally treacherous. The ultimate vindication of Stephen's attitude toward him in the present chapter is that the betrayer and usurper does try to sneak away from Stephen and lock him out of the tower later on. But the chapter itself provides sufficient evidence that, despite his attractive qualities, Mulligan is as Stephen sees him. In the first book of the *Odyssey* (in the words of the translation probably most familiar to Joyce), Antinious says to Telemachus, "Never may Cronion make thee King in seagirt Ithaca, which thing is of inheritance thy right." The action involving the old milkwoman and that concerning the key to the tower illustrate the new situation in Ireland, and the reason why the last paragraph is the one word, "Usurper." Ultimately, this second theme unites with the theme of Stephen's brooding: while that presents his consciousness of his wrong to his "mother," this concerns his consciousness of her wrong (in one of her aspects) to him.

2 *the school*

The second chapter is less than thirteen pages long and the shortest in the novel. (The third [strand-Stephen] is only one page longer; almost every other chapter is longer than both of them combined.) The chapter is dominated by two themes, which are extensions of the principal themes of the opening chapter. Both themes are introduced during the three-page passage with which the chapter begins, the depiction of Stephen's class at its history and poetry lessons. The more prominent one is a question of history; the other is the subject of the poetry to which Stephen and the class turn exactly midway in the passage.
At that point, the history lesson has not been satisfactorily completed. The pupils are ignorant and uninterested, and Stephen himself has to consult the text for the facts he is testing them on. Nevertheless, the meaning of history preoccupies the server of a servant for the opening page and a half—until the lesson simply runs down, the pupils ask Stephen to tell them a “ghoststory,” and he responds by directing them to their poetry lesson, “Lycidas.” The lines recited (actually, read furtively) by a pupil:

—Weep no more, woeful shepherd, weep no more
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor (26)

disclose the new theme by asserting the more comforting of its two opposing elements—that ghosts do exist. However, the lines are no more effective in allaying the brooding of the “woeful shepherd” than the more austere trio of lines offered by Mulligan. Whereas that recitation made him think of his singing of Yeats’ song to his mother when she lay dying, this prompts him to wonder if indeed his mother “is not [beastly] dead” but a living spirit—if she has a soul. He hears the lines, finds in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics,* characteristically, a conclusion to his “interior monologue” on history, and turns to reassuring phrases from *About the Soul* (“The soul is in a manner all that is: the soul is the form of forms,” 27). Then he offers the class a ghost story of his own, the riddle of the fox, which is apparently changed in two significant ways from one traditional in Ireland: the traditional riddle has a different introductory couplet, and the answer involves the fox’s mother, not his grandmother. Stephen’s alterations, whether intentional or not, indicate that the riddle is no banter, and his “shout of nervous laughter” confirms this. P. W. Joyce, the Irish antiquarian (no relation), speaks of “the delightful inconsequence of riddle and answer”; but for Stephen they are consequential, in both senses of the word. The relationship of riddle and answer is complicated, almost a riddle itself, but too illuminating to be passed by.
The fox which expects “his grandmother,” “this poor soul,” to go to heaven is plainly human, and he would not be burying her covertly had he not killed her; on the next page, the same “fox” is described as having “red reek of rapine in his fur” and “merciless bright eyes.” Stephen has represented himself as the fox; he may have killed his mother by his “merciless” behavior to her. In the first chapter he was faced with this proposition by Mulligan. Now he is facing himself with it. When all the other pupils have left to play hockey, and he is helping the quiet, timid, and dull Cyril Sargent with his lesson, he thinks:

Yet someone had loved [Sargent], borne him in her arms and in her heart. . . . She had loved his weak watery blood drained from her own. Was that then real? The only true thing in life? His mother’s prostrate body the fiery Columbanus in holy zeal bestrode. She was no more: . . . an odour of rosewood and wetted ashes. . . . A poor soul gone to heaven; and on a heath beneath winking stars a fox, red reek of rapine in his fur, with merciless bright eyes scraped in the earth, listened, scraped up the earth, listened, scraped and scraped. (28-29)

Cranly had said in the final conversation in the *Portrait*, “—Whatever else is unsure in this stinking dunghill of a world a mother’s love is not,” and Stephen now, after the experience of his mother’s death, wonders if Cranly was perhaps not right all along. Thus he associates himself with Saint Columbanus, who abandoned his mother for an abstract ideal, and with the merciless fox. The “odour of rosewood and wetted ashes” identifies Mary Dedalus explicitly.

However, although his mother has gone to heaven, he, the gore-begrimed fox, is scraping in the earth. His thoughts in the next chapter, while he watches the gypsies’ dog with its “rag of wolf’s tongue redpanting,” confirm that the fox (a member of the canine family) is not burying but digging up:

His hindpaws then scattered sand: then his forepaws dabbled and delved. Something he buried there, his grandmother. He rooted in the sand, dabling, delving and stopped to listen to the air, scraped up the sand again with a fury of his claws. . . . vulturing the dead. (47)
Why should Stephen, who has “buried” his mother, be digging her up? And for what does he listen?

In the first chapter, thinking of the dream-visit of his mother’s corpse, Stephen recalled “her breath bent over him with mute secret words” (12). In the fifteenth chapter (nighttown), when he imagines that his mother’s corpse is upbraiding him, he asks of it:

*(Eagerly.*) Tell me the word mother, if you know now.
The word known to all men. (566)

The murdering fox listens for what he so badly wants his “grandmother” to tell him. His “scraping” is not coordinate with this but contrary to it, just as it is contrary to his “burying” her in the riddle; the alternating scraping and listening symbolize the opposed elements of Stephen’s troubled thought.

Stephen’s riddle and “Lycidas” are ghost stories; in the riddle he accuses himself of having killed his mother, but he also confidently places her in heaven. However, the previous chapter revealed his distress at the prospect that she is “beastly dead.” The opposite of God is dog, and Stephen does not know to which his mother is akin. It is for this reason that the riddle is succeeded in his thoughts by an image of its fox scraping and listening: the fox-dog scrapes up the ground in order to see if he will exhume all the remains of his “grandmother”-victim; he “stopped to listen to the air;” for “bells,” the evidence that the “grandmother” is not buried in the earth below him but a living soul in the heaven above. What Stephen wishes her to tell him is as yet unclear, but his brooding (“scraping”) would be partly relieved if the mother he accuses himself of having killed (“buried”) should speak to him from heaven—if the riddle and answer should truly go together. Meanwhile he scrapes and listens—doubts and hopes that the burial was only temporary, his mother is not in the ground but a ghost, a “soul,” gone “to heaven.”

Stephen’s changing the “mother” of the riddle to “grandmother” is a revelation of the intensity of his feeling of guilt. And the introductory couplet he offers,

*Riddle me, riddle me, randy ro.*

*My father gave me seeds to sow*
in place of the original innocuous one relates to his (in this case strictly literal) mother, his other parent. As in the first chapter, Stephen does not feel toward his “father” as he does toward his mother. He has not solved the riddle; God has not revealed to him if people have souls, if He has been merciful and granted man the possibility of salvation. And he strongly suspects that He has not been so.

At the beginning of the chapter Stephen is teaching history, and “history” is the subject of all but the brief interlude comprising the lines from “Lycidas,” the riddle, and Cyril Sargent, which has just been discussed. In the Portrait Stephen declared his refusal to pay in his “own person and life” for the faults of his ancestors, to pay a claim made on historical grounds. But the preceding chapter reveals that, although he finds it impossible to remain in Ireland, an unacknowledged server of a servant, in his brooding he has associated his mother country with his mother. In Ulysses Stephen Dedalus is no longer able to ignore complications and contradictions. During the present chapter, he reconsiders his long-standing decision to leave his homeland—reappraises the significance of history, the past, for the present.

His very first thought in the chapter is Blake’s dismissal of history as “Fabled by the daughters of memory” (25); but he cannot deny to himself that “it was in some way if not as memory fabled it,” if only because the non-existence of history would be equivalent to the end of the world:

I hear the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry, and time one livid final flame. What’s left us then? (25)

Stephen’s acceptance of the fact of history has an almost immediate effect, for within a few lines he thinks of supplying a witticism to “Haines’s chapbook” that night. This dramatic change of attitude toward Haines, in turn, prompts him to reappraise the historical relationship of his people with the English:

A jester at the court of his master, indulged and disesteemed, winning a clement master’s praise. Why had
they chosen all that part? Not wholly for the smooth caress. For them too history was a tale like any other too often heard, their land a pawnshop. (25)

In the place of his former unalloyed contempt, Stephen now feels some sympathy for the majority of his ancestors and countrymen, believes that they serve the English master at least partly out of despair of being free. They do not respond to the history of their captive nation and its defeated heroes, to the past of the present situation, with fruitless rebellion, like his boyhood friend Davin and the Nationalists; nevertheless, they do not find it necessary to leave their homeland. They hear the "tale" of oppression submissively instead of defiantly and accept a situation they cannot help despite their dislike of it. By offering his witticism to Haines he would be joining the band of "jesters."

Having decided that history is significant and that one ought to submit to rather than defy what it has imposed, Stephen appeases his conscience by concluding that whatever has happened, although it did not have to happen, nevertheless has, and is, therefore, as though inevitable—the one unavoidable reality:

Had Pyrrhus not fallen by a beldam's hand in Argos or Julius Caesar not been knifed to death. They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted. (26)

At this point, the middle of the three-page classroom scene, the pupils ask for a ghost story, and the first theme is temporarily displaced by the second. Stephen has accepted the rationalization of those self-styled realists who submit to circumstances they should either defy or escape: the result of his meditation on history is the shrug of the unhappy collaborator. The phrase taken from *Metaphysics* X, ix, with which he leaves History for The Soul, reiterates the rationalization of the jester. Nothing is to be done, for history "must be a movement then, an actuality of the possible as possible." Joyce mocks this decision to submit to a subject Ireland by having Stephen recall that when he read Aristotle's phrase in a Paris library, "By his elbow a
delicate Siamese conned a handbook of strategy” (26).

