

# James Joyce's Dedalus: Transformations of Ovid, Vergil and Plato

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Numerous critics have demonstrated how James Joyce's characterization of Stephen Dedalus, the protagonist of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, is indebted to the story of Daedalus in the *Metamorphoses* (completed 8 CE by Publius Ovidius Naso), and that *Portrait* owes much of its labyrinthine structure and various plot elements to Ovid's epic-like poem. Building on the insights of these scholars, the present study closely examines key passages in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and also expands our understanding of Joyce's intertextuality to include additional accounts of Daedalus in Vergil's *Aeneid*, Book 6, and in Platonic dialogues, works familiar to Joyce at the time of writing *Portrait*.

The magisterial scholar of the modern reception of classical Roman poets, Theodore Ziolkowski, asserts that Ovid enters modern English literature in the person of Joyce's Stephen Dedalus in the 1916 novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. *Portrait* signals its indebtedness to Ovid with an epigraph from *Metamorphoses*.<sup>1</sup> Joyce prefaced his novel with "Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes" (*Met.* 8.188). In English translation, this reads: "and he [Daedalus] sent forth his mind to unknown arts." Ovid also treated the story of Daedalus and Icarus in his earlier *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*) 2.21-98, written circa 2-1 BCE; however, Joyce's epigraph, *Portrait*'s emphasis on transformation, and Stephen's memory of the teacher who "taught him to construe the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid in a courtly English"<sup>2</sup> indicate that Joyce relied primarily on *Metamorphoses* for the Ovidian influences in this novel. The Latin citation from *Metamorphoses* is the only time Joyce prefaced any of his works with an epigraph. In addition, the main character's surname, Dedalus, derives from the name of Ovid's hero. In early 1904 Joyce started signing his letters with the name "Stephen Daedalus."<sup>3</sup> In *Stephen Hero*, the surviving pages of an early draft of *Portrait*, the protagonist's name is spelled "Daedalus," and Joyce published three short stories

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1 Theodore Ziolkowski, *Ovid and the Moderns* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005), 32-36.

2 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Chester G. Anderson (New York: Viking, 1968), 179. Parenthetical page references to this edition will include the letter P.

3 Patrick Parrinder, *James Joyce* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1984), 30.

in 1904 under the pen name, "Stephen Daedalus."<sup>4</sup> In analogy to the labyrinth invented by Ovid's Daedalus, Joyce's Stephen Dedalus will wend his way through the complex and confusing structure of the streets of Dublin. As noted by Lateiner, *Portrait* borrows narrative, similes, and metaphors from Ovid's account.<sup>5</sup> Like Ovid, Joyce will spend the rest of his life in exile—in his case a voluntary removal from Ireland, while Ovid was banished from Rome by the emperor Augustus.

This paper provides a close reading of three major passages from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—the opening section (called a *proem*, 1.1-4), the narrative of Daedalus and Icarus' flight (8.183-235), and the epic's conclusion (called a *sphraxis*, 15.871-79). Corresponding sections of *Portrait* and an examination of Joyce's word "artificer" illustrate Joyce's reception and modification of Ovid. Joyce was very familiar with Ovid and Vergil from his attendance at a Jesuit-run secondary school, Belvedere College, from 1893 to 1898. While he was introduced early to selections from Ovid and Vergil, Joyce specifically studied Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book 8, containing the Daedalus narrative, in middle grade, beginning in June 1897, at age 15. Ovid's account of Daedalus' burial of his son was a focus of that school year's national-wide examination for Latin by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland, a test in which Joyce participated.<sup>6</sup> Joyce also continued with studies of Latin literature at University College, Dublin.

### Ovid's Proem, Joyce's Epigram, and *Portrait*

Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*, starts with a programmatic statement that the poem will emphasize relentless changes related to forms, that the literary style itself will undergo modifications inspired by the gods, and that the epic will represent a continuous narrative from the creation of the world to the author's own times. Joyce's *Portrait* provides an Ovidian epigraph about the artist applying his mind to unknown arts, with the indication, for those who know the passage in Ovid, that the artist will "give a new form to nature." While the gods (*di*) inspire Ovid, Joyce's inspiration comes from Daedalus as represented by Ovid, Vergil, and Plato, as well as from Plato's account of the demiurge, the creator of the world.