When the treatment of the chapter’s second theme ends with the pupil Sargent’s departure from Stephen for the hockey field, the school’s headmaster, Garrett Deasy, is walking toward Stephen. Mr. Deasy is a living example of the “despairing,” “fated” servant of the English Stephen has just entertained the idea of becoming.

However he is not despairing, and he serves eagerly. The three most prominent features of his office are a picture of Edward VII as Prince of Wales, a series of photographs of (English noblemen’s) race horses, and a tray of Stuart coins. The furnishings characterize the man. He admires everything English almost to the point of worship, he is analogous to Nestor (“the tamer of horses”), the aged Achaean king who gave Telemachus wise advice about protecting his patrimony, and his advice to Stephen is in terms of the Stuart coins—an exhortation to avarice after the example of the English. The Homeric analogy is ironic, of course: Mr. Deasy is the headmaster of a shoddy boys’ school, and his wisdom consists of worshipping the English and money, quoting Iago as “Shakespeare,” and justifying rank anti-Semitism as an awareness of Divine justice; even his sensible appeal for Koch’s treatment of hoof and mouth disease is expressed with laughable triteness. But the irony is double, for Stephen’s Nestor does unknowingly guide him.

More important than the parodic identification of him with Nestor is the presentation of Mr. Deasy as the complete Irishman:

—I have rebel blood in me too, Mr Deasy said. On the spindle side. But I am descended from Sir John Blackwood who voted for the union. We are all Irish, all kings’ sons.
—Alas, Stephen said.
—Per vias rectas, Mr Deasy said firmly, was his motto. (32)

Stephen’s “alas” is as much caused by Mr. Deasy’s identification of himself as ultimate descendant of the heroic Irish kings as it is by the weight of the historical responsibility they both have as kings’ sons. And Mr. Deasy’s firm pronunciation of the motto of his Ulster ancestor who
voted for union with England (in the corrupt plebiscite of 1800 that produced the Act of Union) is a statement of his own upright ethic. He will restate it in a few pages, at the climax of his defense of anti-Semitism.

It is that aspect of the mentor’s wisdom which guides Stephen. Thus, when he accuses “the jew merchants” of destroying “old England,” it is with “eyes open wide in vision,” and while he is standing in “a broad sunbeam” (34). Stephen objects, and:

—They sinned against the light, Mr Deasy said gravely. And you can see the darkness in their eyes. And that is why they are wanderers on the earth to this day. (34-35)

The key words are “and that is why”; Mr. Deasy not only affirms the proposition that Stephen has just tentatively accepted, that history has power over the individual, the past over the present, but considers this condition a manifestation of divine justice; as in his servitude to the English, the old and experienced complete Irishman does not merely accept a historical situation that has caused a people suffering but glorifies it. And he is so eager a servant that he fails to see the obvious analogy between the dispossessed Jews and his own oppressed nation.

Stephen perhaps does see it; at any rate, he refuses to regard the victimizing of a whole nation as the manifestation of justice, divine or otherwise. He asks “Who has not?” sinned against the light; and when Mr. Deasy responds by becoming literally slack-jawed, he defines the attitude he realizes he must take to the history he has so recently accepted. The passage is rich in meaning. At Stephen’s “Who has not?”, Mr. Deasy’s “underjaw fell sideways open uncertainly”; Stephen thinks, “Is this old wisdom? He waits to hear from me,” and elucidates his dissent:

—History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.

From the playfield the boys raised a shout. A whirring whistle: goal. What if that nightmare gave you a back kick?

—The ways of the Creator are not our ways, Mr Deasy said. All history moves toward one great goal, the manifestation of God. (35)
Stephen cannot deny the power of history, cannot even deny that he is almost totally vulnerable to it, but he can and does insist that it is a “nightmare.” Correspondingly, in response to Mr. Deasy’s statement of his comfortably pious view of history, the view implicit in his remarks about the Jews, Stephen identifies the “manifestation” toward which “all history moves” by punning on “goal”: he gestures toward the soccer field, on which a goal is being announced and cheered, and says “That is God,” “A shout in the street” (35). He agrees that God ordains history, but protests against “the ways of the Creator.” For he is not merely insulting God by identifying Him as he does, he is accusing Him. He has already likened the soccer game to a bloody battle (33), and therefore to the battles and their “corpsestrewn plain[s]” with which he had identified “history” on the first page of the chapter. God is responsible not merely for quotidian reality, but for all the nightmare.

Mr. Deasy completes his justification of the suffering of the Jews by recounting the “errors” of other suffering groups, the Trojans and the Irish, and insisting that they did not commit “the one sin” against Jesus, and by restating in English his inherited moral principle, “I will fight for the right till the end.” Stephen can only conclude “here what will you learn more?” and impatiently rustle Mr. Deasy’s letter. They have agreed that he will not be at the school for long. Our last sight of “old wisdom” is of his back. Having delivered a final insight about the Jews, he turns and walks away, laughing almost hysterically:

On his wise shoulders through the checkerwork of leaves the sun flung spangles, dancing coins. (37)

The encounter with Mr. Deasy decides Stephen against simple submission to the nightmare, which he had been entertaining at the beginning of the chapter; he will try to “escape.” He accepts his historical identity—he finally (36) decides to help Mr. Deasy in his campaign on behalf of Irish husbandry; furthermore, he is aware that God can cause him to suffer a “back kick.” But he cannot emulate Mr. Deasy. That vain, petty, avaricious, and uncharitable man not only accepts history but glorifies it, and, so,
eagerly embraces the historical role allotted him as an Irishman: servant and admirer of English pomp and power. In Book III of the *Odyssey*, Nestor not only gives Telemachus advice on his patrimony but inspires him to continue his journey and provides the means for his doing so.

Although his guilty "brooding" is no less intense in this second chapter than in the first, again Stephen's emotional attitude is balanced by a rational one. In the first chapter it was his recognition that the modern scientist had usurped his rightful place as the poet in his homeland. In the present chapter it is a realization of the true grounds of his long-standing opinion that he cannot submit to life in Ireland.

In both chapters, Stephen combines with the indictments of his environment, which are familiar from the *Portrait*, but dramatically developed and integral in *Ulysses*, a new insecurity and guilt. He is no longer arrogant and self-righteous, but a suffering young man. The third chapter is devoted to a vivid presentation of his suffering.

This chapter, which concludes the initial representation of Stephen Dedalus, is almost exclusively the "interior monologue" of a highly erudite young man. There is very little exposition, and only one line of dialogue ("—Tatters! Out of that, you mongrel," 47). The action is, next to that of the last chapter, the sparsest in the novel. Stephen walks along Sandymount Strand. Two women cross the strand to the water and walk out of sight. Stephen sits on a rock by the water's edge. A dog runs toward him from the direction taken by the women. Two gypsies, a man and a woman, owners of the dog, approach, wade into the water, and dip their bags of recently gathered cockles. The male gypsy commands "Tatters" to leave a dog's corpse he has found, the dog "scrapes" the ground and "listens," and dog and
gypsies depart. Stephen composes and writes down a quatrain, reclines on the rock, sits up again, wipes a finger with which he has picked his nose on the rock, and turns to see if he is observed. Behind him a ship with sails furled is moving by.

Stephen thinks about many and apparently widely diverse things in this chapter, including abstract metaphysics, phylogeny, his maternal uncle, an exiled patriot of his acquaintance, ancient Dublin and its Viking attackers, his soul. By a nimble power of association that is itself part of Joyce's characterization of him, one thing leads to another in the course of the chapter until all that is vital to Stephen Dedalus is touched upon. His preoccupations are those we have been led to expect: his mother; her death; his guilt; his one-time cocky vanity; the nature of divine Fatherhood; the nature and power of history; the usurpation of his place by the scientist-jester; the existence or non-existence of the soul; and language, the material of the artist he has so completely failed to become.

The "Protean" character of the chapter is generally said to lie chiefly in the changes rung on language. It is more closely related to the fact that through its changing forms Stephen's thought, like Proteus, retains its single essence. Joyce is not drawing an idle parallel with the Odyssey, and he is not presenting a contrived and meretricious exposition of his character's state of mind. Stephen has done a very common thing—stopped at the water's edge on a deserted beach, to think. He is beset by anxiety, guilt, self-contempt, and even practical worries, for he can no longer abide his companions or his work, and he no longer has a place to sleep. He will not stay in Ireland but cannot leave, will not teach but cannot write, will not submit to circumstances (history, God) but cannot deny their hold. He has reached the end of the road set out on when he smugly welcomed life, and is taking stock, asking himself where he can go from a dead end. The Homeric parallel serves to make the point that this inquiry is the essential nature beneath the changing subjects of Stephen's thought, and therefore the ultimate subject of the chapter.

As Menelaus explained to Telemachus, Proteus, the old man of the sea, napped on the shore every day at noon. If, at that time, a person desiring information about the future
succeeded in holding the demi-god fast despite his metamorphoses, he was obliged to grant the prophecy. Stephen's thought contains no mention of Proteus, but he does identify the time as "the faunal noon" (50); and when he recites "Won't you come to Sandymount,/ Madeline the mare?" on the first page, he is unknowingly invoking Mananaan MacLir (not only are the names similar in sound and rhythm, but mare and lir are Latin and Gaelic for "sea"), the sea-diety, who was one of the two chief Irish Celtic gods, and who had Proteus's metamorphic power. Thus, on the next page he thinks that "The whitemaned seahorses... the steeds of Mananaan," are approaching.

Joyce associates the two sea-deities in order to disclose what essentially is happening in the chapter. But the fact that they are sea-deities is also important; and he stresses the sea by direct means such as the attention Stephen gives to the action of the waves, and by indirect means such as having phrases from 

King Lear occur to Stephen, "lear" being a variant of "lir." Stephen has always avoided water, the source of life as Mulligan observed at the beginning of the novel. Like its Proteus and Mananaan, the sea, life, conceals its nature and withholds its truth under an ever-changing surface. In facing the sea in this chapter—confronting reality, coming to grips with his condition and persisting through all the shifts of his thought—Stephen is attempting to discover what Menelaus had sought from Proteus, knowledge of how he could continue on his way. Stephen concludes his endeavor in despair. Yet he is not as fully equipped to judge what he sees and thinks as Joyce enables the reader to be.

Quite characteristically, Stephen tries to determine his condition by a controlled formal procedure. And quite characteristically, his thoughts are almost wholly direct or indirect expressions of his various preoccupations—the central facts of that condition. He begins well enough, with a quasi-Aristotelian determination of first principles. Following the line of Aristotle's discussion of sense perception in About the Soul (II, vii, viii), he decides first that sight reveals an undeniable mode of reality (the "ineluctable modality of the visible," 38), one mode despite all the specific forms it assumes: space ("the nebeneinander"); and next that hearing reveals another such mode ("the
ineluctable modality of the audible”): time (“the nacheinander”). He then deduces experimentally (having continued walking with his eyes closed) that reality exists independently of his senses—his experience of its Protean modes (“There all the time without you”).

The formal inquiry gets no further than this promising beginning before he sees the two women walking onto the beach and converts them into midwives—initiates the long train of revealing observations, memories, allusions, speculations, and fancies that is the body of the chapter. The most isolated phrase and the most transitory association makes its contribution, yet the substance and meaning of the whole can be derived from certain principal elements in their sequence.

Having made midwives of the two women who are “Like me . . . coming down to our mighty mother” (38), Stephen thinks about the line of generation back to The Beginning, and about himself as one of the children “made not begotten”—as only matter. His inversion of the description of Jesus in the Nicene Creed (“begotten, not made”) leads him to speculation on the Fatherhood of God. “He willed me and now may not will me away or ever. A lex eterna stays about Him” (39), he declares, and wonders if he has discovered the reconciliation of the Arian position: that the Father and the Son are consubstantial, as the Church says, because the Father shares the inferior position that the Arians ascribe to the Son, under the real predominance of the lex eterna—because the Father is not the absolute Father.

At this point he thinks of “the steeds of Mananaan” (whom he unwittingly invoked before seeing the two women), and asks himself if he will turn off the beach to visit the home of his maternal uncle, who is despised by his father and who is not a much better provider. He imagines the visit, calls the Dedalus and Goulding houses “houses of decay” (40), and recalls how he had romanticized his uncle when a child at Clongowes. His “Come out of them, Stephen. Beauty is not there” is reminiscent of the description of Stephen’s dedication to beauty on the same beach at the end of Chapter IV and the sordidness of his actual life at the beginning of Chapter V in the Portrait; it serves as a subtle corrective to his earlier joy. He himself
seems to recall the experience on the beach, if not his folly, for he thinks of the opportunity to study for the priesthood which he had refused that afternoon. His appraisal of the life of the “gelded” priesthood becomes mockery of himself for impiety, lechery, and finally intellectual and physical vanity:

You bowed to yourself in the mirror. . . . Hurray for the Goddamned idiot! Hray! . . . Books you were going to write with letters for titles. Have you read his F? O yes, but I prefer Q. . . . (41)

The bitterness of the mockery is dramatic evidence of Stephen’s mood. But something has been accomplished. As he realizes, he has “passed the way to aunt Sara’s”; furthermore, he has been walking near the water’s edge and the steeds of Mananaan in the amorphous wet sand. “He . . . crossed the firmer sand towards the Pigeonhouse” (42), and “pigeon” invokes a blaspheming French joke about the father of Christ and a phrase from the “Ballad of Joking Jesus.” He resumes his mockery of himself with his “flight” to Paris, “pretending to speak broken English . . . ” (43), and is diverted from this only by the memory of receiving his father’s telegram informing him that his mother was dying.

Perhaps because he has walked away from the sea, his thoughts do not dwell on his mother but on Paris. He remembers his conversations with a fugitive patriot dynamitard, Kevin Egan, who tried to “yoke me” to “our common cause” (44). He thinks of Egan as a “spurned lover” of Ireland: “They have forgotten Kevin Egan, not he them” (45).

At this point, “He had come nearer the edge of the sea” and, “his feet beginning to sink slowly in the quaking soil,” his thoughts return to himself. Like Egan, he has been spurned by Ireland; but he will not emulate Egan, will not return to his servitude in the tower: “they [Mulligan and Haines] wait . . . around a board of abandoned platters. Who to clear it? He has the key. I will not sleep there when this night comes.” He makes a frightening characterization of the tower-Ireland (Mulligan, its new lord, is a bird dog because he is both “beastly” and a betrayer): “A
shut door of a silent tower entombing their blind bodies, the panthersahib and his pointer”; and he declares that he can afford to relinquish that patrimony to the beastly usurper:

Take all, keep all. My soul walks with me, form of forms. So in the moon’s midwatches I pace the path above the rocks, in sable silvered, hearing Elsinore’s tempting flood.

He has a soul, then is all soul and his own father (King Hamlet’s ghost) as well.

The word “flood” makes Stephen aware of how close the water is, and he goes back a few steps to sit on the rock on which he remains through the rest of the chapter. From this point his wrestling with the Proteus of his thought becomes more intense, and events combine with thoughts to develop the climax and resolution of the chapter. Immediately he is confronted with a refutation of his last comforting assertion: “A bloated carcass of a dog lay lolled on bladderwrack,” and a few moments later a live dog is running toward him. Fearful of attack he appraises the situation, but with ironic self-ridicule: “Respect his liberty. You will not be master of others or their slave. I have my stick” (46). He sees the two gypsies in the distance (the dog is “Tatters”), thinks they are the two women he had seen earlier, and decides that they have gotten rid of a misbirth—all there was of a human.

Just after Stephen sees the dog’s carcass, the often-quoted line “These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here” occurs. It is concerned primarily not with language but with the past—the sands are a kind of historiography. While Tatters runs along the strand, Stephen thinks of the invading Vikings who debarked there, of the people of Dublin butchering a school of beached whales during a famine, of a time when the Liffey froze over; his reference to King Malachi II, “When Malachi wore the collar of gold,” is, appropriately, a line from Thomas Moore’s “Let Erin Remember the Days of Old.” He declares, “Their blood is in me,” and imagines himself in one of those earlier times among the other ancient Irish; yet, “I spoke to no-one: none to me.”
The dog has been barking and approaching in an irregular fashion. He thinks “Dog of my enemy”; and when he returns to Irish history, his mocking “Paradise of pretenders then and now” is promptly turned upon himself, with Mulligan as his comparison. The next sentence is, “He saved men from drowning and you shake at a cur’s yelping.” A sharp self-examination follows, during which he admits that he would not be capable of Mulligan’s feat, and which ends with an alteration of the pronoun into the feminine; “I could not save her. Waters: bitter death: lost.”

Almost immediately after his mother’s death returns to Stephen’s thought, Tatters discovers the dead dog’s carcass. The passages quoted during the discussion of the second chapter—the description of Tatters’ “rag of wolf’s tongue redpanting” (47), and the account of his alternately scraping up the sand and listening—occur here, along with other direct connections Stephen makes to his fox-riddle thoughts in the schoolroom. The gypsy man utters the one line of dialogue in the chapter, calling his dog away from the carcass, but not before Stephen has reiterated the two alternative propositions of his riddle, so fundamental to his brooding. He says, “Ah, poor dogsbody”; but he immediately alters the phrase so that the despairing exclamation is followed by a reassuring statement: “Here lies poor dogsbody’s body”—specifically only that corporeal part of him, there being therefore another part which has risen.

As the dog scrapes, Stephen likens him to a pard, and so recalls the dream he was having at about the time Haines, the “panther-sahib,” had his nightmare involving a black panther:

After he woke me up last night same dream or was it? Wait. Open hallway. Street of harlots. . . . I am almost-ing it. That man led me, spoke. . . . The melon he had he held against my face. . . . In. Come. Red carpet spread. You will see who. (47-48)

The dream is strange, to say the least, and perhaps for this reason it sticks in the reader’s mind, but its significance for the story of Stephen Dedalus will not become clear until much later in the novel.
As Stephen is recalling his dream, the gypsies approach. He thinks about their lives, plays with their argot, watches them glance at his "Hamlet hat" as they pass, and thinks, "If I were suddenly naked here as I sit? I am not." He continues to play with language, thinks of the gypsies as eternally journeying "to the west, trekking to evening lands," concentrates on the gypsy woman, and then combines all three matters by composing a crude quatrain about the coming of a personified death to his mother, "mouth to her mouth's kiss." Although he writes it down, the reader does not see it until he next appears, in the seventh (newspaper) chapter; by that time it is far more polished, and the last line has become "Mouth to my mouth" (131). He then thinks about his writing and moves naturally to thinking about his soul: "she" clings to him although "shame-wounded" by his sins, and he does not know where he is taking "her." He begins his self-ridicule again, this time over his attentions to girls, but his bravado breaks down and he makes a moving direct appeal:

Touch me. Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand. O, touch me soon, now. What is that word known to all men? I am quiet here alone. Sad too. Touch, touch me. (49)

A sense of isolation has shared prominence with self-blame in Stephen's thought. His inability to tolerate his uncle and cousin; his separation from his living father as well as his dead mother (a break in the umbilical cords that "link back"); the abandonment of Kevin Egan (with whom he therefore identifies himself) by his country; his isolation among the ancient Dubliners ("I spoke to no-one: none to me"); even his observations on language and on the difference, preventing communication, between his idiom and the cant of the gypsies—all ring changes on the theme of isolation, of his loneliness. Having become more and more consciously manifested in his thoughts, it now prompts a naked appeal. Once again the unsuccessful injunction of the first chapter is made: "And turn no more aside and brood" (50). This time it causes him to think about Mulligan. He is defiant still, but his loneliness is intensified:
“He now will leave me. And the blame? As I am. All or not at all.”

His sense of loneliness having become as sharp as his self-ridicule, Stephen is in almost abject despair, and this mood persists to the very end of the chapter. He thinks for some time about the “weary,” “sighing” weeds in the water, helpless, moved throughout their existence by a sea which for them is literal reality-life: “Day by day: night by night,” “To no end gathered: vainly then released.” The symbolic personal relevance of the passage becomes clear when he moves to the similar action of the sea (now not “our mighty mother” but “Old Father Ocean”) on the drowned man, who is expected to rise soon. He likens the corpse to Lycidas, and so to his mother, but only in passing. What he dwells on is the awful “seachange” the drowned man undergoes; he then makes explicit his thoughts about death’s pervasiveness in life, concluding, “Dead breaths I living breathe, tread dead dust, devour a urinous offal from all dead” (51).