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4 Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982), 164.

5 Donald Lateiner, "The Epigraph to Joyce's *Portrait*," *Classical and Modern Literature* 4 (1983): 77-84, at 78.

6 Bruce Bradley, *James Joyce's Schooldays* (New York: St. Martin's, 1982), 129.

Here is my literal translation, and the Latin original, of the poem of *Metamorphoses*:

My mind moves me to tell of forms changed into new  
bodies. You, gods, inspire my undertakings  
(for you have changed them, too), and draw out a  
continuous song  
from the world's first origins to my own time.

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas  
corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illas)  
adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi  
ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen!

*Met.* 1.1-4<sup>7</sup>

The accusative phrase in the opening line, *mutatas ... formas* (“forms having been changed”), appears to have been the basis of Ovid’s Latin title, *mutatae formae* (nominative case), the words by which Ovid refers to his epic in his poems from exile, *Tristia* 1.1.117, 1.7.113, and 3.14.9. The Greek rendition of this phrase, *Metamorphoses*, does not appear until some decades later, used first by Seneca, and then by Quintilian.<sup>8</sup> Ovid structures the first clause of his poem so that the reader does not learn the noun object of the preposition *In* until after the enjambment leading to the second line, *corpora*. Many English translators render “In nova ... mutatas formas corpora” as “bodies changed into new forms.”<sup>9</sup> The Latin grammatical structure, however, says otherwise: the adjective *nova* must modify the noun *corpora*, with which it agrees in gender and case, so that Ovid is instead writing that “forms are changed into new bodies.”

Ovid’s words begin Joyce’s *Portrait*: “Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes” (*Met.* 8.188); “and he [Daedalus] sent forth his mind to unknown arts.” Like Ovid’s opening clause (“In nova ... corpora”), the epigraph does not disclose its basic meaning until its last word, *artes* (“arts”). Joyce, a superb Latin scholar, knew the phrase Ovid placed immediately following *artes*, and would assume that many of his readers would make the connection. Ovid continues: “naturamque novat” (*Met.* 8.189), “and he gave a new form to nature / changed the constitution of nature / invented

7 Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Latin text at [thelatinlibrary.com](http://thelatinlibrary.com).

8 Stephen M. Wheeler, *A Discourse of Wonders: Audience and Performance in Ovid’s Metamorphoses* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1999), 14, 214.

9 E.g., Rolfe Humphries, *Metamorphoses* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955); Stanley Lombardo, *Ovid: Metamorphoses* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010).

a new nature.” The first words of *Portrait* thus correspond to the first clause of *Metamorphoses*: the artists (Ovid, Daedalus, Joyce) will apply new forms to bodies, creating a new nature. Just as the last word of the epigraph, *artes*, clarifies what has been unknown (*ignotas*), the last words of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and of Joyce's *Portrait* will clarify, and even reinterpret, their respective proem and epigraph.

Lines 2-3 of Ovid's proem address the gods, asking them to inspire the poet's writings, and indicating that they have already changed them. In addition to any change of content, the gods have influenced the poet's style. The first elegy of the *Amores*, an earlier work by Ovid, explains how the gods have changed the metrical form of that poem:

par erat inferior versus—risisse Cupido  
dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem. *Am.* 1.1.3-4

[As if planned in hexameters], the second verse was equal in measure to the first. Cupid, it is said, laughed and stole away one metrical foot.

Removing one foot (*unum ... pedem*) from the second line of each couplet results in the meter known as the elegiac couplet, consisting of a hexameter line followed by a so-called pentameter line, a rhythm suitable for erotic poetry. In *Metamorphoses*, in contrast, Ovid uses the characteristic Latin and Greek meter for heroic epic, hexameter lines, throughout. The gods have changed Ovid's poetry again. The style of Joyce's fiction will undergo even more metamorphoses than Ovid's.

Following the proem, Ovid depicts chaos, then the creation of the world and the four ages of mankind. The narrative continues with the stories of hundreds of metamorphoses of humans into, for example, trees, stone and animals, eventually incorporating recent Roman history, and concluding with a statement underlining the permanence of the poet's achievement. Joyce's *Portrait* proceeds from early childhood to young adulthood, with examples of the chaos of Stephen's fears and insecurities, leading to a religious crisis in which he rejects his mother's beliefs and practices, despite her desperate pleas that he fulfill his religious obligations. The novel concludes with Stephen's decision to become an artist and an exile, evoking Ovid's Daedalus and other creators in the process.