Approaching its end, Stephen’s line of thought is apparently interrupted, but only apparently, when he notices that the sky is clouding over, and remarks “Allbright he falls, proud lightning of the intellect, Lucifer, dico, qui nescit occasum.” He is probably thinking of Isaiah’s mocking of the “day-star”:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! . . .
For thou hast said in thy heart. . . .
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.
Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell. . . . (Isaiah 14: 12-15)

For having taken stock of his situation, wrestled with his Proteus through its many changes of subject, he looks upon the lowering sky as a judgment or omen and reaches his conclusion, secures an answer. Following his apostrophe to the star of the morning, “who knows no setting,” he announces his destination: “Where? To evening lands.” For,
like Lucifer, he has fallen from proud assurance into hellish misery. He has run the gamut from the arrogance of the morning star to the resignation of “evening will find itself in me, without me,” from the “Welcome, O life!” at the end of the Portrait to the acceptance of a journey “to the west, trekking to evening lands.” The answer he derives from his Protean inquiry is nothing more promising than a life that is like death, until the release of death itself.

It is when his despair has reached this climactic and conclusive point that Stephen, who has been picking his nose, searches in vain for his handkerchief and, prompted by the thought that he may have been observed, turns and sees the schooner “Rosevean.” A brief description of the “threemaster” ends the chapter.

But although it is the theme of Stephen’s meditation, despair is not the theme of the chapter. Rather, the chapter has been moving toward a specific statement about Stephen’s despair, a foreshadowing of his destiny that corresponds to the pronouncements sought from Proteus. Not only in folklore, but in medieval science, the nose was considered the passage to, and an expurgative of, the brain. In a sense Stephen has been “picking at” his mind during the chapter—his nose-picking is a counterpart to his brooding meditation. Throughout the Portrait he misread omens, and the suggestion is that he has done so again with the lowering sky, and that in view of the conclusion he has reached, the sum of his thoughts is equal to the “dry snot” he picks from his nose. The last lines of the chapter make the point:

He laid the dry snot picked from his nostril on a ledge of rock, carefully. For the rest let look who will.

Behind. Perhaps there is someone.

He turned his face over a shoulder, rere regardant. Moving through the air high spars of a threemaster, her sails brailed up on the crosstrees, homing, upstream, silently moving, a silent ship. (51)

Stephen wonders if his nose-picking is observed, turns, and sees only the ship. Earlier, he had looked behind him for the same reason: “Who’s behind me? Out quickly, quickly!” (46), and despite his lonely appeal had been generally
concerned about being exposed, revealed to an observer:
“If I were suddenly naked here as I sit? I am not.” (48);
“Who watches me here?” (49).

Not only is Stephen’s “I am not” mistaken, but the one
who “watches” him has the “soft eyes” and “soft soft soft
hand” he appealed for; to Him, he is “naked.” The
“threemaster” with the silhouetted masts and “crosstrees”
is a specific symbol of the crucifixion. The correct term for
the spar supporting a sail is “yard” (when this was pointed
out by his friend Frank Budgen, Joyce called “crosstrees”
“essential”11); the incorrect technical term which so con­
veniently combines two synonyms for the cross is actually
identical with the neologism Stephen uses in the ninth
chapter (library), when he speaks of Christ as “starved
on crosstree.” Stephen’s plea has been heard. Although he
thinks his façade is intact, he has been seen naked; and
although he feels totally alone, the reader is pointedly
advised that he is not, and furthermore that he may not
be lost to love or to salvation.

In view of Joyce’s lifelong apostasy from the Catholic
church (he refused to permit the office of a priest at his
deathbed, or even at his burial), the Protean prophecy of
Stephen’s future which he provides the reader—the sug­
gestion of divine grace—seems strange. Nevertheless, the
religious burden of the chapter cannot be avoided. When
Menelaus tells Telemachus of his successful encounter with
Proteus, in Book IV of the Odyssey, he says that he learned
from Proteus that Odysseus was alive—that Telemachus’
quest is not a vain one. This has an obvious, but secular,
relevance for Stephen’s situation at the end of the third
chapter of Ulysses. However, Menelaus’ chief business with
Proteus, his reason for wrestling him, is more significant.
Menelaus was totally becalmed on an island whose shore
was the site of Proteus’ noontime naps. He tells Telemachus
that when he had defeated Proteus, he put his question to
him, and it is very similar to Stephen’s question of Blooms-
day morning:

“I am holden long time in this isle, neither can I find
any issue therefrom, and my heart faileth within me.
Howbeit do thou tell . . . which of the immortals it is
that bindeth me here . . . and . . . how I may go over the teeming deep.'

"Even so I spake, and he straightway answered me saying: 'Nay, surely thou shouldst have done goodly sacrifice to Zeus and the other gods ere thine embarking. . . . For it is not thy fate to see thy friends . . . till thou hast . . . offered holy hecatombs to the deathless gods who keep the whole heaven. So shall the gods grant thee the path which thou desirest.'"12

Important as his destination was to him, Menelaus had set out for it with too much self-assurance and too little reverence. When he wrestled with Proteus, he was trapped and despairing. The pronouncement of Proteus was that he had to worship "the gods." Menelaus did so, he tells Telemachus, "and the deathless gods gave me a fair wind."13 Stephen may be as fortunate as Menelaus; he is more reluctant to worship his God, and he misunderstands the Protean pronouncement; but his God watches over him with soft eyes.

in search of stephen

The reader brings two facts about Stephen Dedalus to *Ulysses*: there is an undeniable connection of some sort between him and the young Joyce; and his life from early childhood up to a point less than fourteen months before June 16, 1904, was the subject of a previous novel by the author. The first of these facts is one aspect of the complex relationship between Joyce's fiction and actuality, discussed in Chapter Five under the heading "Joyce's Dublin and Dublin's Joyce." The second puts *Ulysses* in the position of being a sequel with respect to Stephen—makes the depiction of him in the Portrait part of what is given in *Ulysses*.

But by the end of the third chapter of *Ulysses*, it has become quite clear that neither of the two familiar—and directly opposed—critical views about Joyce's portrait of that
younger Stephen can be reconciled with the Stephen of Bloomsday morning. If the young man of the Portrait is damned, or if on the other hand he has fulfilled, begun the process of fulfilling, or prepared himself to fulfil his artist's destiny, then Joyce has capriciously created two essentially different Stephen Dedaluses in his two novels.

The problem is not with the older Stephen's state of mind in his three introductory chapters, of course; the change from his former proud assurance is fully motivated. It is with Joyce's presentation of him as neither damned nor an artist. And because not the character of the young man handed on to Ulysses, but his creator's earlier disposition of him—the essential meaning or ultimate point of the Portrait—is at issue, that earlier novel will have to be considered as a whole. As I understand it, Joyce's treatment of Stephen in the Portrait is not only completely consistent with but prepares for his appearance in Ulysses. My debt to advocates of both of the two prevailing points of view about the Portrait is extensive, but my answer is not a compromise between them, for they are irreconcilable. It is an attempt to consider the book anew.

The first significant point to be made about it is that it is psychological in a very precise sense, whatever may be true about the influence or confluence during its composition of "the new Viennese school," as Stephen calls the Freudians in the ninth (library) chapter of Ulysses. Specifically, the whole first part of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is almost literally the early history of a "psyche," and the remainder of the book is determined by what has been formed. Questionable as this conception of the Portrait may seem, Joyce leads us to it in the very beginning. The two-page "overture" in which the structure of Chapter I and the major themes of the book can be discovered, as Hugh Kenner has pointed out, is explicitly the account of a very young child's responses to his environment; and from Simon Dedalus' tale of baby tuckoo to Dante's threat, it presents the book's themes precisely in terms of environmental influence on Stephen.

The first part of the Portrait is not its first chapter. Like those of Ulysses, the five chapters are shaped more to perform narrative functions than to subdivide the action,
while the book's form reflects the three phases of its subject: Stephen's childhood, his adolescence (the clinical term is the most appropriate), and his ultimate stance as a young man. The first part ends in Chapter II, when the pandying incident of Chapter I is concluded; the second extends from that point, with its abrupt two-year transition to the Whitsuntide play, until Stephen sees the wading girl at the end of Chapter IV; the third is congruent with Chapter V, which takes place after a transition of four years, at the very end of his university career. The first part ends when Stephen learns that he will be able to go to Belvedere College (a secondary school), the second when he learns that he will be able to go to the university, the third when he learns that he will be able to go to Paris. Although this pattern distinguishes perfectly normal stages in human growth (as well as formal education), and ignores the chapter divisions, it not only exists but is important; for the three stages in Stephen's younger life are complication, unraveling, and conclusion of its story.

The idea of psychogenesis, the virtual molding of human character by specific childhood experiences and early environment, is a truism today, and its use for the motivation of literary characters almost a cliche. But despite that embarrassing fact, the first part of the Portrait presents something different from the normal tension between experience and character found even in the remainder of the Portrait. I speak of it as the early history of a psyche because Joyce's portrayal of Stephen Dedalus' childhood (his "formative years" in that originally psychoanalytic term) seems to be primarily a record of the development of Stephen's way of perceiving and dealing with, respectively and explicitly, the external world and his own feelings—the development of precisely that to which the "new psychology" gave the name "ego":

As the child grows older, that part of the id which comes in contact with the environment through the senses learns to know the inexorable reality of the outer world and becomes modified into what Freud calls the ego.17

The ego tests and evaluates reality. It determines the
kind of adaptation the individual makes to internal and external pressures; . . . its way of handling the pressures requiring adaptation determines the personality of the individual.\textsuperscript{18}

Although he does not use the term in the book and probably was ignorant of the psychoanalytic concept, Joyce seems to have intuitively understood, as Freud said of artists with respect to the unconscious, what psychologists named and studied—and to have considered it of vital importance. The recently published prose piece, "A Portrait of the Artist,"\textsuperscript{19} clearly the first form of the work that became \textit{Stephen Hero} and ultimately the \textit{Portrait}, begins:

The features of infancy are not commonly reproduced in the adolescent portrait for, so capricious are we, that we cannot or will not conceive the past in any other than its iron memorial aspect. Yet the past assuredly implies a fluid succession of presents, the development of an entity of which our actual present is a phase only. Our world, again, recognizes its acquaintance chiefly by the characters of beard and inches and is, for the most part, estranged from those of its members who seek through some art, by some process of the mind as yet untabulated, to liberate from the personalized lumps of matter that which is their individuating rhythm, the first or formal relation of their parts.

This piece was written in the winter of 1903-4, when Joyce was only twenty-one, and at about the time the process of the mind was being tabulated at Vienna. Despite the decade of literary activity before his completion of the \textit{Portrait}, Joyce did not relinquish his belief that "the first or formal relation" of a subject's "parts" is linked to his "development," and that this "individuating rhythm" is vital to an "adolescent portrait." The \textit{Portrait} depicts the development of Stephen's ego and the persistence of that "entity" or way of being throughout his adolescence and into young manhood. (It even persists, in fact, on Bloomsday morning.)

The development of Stephen's ego, his way, in his own
words, of "battling against the squalor of his life and against the riot of his mind" (p. 91),* begins before the advent of either squalor or riot. In Chapter I, his circumstances are still comfortable and his mind innocent; yet, from the story of baby tuckoo, he is (in a phrase from *Finnegans Wake*) "jung and easily freudened."

The chapter is an excellent example of Joyce's exploitation of structural elements. It has four sections, which are separated by asterisks. (Those between the second and third sections are missing in American editions although a space for them is provided.)

The four sections are two sets of alternating episodes of home and school, which are significantly different from each other. The first pair of episodes of home and school, the "overture" and the first scene at Clongowes, are almost completely subjective in point of view. Except for some snatches of dialogue, almost nothing interrupts the record of Stephen's perceptions, feelings, memories, and attitudes. The scene at Clongowes begins with his memory of his parents as they deposited him with Father Conmee and left. He is young, weak, lonely, and bullied, and his illness makes his misery extreme. He anticipates in his feverish reverie and dream the end of the term, the triumphal trip from school, his home, and his first Christmas dinner.

The actual Christmas dinner follows, and is the first occasion in the *Portrait* on which the facts, as Stephen later thinks (p. 87), "give the lie rudely to his phantasies." The distinction between the two pairs of episodes of Chapter I is precisely that of "phantasy" and fact: the subjective record of a child's idealized assumptions about his world (home and school) is negated by an objective depiction of that world itself, reality juxtaposed against idealization stylistically as well as substantially, in the same formal unit. Moving as it is, the dinner episode is not in the book

* For the remainder of this chapter, Arabic numerals in parentheses accompanied by "p." or "pp." indicate pages in the *Compass Books* edition of the *Portrait* (New York, 1958), unless otherwise specified. Quotations from the text of the novel have been revised to eliminate errata specified by Joyce and listed in Peter Spielberg, "James Joyce's Errata for American Editors of *A Portrait of the Artist*," in Joyce's "*Portrait*": Criticisms and Critiques, ed. Thomas E. Connolly (New York, 1962), pp. 318-28.
to represent Ireland’s predicament at the time, or the de­struction of her “uncrowned king,” but to show the subject confronted with these facts, Stephen’s fervent anticipation of the feast of love before the hearth of home rudely disappointed and disillusioned. The irony with which Joyce invests the Christmas colors is part of Stephen’s formative experience. He has learned that Church and country are not harmonious, that there can be no green rose after all. As on one or two other significant occasions in the first part of the novel, Stephen’s reaction to his experience is not given. But it can readily be inferred; his confusion (p. 36), Dante’s “O, he’ll remember all this,” and the echo of her prediction by Mr. Casey, spokesman for the other extreme, are all to the point.

The last episode in the chapter, which carries forward the confuting of the protected child’s assumptions about the world, seems on its surface to be very different. The boys speak in the yard of revolting against the school’s “unjust and cruel and unfair” discipline, but Stephen alone has the courage to do so. When his trust in the authority placed over him by home and society is seemingly vindicated and his admiring schoolfellows lift the shy and unpopular child aloft, the similarity with the note of fulfillment at the end of the book is apparent.

But deep ironic undercuttings show the reader the episode’s place in the pattern of the chapter. Stephen is very soon “alone”; the cricket bats that had played in the background when the boys were discussing the punishment (pandy bat) of their schoolmates return; furthermore, the skull on Father Conmee’s desk, beside which he takes Stephen’s hand across the desk, and his attempt to excuse Father Dolan’s action on sophistical grounds suggest that the triumph of justice has not been absolute.

Stephen undergoes the disillusionment in Chapter II, at the end of the first part of the book. His reaction to Simon’s unwitting revelation that the justice of Father Conmee was absolute cant and that Simon himself is unable to recognize the moral issue (“O, a Jesuit for your life, for diplomacy!”) is not shown. But the dramatization in Chapter I of his intrepid appeal to Father Conmee and of the feelings that preceded and followed it is one index of what the reader may infer about the general nature and the
intensity of that reaction; and another is the fact that the imitation of Father Conmee’s laugh with which Simon Dedalus ends his anecdote is followed directly by the end of the section (the asterisks are missing in American editions, although a space for them is provided) and by a forward jump of two years. The first part of the book is defined not so much by the transition in time to the midst of Stephen’s high-school days as by the suggestion that the discovery he makes about Father Conmee completes the pandying affair and so fulfils the pattern of the child’s disillusioning experience of home, society, and Church, set up so symmetrically in Chapter I.

The depiction of Stephen’s formative years is completed at that point. But before the point is reached, his experience broadens to include squalor and riot. Chapter II begins the summer after his year at Clongowes, and almost immediately he is weaving his fantasies about Dantes’ betrothed in The Count of Monte Cristo. The association he makes between Mercedes and the Virgin Mary is more overt than that involving his first inamorata, the Protestant neighbor, Eileen, yet he seeks Mercedes constantly in real rose gardens. The principal subject of Chapter II is this struggle against the “riot” of his sexual impulses, but “the squalor of his life” is also articulated. His idealized view of the cows at summer pasture is the first fantasy rudely given the lie in the chapter—autumn comes, and “the first sight of the filthy cowyard” sickens him so he can not even “look at the milk they yielded.” The note of squalor is promptly reinforced as he becomes aware of the effects of his family’s declining fortunes. The sudden loss of his material security complements the loss of his emotional security, dramatized in the Christmas dinner scene; the author makes the point explicitly:

those changes in what he had deemed unchangeable were so many slight shocks to his boyish conception of the world. (p. 64)

Whereupon, “He returned to Mercedes and, as he brooded upon her image, a strange unrest crept into his blood” (p. 64). The author tells in the next three pages (pp. 64-67)
of Stephen’s isolate wanderings and reveries about travel to exotic places, his “restless heart,” his feeling of difference from other children and almost total withdrawal from their society, his incapacity for either amusement or pleasure, his endeavor “to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld,” his belief that with that meeting “he would be transfigured.”

These new developments in Stephen’s character are strange neither to experience nor to literature, although they are extreme in intensity. However, the author takes care to link his behavior to the carefully laid-out set of “shocks” Stephen has undergone; and when he has described that behavior, he identifies Stephen’s antagonists explicitly:

He was angry with himself for being young and the prey of restless foolish impulses, angry also with the change of fortune which was reshaping the world about him into a vision of squalor and insincerity. (p. 67)

To this point what I have designated the first part of the Portrait not only presents a history of the child Stephen’s experiences of the world about him and his own impulses but does so explicitly and in those very terms of world and self. Still, all human experiences must be of one or the other, and Freud gave the name “ego” to an active quality of mind which we develop as a way of perceiving and dealing with external reality and our feelings. Before Simon’s anecdote (pp. 71-73), only two more incidents occur—Stephen’s first meeting with E.C. (pp. 68-70), and his attempt to compose a poem about the meeting (pp. 70-71). But he has come to recognize the antagonists troubling him. In that meeting and its consequence he shows the way he has developed for dealing with them.

E.C., whom Stephen makes another avatar of the Virgin and the answer to his longing (her eyes speak “to him from beneath their cowl,” and “he had heard their tale before,” p. 69), is indeed beckoning to him as they stand on the tram steps. He recognizes that “I could hold her and kiss her,” and has been shown to want nothing in the world more. “But he did neither,” the author says, and turns to Stephen’s poetic effort of the following day. The attempt to render the vivid incident is futile until:
by dint of brooding on the incident, he thought himself into confidence. During this process all those elements which he deemed common and insignificant fell out of the scene. There remained no trace of the tram itself nor of the trammen nor of the horses: nor did he and she appear vividly. The verses told only of the night and the balmy breeze and the maiden lustre of the moon. Some undefined sorrow was hidden in the hearts of the protagonists as they stood in silence beneath the leafless trees and when the moment of farewell had come the kiss, which had been withheld by one, was given by both.

By dint of brooding on the incident, he succeeds in removing every element of reality from it, idealizing and blurring until he is able to bring about the very opposite of what happened to him. The probable quality of Stephen's poem is incidental here; what is central is his development of a pattern for dealing with the world and himself. His disappointments, disillusionments, shocks, the "two years' spell of reverie," the worst possible thing for him (which is to end directly, when his father secures his admission to Belvedere during the revelatory meeting with Father Connmee)—all have resulted not in a revision of his discredited ideals concerning his own feelings and the world about him but in his denial of reality for the sake of those ideals and consequent inability to act in reality to achieve them. If his ambiguous words at the end of the book, "I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience," assert that he himself had encountered it the other times, the boast is not only one of the most grandiloquent in English literature but one of the most hollow as well.

That the Stephen of the Portrait is among those heroes of fiction who tend to deny reality has been pointed out before, but the relationship of this tendency to his character as a whole and the careful and (as I have shown) systematic presentation of its genesis have not; and these additional elements of Joyce's portrayal qualify the tendency itself significantly. The view of the book as "The picture of a soul that is being damned for time and eternity," as the portrait of "a matured, self-conscious, dedicated, fallen being," derives mainly from a judgment upon Stephen's rejections and self-delusions: they are an attempt
to achieve "metaphysical self-sufficiency" because of "spiritual pride." Yet the supposed moral tragedy of this "anti-Christ" is actually presented as the result, in large part, of a child's encounters with a treacherous world and with the "strange unrest" of his own inchoate adolescence. Although his way of dealing with life is his own and not determined, Stephen is explicitly denied some degree of responsibility. Joyce's *Bildungsroman* is not about a tragic Luciferian but about a boy who is ludicrous, pathetic, and full of admirable potentialities.

This is confirmed by the culmination of Stephen's search for his ideal woman, in which he supposedly "falls" into "sin" for the first time. Joyce treats it more severely than he does the ultimately touching incident on the tram that foreshadows it. When he first conceives the woman at the beginning of Chapter II, Stephen imagines that upon their meeting "weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him." Unable to see that he has found his ideal in E.C. and failed it, he continues his search throughout the chapter until his meeting with the prostitute at the end, which is couched in terms that elaborately parody the imagined meeting:

... a premonition which led him on told him that this image would, without any overt act of his, encounter him. They would meet quietly as if they had known each other and had made their tryst, perhaps at one of the gates or in some more secret place. They would be alone ... and in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured. He would fade into something impalpable under her eyes ... Weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him in that magic moment. (p. 65)

He wandered up and down the dark slimy streets

A young woman dressed in a long pink gown laid her hand on his arm...

—Good night Willie dear!

Her room was warm

He wanted to be held firmly... In her arms he felt that he had suddenly become strong and fearless and sure of himself...
he read the meaning of her movements in her frank uplifted eyes. . . . He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her. . . . (pp. 99-101)

The accusation of lechery may or may not be implicit; but although Stephen himself and the critics who see him as “being damned for time and eternity” hold his first mortal sin at face value (“from the evil seed of lust all the other deadly sins had sprung forth,” p. 106), sin is not the author’s chief concern. The “disembodied grin” of Joyce’s ubiquitous irony is mocking and disapproving, but it is human rather than ghoulish. Adolescent boys frequently both glorify objects of infatuation and engage in sexual adventure rather than have a balanced relationship with any one girl; Stephen’s idealism is an extreme case. The depiction of him seeking his ideal, finding her real equivalent, but failing himself, and continuing to seek until ultimately he is subjected to an elaborate parody of his dream, might be so sadistic as to be intolerable were it to signify not merely folly but self-damnation. Stephen’s problem is that he refuses to face the fact of his own growing masculinity; his ego, the way of being he has developed, tries to deny his senses rather than discipline them, to climb away from all sense and to pure spirit, union with “Mercedes.” His attitude is not simply Christian but Platonic: he conceives an ideal relationship with an ideal mate that will come about under ideal circumstances in an ideal way. What Joyce presents in his double satire is a boy Platonist who persists in etherealizing his sexual feelings until he is made helpless by them and “transfigured” into bestiality—and the search of Chapter II reaches its comic fulfilment.

The fact of Stephen’s faults is not synonymous with their gravity. Unless the Portrait also provides a Roman Catholic standard for taking their measure, critical discussion of “his persistent sin” or his “denial of metaphysical fact, that is Divine fact,” and consignment of his soul to eternal fire infers such a standard in spite of the very different one which the book does provide. Joyce’s treatment of Stephen’s experiences with sex exemplifies its true tone, which is less the damnation of a corrupted vision than the chastisement of youthful folly; and the book shows the development of that
folly from "the features of infancy" on and thereby tempers the chastisement. The references it contains to Stephen's Icarus-like "falling" have been unfortunate in one sense, for they have been too readily taken out of their pagan context. He is no satanic hero who systematically, because of "spiritual pride and autonomy," falls; he is a young man who repeatedly, because of a twisted way of being, flops.

Precisely because he flops, Stephen also cannot be the developing artist who by the end of the book has fulfilled, has begun the process of fulfilling, or has prepared himself to fulfil, his destiny. There is no doubt of his bravery, integrity, and dedication to the values of art. His appeal to Father Connem in Chapter I, his resistance to the bullying of his schoolfellows in Chapter II, his entering a room he fully and literally believes to contain fiends waiting to take him to hell in Chapter III, his deliberations after the invitation to join the Jesuits in Chapter IV, and, in Chapter V, both the contrast between his aspiration and the shabby, materialistic self-seeking of his schoolfellows, and his firm willingness to risk eternal damnation—all show that unlike "Sunny Jim" Joyce as Stephen Dedalus may have been in some ways, he shared those three considerable virtues of his creator. Nevertheless, the view that "the whole book points toward the selection of a calling by the hero" replaces a harsh and alien religious judgment of Stephen with a neglect of the judgment which Joyce actually makes. It is not of his immortal soul, his failure is no fall through corruption. But beneath the protestations, proclamations, and maturations that mark his progress through and beyond adolescence, the postulant artist persists in the way of being he has fully developed by the time Simon's anecdote about Father Connem completes his rude removal to the world outside tuckoo's nursery; and for this reason he is found wanting. Whether a lapwing, as he calls himself in Ulysses, or a thoroughgoing dodo, he is not the Dedalion.

The second part of the Portrait ends when Stephen goes down to the beach, sees the wading girl—"the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird"—and affirms his personal destiny and vocation. The girl seems to provide him with the key to all the problems depicted throughout that part of the book, to exemplify a wedding of his sexual (Chapter
II), religious (Chapter III), and artistic (Chapter IV) aspirations: he will worship the beauty of the created world, and his work will be "to recreate life out of life!", in his own fervid phrase. Just as the first part of the novel can be said to take the child Stephen from his father's fanciful nursery tale to his worldly anecdote, the second can be said to extend from the fictional Mercedes to the girl in the water—Stephen's discovery of Dumas' character at the beginning of Chapter II is his unpromising introduction to sex, religion, and literature, and his encounter with the bird-girl at the end of Chapter IV convinces him that his problems are resolved. Some readers have agreed with Stephen (divorcing him from his condition in Ulysses) and called Chapter V anticlimactic and an artistic error. But the progress of the second part of the novel to that fervid denouement indicates that Stephen has deluded them and himself both, as he seems to realize when he (significantly) returns to the beach in the third chapter of Ulysses.

First of all, Joyce creates in Chapter II an advertisement of the force and importance of Stephen's problem—a virtually unbroken series of examples of the denial of reality by deception and self-deception. On the first page one reads that the bankrupt parasite Uncle Charles (who acts like a prosperous burgher with the tradesman), made to leave the house when smoking, calls "the reeking outhouse" "his arbour"; on the second the weakling boy is "trained" as a runner by the derelict athletic coach; thereafter, Stephen's daydreaming about Mercedes, his pastoral idyll, the women's admiration of "the beautiful Mabel Hunter," Stephen's idealization of E.C., the writing of the poem, Father Connem's justice, the play production in general and in detail ("—Is this a beautiful young lady? . . . Upon my word, I believe it's little Bertie Tallon . . . "), Simon's attempted return to the Cork of his youth, and the exotic delicacies, theater parties, and pink paint of Stephen's last desperate effort "to build a breakwater of order and elegance" with his essay prize money before surrendering to his frustration in nighttown—all have that quality in common. Its ubiquity in Stephen's world actually serves to temper one's judgment of him as well as to make his developing problem unavoidably apparent.
Furthermore, the chapter meaningfully charts Stephen's
descent of the Platonic scale to the stews. In the two years
between his first experience of E.C. and the night of the
Whitsuntide play, the two years passed over in the book,
his has not seen her. He has spent that day thinking about
her. Furthermore, he is aware that "poetry" will no longer
do him any good:

The growth and knowledge of two years of boyhood
stood between then and now, forbidding such an outlet
(p. 77)

even though the basis of her hold on him is unchanged:

He tried to recall her appearance but could not. He
could remember only that she had worn a shawl about
her head like a cowl and that her dark eyes had invited
and unnerved him. (p. 82)

The night of the play something unique in the novel
occurs, a contradiction of the tendencies in Stephen that
Joyce shows to be deplorable:

He saw her serious alluring eyes watching him. . . .
Another nature seemed to have been lent him. . . .
For one rare moment he seemed to be clothed in the
real apparel of boyhood. . . . (p. 85)

During his religious reversion in Chapter III, Stephen
chastises himself for replacing "boyish love," "chivalry,"
and "poetry" with "brute-like lust." But a moral distinction
between pious chivalry and bestiality is irrelevant: they
are alike in significance, are the alternative symptoms of
his real fault. In Stephen's explicitly transforming ex­
perience of E.C.'s eyes, Joyce both makes this point and
presents the corrective for Stephen's fault; and his place­
ment of the episode in the chapter creates the meaningful
chart.

Saying that Joyce works almost diagrammatically here
may seem to denigrate him, but the serious witty game
he made of his art results in, and supports, greater whimsies. Both of the extremities between which Stephen moves during the chapter in dealing with his sexual feelings are inadequate to the real nature of such feelings. However, midway on his descent from the ideal to the bestial, from the eyes of Mercedes to the obscene ("frank uplifted") eyes of the prostitute, he experiences an alternative to the two baneful extremes which is simply the mean between them: he sees E.C.'s eyes, both longed for and inviting, doing violence to neither spirit nor sense. And his ability to deal with his experience transforms him.

Unfortunately, not for long. And it should be noted that once more circumstance is the villain. When he rushes out of the theater after the play, not only willing to act but full of purpose (p. 95), E.C. is gone. In the next incident, the trip to Cork, his reaction to the carved word "Foetus" reveals that he has begun to have "monstrous reveries." The final step in his gradual descent follows his unsuccessful "breakwater of order and elegance": he makes E.C. a succubus. At this point he resumes his search, but not in neighborhoods with rose gardens.

When Stephen confesses his carnal sins at the end of Chapter III, the priest tells him to turn to the Virgin; but the place of E.C.'s eyes in Chapter II, as point of balance between complementary extremes and as cure of the troubles of which the extremes are the symptoms, suggests both that the priest's advice is singularly poor and that Stephen cannot satisfactorily turn to the prostitute either. The beginning of Chapter III is primarily an extended exposition of Stephen's new sensuality, but it reveals that his commitment to all the deadly sins—"his soul lusted after its own destruction"—is as deluded as are his former and future aspirations to pure spirituality; for at the same time, "The glories of Mary held his soul captive." Furthermore, his inability to reconcile spirit and sense has badly perverted both:

If ever his soul, reentering her dwelling shyly after the frenzy of his body's lust had spent itself, was turned towards her . . . it was when her names were murmured
 softly by lips whereon there still lingered foul and shameful words, the savour itself of a lewd kiss. (p. 105)

The religious reversion that fills the remainder of Chapter III is also explicitly undercut, not only by the crudeness of Father Arnall's theology and Stephen's simpleminded responses of fear followed by smugness, but also by precisely the device used in connection with his ideal woman in Chapter II: parody. The chapter begins with Stephen's anticipation of eating a greasy stew and ends with precisely the same sensual anticipation, although its object ("White pudding and eggs and sausages and cups of tea") is decorous enough to support his self-delusion. Joyce reiterates the point blasphemously, by concluding the chapter at that place in the Communion service at which Stephen is about to accept the host: "The ciborium had come to him."

Chapter II begins with Stephen's attempt to exist on a purely spiritual plane and records his progressive descent to the purely sensual. Chapter III begins with Stephen's attempt to exist on a purely sensual plane and records his progressive ascent to the purely spiritual. Chapter III ends with the Communion, Chapter II with the prostitute, but both kinds of fulfilment are undercut. And the two chapters are clearly complementary, depicting in concert Stephen's being flung from pillar to post by his inability to reconcile his impulses with his idealizations. The descent through Chapter II and ascent through Chapter III is a kind of geometrical trope, whose very symmetry suggests the futility of Stephen's actions and the worthlessness of both his denial that his genitals are part of him (p. 161) and his reversion to the opposite extreme of the Platonic scale. By the end of Chapter III, he has resolved nothing.

Joyce has made his depiction of Stephen's troubled adolescence a simplistic criticism of that scale itself, a refutation of Plato's view of reality and human experience through that of Aristotle. The true dichotomy he offers is that between the whole range of Stephen's frenetic conduct, on the one hand, and, on the other, his brief and luckless coping with E.C.'s real eyes—with the tension between spirit and sense of normal human experience. The form
of Chapter II, with Mercedes at one end, the prostitute at the other, and Stephen’s unique and salutary experience of E.C.’s eyes between, suggests the paradigm.

The two chapters representing Stephen’s personal suffering are followed by Chapter IV, whose principal subject is his quest for vocation ending in the revelatory sight of the wading girl. But, just as the implicit comment on Stephen’s delusion about Father Conmee at the end of Chapter I is made explicit at the beginning of Chapter II, and the implicit comment on his escape into sensuality at the end of Chapter II is made explicit by his visits to the shrine of the Virgin, so the beginning of Chapter IV explicitly mocks his reversion from sensuality, which has already been implicitly refuted in the white pudding and Communion. His piety is methodical and crass (“he seemed to feel his soul . . . pressing . . . his purchase . . . in heaven,” p. 148); he still feels indifference for others; above all, after a while his devotions lose their meaning—until he discovers a “world of fervent love and virginal responses” in an old prayer book in which “the imagery of the canticles was interwoven with the communicant’s prayers”:

An audible voice seemed to caress the soul . . . bidding her arise as for espousal . . . look forth, a spouse, from Amana and from the mountains of the leopards; and the soul seemed to answer with the same inaudible voice, surrendering herself: *Inter ubera mea commorabitur.* (p. 152)

The bulk of the allusions are to the fourth chapter of Song of Songs, which contains the famous physical description of the mistress and the “Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse” passage. The pun on “ubera” in the Latin of the soul’s response makes the sexual cast of the passage unmistakable. Stephen is still engaged in his characteristic folly, and his “I have amended my life, have I not?”, with which the episode almost immediately ends, is Joyce’s characteristic mockery of it.

The next episode in the chapter presents the interview between Stephen and the director of the school, and the perceptive and ennobling grounds on which he rejects the
invitation to prepare for the Jesuit order. The third and final episode depicts his discovery of vocation. It begins with his learning that he is to enter the university and feeling that he has therefore "passed beyond" the authority and pressures of his society. He wonders about "the end he had been born to serve," reflects upon the "dappled seaborne clouds," composes his phrase, and decides that he is interested in language and that, like the clouds, he is to "wander." He comes on his swimming classmates, whose schoolboy Greek causes him to consider his name. He has a vision of "a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air," "a hawklike man flying sunward," and decides that along with the clouds this vision is significant of his destiny:

What were they now but cerements shaken from the body of death—the fear . . . the incertitude . . . the shame that had abased him within and without. . . .

His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her graveclothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He could create . . . as the great artificer whose name he bore. . . .

(pp. 169-70)

He sets out, freed from distraught adolescence, full of assurance and joy, and sees the bird-girl, who like the girls before her looks in his eyes. The chapter ends in his rhapsodic affirmation of life in nature and of his destiny as its celebrant.

Unfortunately, his sense of vocation is no more meaningful for him than was either of the complementary motive forces, spiritual aspiration and sensual indulgence, that preceded it; and he is as wrongly praised for finding himself and his vocation as he is charged with losing his immortal soul. Joyce denied the value of Stephen's vocational commitment in the very process of revealing it. Stephen's two omens are ironic—that is to say, he misreads them (characteristically) to suit his wish: the clouds are travelling westward, have gone from the continent to Ireland; the artist of his vision is "flying sunward," "climbing the air," acting not like the fabulous artificer but like his foolish son, as the text promptly confirms:
An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes and wild his breath and tremulous and wild and radiant his wind-swept limbs.
—One! Two! . . . Look out!—
—O, Cripes, I'm drowned!— (p. 169)

Stephen must fail to realize the artist's calling because he will repeat, is inclined by his whole way of being to repeat, the fault of his first poem to E.C. Throughout the book, water has the symbolic meaning that it has in Ulysses: it represents life or reality. Thus, Stephen always refuses to swim and is reluctant to wash (as in Ulysses). In Chapter I, water dropping into a bowl is linked with pandying, the life of a priest is likened in Chapter IV to turf-colored water, and in Chapter II the association is made the vehicle for a statement of Stephen's condition in terms familiar to this discussion:

He had tried to build a breakwater of order and elegance against the sordid tides of life without him and to dam up . . . the powerful recurrence of the tide within him. Useless. From without as from within the water had flowed over his barriers: their tides began once more to jostle fiercely above the crumbled mole. (p. 98)

Joyce said in his student essay "James Clarence Mangan," "so long as this place in nature is given us, it is right that art should do no violence to that gift." The creative process corresponds to the flight of Dedalus because in both cases success depends upon remaining close to the water; and Stephen's misconception of that process dooms him to failure. The point is made in the chapter before the advent of omens and bird-girl, when Stephen thinks with amusement of his father's gardener, "the man with the hat," and

of how the man with the hat worked, considering in turn the four points of the sky and then regretfully plunging his spade in the earth. (p. 162)

The lesson for the artist is lost on him. Being the way he is, he naturally inclines to "soar" "sunward" himself rather than turn over the earth and create "out of the . . . earth"
Despite his rhapsodizing about mortal beauty, the young Stephen has provided the reader with a prognosis of failure in his artistic aspiration that is consistent with his unchanged character. The long-limbed bird-girl who seems to him an augury of his emergence from boyhood, of the end of the trials begun with his encounter with Mercedes, and who seems the embodiment of his successful reconciliation of spirit and sense through vocation is depicted very clearly as a water bird.

The last part (and chapter) of the book has for its subject the young man who is the product and veteran of Stephen's experiences of childhood and adolescence. Far from being superfluous, it is required by what has gone before. It presents the result of the development in childhood and the living out in adolescence of Stephen's way of being. What the young man who emerges is, determines what the Portrait is about in the most elementary sense. Some critics feel that Joyce withholds the answer to the elementary question, and so does not truly end the book at all. But it does end, for Joyce truly does portray and judge Stephen. He does not indicate Stephen's destiny in the full sense of the grandiloquent word; but such an indication is not called for—the portrait is of the artist specifically as a young man. The method at the end of the novel is consistent and familiar. The five chapters, both discrete and sequential, a pentaptych much like a Hogarth progress, are linked by corresponding revelations about Stephen's major delusions, each made implicitly at the end of a chapter when the delusion reaches its climax, and then explicitly at the beginning of the next. Because of this method, the Portrait does end, and yet Ulysses is its sequel with respect to Stephen: when he appears at the beginning of Ulysses he is precisely what the end of the Portrait showed him, by ironic suggestion, to be.

Stephen saw in the bird-girl the beauty of the created world, which would be the matter of his art. But when the page is turned and the time suddenly becomes the end of that university career the anticipation of which a few pages before had led to his rhapsodic affirmation, the explicit revelation of that climactic delusion of his adolescence is made:
Chapter V

He drained his third cup of watery tea to the dregs and set to chewing the crusts of fried bread that were scattered near him. . . . The yellow dripping had been scooped out like a boghole and the pool under it brought back to his memory the dark turfcoloured water of . . . Clongowes. The box of pawn tickets at his elbow had just been rifled and he took up idly one after another in his greasy fingers. . . . (p. 174)

Fundamentally Stephen is unchanged; despite the true nature of the world out of which he must make his art, he is still dedicated to the bird-girl he had seen years before and still assumes that he need only “fly” to the continent to fulfil himself. He has changed enough superficially to confirm his belief that “his soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood”—he is confident, even smug, in his consciousness of potentiality, is gregarious, sententious, assertive, and resolute. It is precisely because these characteristics are superficial that they are so fully overwhelmed by his troubles in Ulysses. The fundamental fact is focussed on again and again in the chapter. Despite the multitude of boys’ names that contrasts so completely with the preceding chapters, he is still isolate. In a consistent pattern, he taunts his mother for her tenderness toward him, walks to school alone, spurns the flower girl (“a type of her race and of his own”), fails to communicate with the dean of studies (“I meant a different kind of lamp, sir,” “No, no—said Stephen smiling—I mean . . . ”), rejects McCann the internationalist and Davin the nationalist, and really has no meaningful relation with either Lynch or Cranly, although they compete for him. (He is little more than a prestigeful curiosity to Lynch; he does all the talking in their intellectual “discussions,” so that his blushing “We are right” is pathetic. He unconsciously associates Cranly with John the Baptist and confides his most intimate feelings to him, yet Cranly is as kind to “the captain,” the symbolic dwarf in the National Library, as he is to Stephen: Temple, the “flaming floundering fool” who is “a believer in the power of mind,” is a comic version of Stephen himself, and Cranly’s intolerance of Temple is a meaningful index.)
Stephen’s essential isolation joins with the box of pawn tickets, “speckled with louse marks,” to confirm that his triumphant joy at the end of Chapter IV was unjustified and he is still unable to cope with his own feelings or the world about him. The remainder of the chapter simply takes this fact and ironically juxtaposes it against his final stance as artist and individual; Joyce’s tone and method both are precisely what they are in the anticipatory triumph at the end of Chapter IV.

Joyce shows Stephen as artist in the composing of his villanelle. The process is recorded from beginning to end, and the passage beautifully combines the images and ideas of the aesthetic discourse with Lynch. Shelley’s “fading coal,” the phrase from Galvani, the Aquinian phases of artistic apprehension, the process of creation by stages—all are related in the making of a poem which, when made, exemplifies the defects of an aesthetic that nowhere admits value to the object itself, that is not Thomistic but, like Stephen’s morality, Platonic, separating experience and idea. Stephen awakes with a “morning inspiration.” The subject and agent, E.C. and his own soul (the ideal in two aspects), are combined into one “she.” With this ideal he associates females symbolic of Ireland, such as the flower girl. He sees himself as “a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everlasting life” (p. 221). And Joyce invests the incident with its final bit of significance by having him think that he “had written verses for her again after ten years” and recall the ride on the tram that inspired his last previous composition of a whole poem.

He is still a failure as an artist, and for the same reason. The poem is consummated when his soul, one aspect of “the temptress of his villanelle,” is aroused sufficiently, with the whole incident suggesting Stephen’s familiar confusion of the sexual, the religious, and the artistic; and the villanelle is a vague piece full of figurative possibilities without a literal base—Joyce’s own poetry of the period pushed beyond image to vapor. There is no transubstantiation of experience into everlasting life, only sweet sound and an echo, appropriately, of Shelley’s apostrophe to the “weary” celestial wanderer, quoted in Chapter II. Joyce shows him
going wrong during the process. "Shrinking from that life" of the world around him, he nurtures his inspiration, "imaging a roseway from where he lay upwards to heaven." His reversing the direction of the primrose path may not be morally significant, but it is poetically so. As he did when a child, he has taken the easy way out, left the earth and climbed sunward. One can measure the extent to which he has failed his aspirations against Joyce's own well-known literary accomplishments at his age, and against the fact that the protagonist of *Stephen Hero* is said on page 211 of that book to have composed "some ardent verses which he entitled a 'Vilanelle of the Temptress'" and on page 226 tells his brother Maurice that he has burned his whole volume of poems because "they were romantic," lacked precisely the virtue of "bend[ing] upon these present things" which Joyce's essay on Mangan cites in arguing the superiority of the "classical" attitude over the "romantic."

Stephen watches the birds in flight from the steps of the library, thinking of Thoth and Dedalus and advising himself that he is watching the birds for an "augury," immediately after his composition of the villanelle. He construes (p. 225) that the birds are indeed an augury of flight and creation, in the tradition of Dedalus and "Thoth, the god of writers." But Thoth has the head of an ibis, which is a water bird; and Stephen concludes that "he was to go away" and create just when "they came back with shrill cries. . . . " He has once again caused himself to misread the omens; like the clouds and the vision of Dedalus, the birds and the vision of Thoth signify for him as man and as artist the very opposite of flight from the Irish earth, either toward the continent or toward the heavens. From this point to the end of the book, Joyce persistently invalidates Stephen's expectations and assumptions. After interpreting the omens, Stephen seeks out Cranly for the "Easter duty" conversation, and declares with as much bravery as bravado his willingness to risk eternal damnation. However, as Cranly points out, he believes in the validity of the sacraments, his "mind is supersaturated with the religion in which you say you disbelieve," so that a flight from
Ireland would be futile with respect to the “net” of religion. Another pall is cast on his prospective departure by the circumstances in which he finally decides that he will make it. Cranly sings “Rosie O’Grady,” Stephen adds Rosie O’Grady to the symbols of Ireland embodied in E.C., thinks that E.C. prefers Cranly to himself, and concludes:

Away then: it is time to go. A voice spoke softly to Stephen’s lonely heart, bidding him go. . . . Yes, he would go. He could not strive against another. (p. 245)

Although his escape is at least occasioned by apparent dismissal, he proceeds to make his self-deluding proclamation about the things he will not serve and the “arms” he will use for his “defense.” Cranly mocks his stance (“Is it you? You poor poet, you!”), and the action gives way to the excerpts from his journal.

These confirm Cranly’s judgment. By the end of the book, Stephen has associated E.C. with his ideal woman, with the Church, with Ireland, and even with his own soul. (E.C. is completely absent from *Ulysses* for the good reason that all her symbolic functions are taken over by Stephen’s dead mother.) His decision to make his melodramatic “flight” is prompted by the belief that E.C. has rejected him (it seems never to have occurred to him that Mercedes married Monte Cristo’s enemy, although it must have occurred to Joyce that she fared badly as a result). And despite all his previous concern about omens and his triumphant pronouncements during the course of the journal passage, E.C. comes up eight times in the six and a half pages—she is his only constantly recurring subject, and Joyce may well have used the device of the journal primarily to show Stephen’s preoccupation with her; she keeps appearing until, just before the end, he reveals that he met her and expresses a willingness to throw up calling, flight, freedom, and all if only E.C. (with her whole freight of meaning) will have him:

Yes, I liked her today. . . . Then, in that case, all the rest, all that I thought I thought and all that I felt I felt, all the rest before now, in fact. . . . (p. 253)
He recognizes however that his courtship is futile, and turns to the exultant apostrophe to life and boast about his millionth encounter with the reality of experience with which the book ends half a page later. The passage is one with his poem about the tram-car tryst at the end of the first part of the book, and his paean to the created beauty of the bird-girl at the end of the second. Joyce shows him to be fundamentally unchanged in Chapter V, and his aspirations to continue to be futile: both his poetic practice in the chapter and his inability to relinquish or even put out of mind that which he protests he would escape testify to the fact.

The ending is complete and without ambiguity. After all the ironic revelations of the chapter, Stephen is caused to make his exultant boast and to invoke Dedalus. However, just as he is more like Monte Cristo than like Christ, both in his own nature and in his relations with his bride, he is more like Icarus than like Dedalus. And the weight of the irony generated when this already familiar point is not only made again, through Stephen’s references to “the wings of their . . . youth” and to Dedalus as “father,” but is also amplified by the whole context of false analogy—Dedalus had only to separate himself physically from what he wished to escape while Stephen’s island prison is also within him; Dedalus had been able to fly close to the water; Dedalus had been returning to his home from exile—brings to a decisive end the portrayal of an attractive and impressive young man who is neither damned nor fulfilled, but self-deluding and ineffectual.

Just as the tone of Joyce’s portrait of Stephen Dedalus is complicated but not ambiguous, so is its basic argument. Stephen’s expectations at the end with regard to himself and his future are vain, and his suffering and sense of futility when he reappears a year and seven weeks later are expected, the explicit representation of that former vanity. But Stephen’s failing has been fully articulated in the Portrait and its correction is plain. He must come to apprehend and to accept reality, submit to the laws of his existence, in terms both of the condition of the created world and the limitations of human nature. Joyce is not suggesting that he spend his life in a milieu whose hypo-
crescendo and squalor helped to develop that failing but, as the
omens reiterated, his going “forth” in his condition was
mistaken, for to do so was only to avoid more successfully
the reality he would sooner or later have to, and by his
mother’s death was forced to, confront.

Therefore, not only has the failure of Stephen’s con-
summate aspiration in the Portrait been inevitable, it has
been necessary for his rescue from complete spiritual
breakdown. And not only is the Stephen of the Portrait not
irreconcilable with the Stephen of Ulysses, but Ulysses is
Stephen’s only chance.

132-74, 164.
2. James Joyce, p. 69.
5. Ibid. (New York, 1911), X, 449.
7. S. H. Butcher and A. Lang, The Odyssey of Homer Done into
Butcher and Lang translation was the standard one throughout
Joyce’s lifetime.
8. For a discussion of its origins, see Joseph Prescott, “Notes on
9. Ibid., p. 149.
10. Saint Columbanus (d. 615) was, according to Butler’s Lives
of the Saints (London, 1938), “the greatest of the Irish missionary
monks on the continent of Europe” (XI, 276). “He left his mother,
grieveously against her will” to follow the monastic calling (ibid.).
A work with the same title (Edinburgh, 1914) by the Reverend S.
Baring-Could is more explicit about the incident alluded to in
Ulysses: “His mother attempted to deter him, prostrating herself on
the threshold of the door; he stepped over her, and left . . .” (XIV,
489-90).
11. See Budgen, p. 56.
13. Ibid., p. 66.
(1953), 388-93.
College English, XVIII (1957), 256-61, and the chapters named for
the Portrait in Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel, Form and
Function (New York, 1953), and in Joyce.
23. Joyce, pp. 120-21. Mr. Waith states that Joyce "never fails . . . to indicate what is unlikeable, weak, or foolish" in Stephen, but focuses on the extent to which he is made right-minded or even admirable, and his striving toward fulfilment as a man and an artist is supported.