### Ovid's Daedalus and Stephen Dedalus

*Portrait* repeats and transforms multiple themes from Ovid's account of Daedalus and Icarus in *Metamorphoses* 8.183-235, including the comparison of humans to birds (*P* 169 and 171), the importance of feathers (*P* 171), and a parody of Icarus' fall when a boy who is swimming cries out, "I'm drowned!" (*P* 169). The most frequent Joycean allusions to this passage in Ovid relate to Daedalus as an artist, and to the flight of Daedalus, whom Joyce sees as heroic in his choice to become an exile. Stephen Dedalus becomes an artist when he fully accepts the implications of his name, "Dedalus." In the second half of Book IV, when Stephen's schoolmates are teasing him about his name, he experiences an epiphany related to the name of "the fabulous artificer." Schoolfellows, while swimming and diving, tease Stephen, calling out:

—Stephanos Dedalos! Bous Stephanoumenos!  
Bous Stephaneforos!

Their banter was not new to him and now it flattered his mild proud sovereignty. Now, as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy. So timeless seemed the grey warm air, so fluid and impersonal his own mood, that all ages were as one to him. A moment before the ghost of the ancient kingdom of the Danes had looked forth through the vesture of the hazewrapped City. Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air. What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some medieval book of prophecies and symbols, a hawk-like man flying sunward above the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being? (*P* 168-69).

The Greek or quasi-Greek names by which young men tease Stephen directly point to the legend of Daedalus. *Stephanos* is Greek for a wreath or crown. *Dedalos* is a Greek-like form of Stephen's surname, the correct Greek transliteration being *Daidalos*. *Bous* is Greek for ox or bull. As Lateiner has noted,

*bous* evokes the bull loved by Pasiphae, for whose consummation Dedalus built a contraption in the form of a wooden cow, as well as recalling the half-bull, half-human Minotaur, to contain whom Daedalus built the labyrinth.<sup>10</sup> Although Gifford and Seidman claim that *Stephanoumenos* is “[s]choolboy Greek,”<sup>11</sup> the word is authentic ancient Greek, the middle or passive voice present participle of the verb *stephanoō*, meaning “being crowned by a wreath,” as a bull or ox would be crowned prior to sacrifice. While *stephanōmenos* is the most common form of this participle, Achilles Tatius spells it *stephanoumenos*. *Stephanēforos* is an active voice present participle of the verb *stephanēphoreō*, which means “to wear a wreath.” This word is also authentic Greek, although the “e” is not the short vowel epsilon, but the long form of “e,” eta (here transliterated as ē). Joyce returns to several of these phrases in *Ulysses*. The first page of *Ulysses*, for example, calls attention to Stephen’s name when Buck Mulligan addresses Stephen: “The mockery of it! he said gaily. Your absurd name, an ancient Greek!” (*U* 1.34).<sup>12</sup> In addition, in the Scylla and Charybdis chapter, Joyce will repeat the phrases *Bous Stephanoumenos* (*U* 9.939), *Stephanos* (*U* 9.947) and “Fabulous artificer” (*U* 9.952).

After further allusions to Daedalus, *Portrait* depicts Stephen seeing a girl wading in the water. As Fritz Senn states, “[A]t Stephen’s climactic awareness of the portent of his own name, classical echoes conveniently cluster. The artist, in his new-found vocation, proceeds at once to transform the first real being available, the girl in the water, into a literary composition.”<sup>13</sup> Joyce writes:

A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane’s and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and soft-hued

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10 Lateiner, “Epigraph,” 81.

11 Don Gifford and Robert J. Seidman, *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce’s Ulysses*. 2nd ed. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988), 245.

12 Joyce, *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler. (New York: Random House, 1986). Parenthetical references are to chapter and line numbers in this edition.

13 Fritz Senn, *Joyce’s Dislocations: Essays on Reading as Translation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1984), 136.

as ivory, were bared almost to the hips, where the white fringes of her drawers were like feathering of soft white down. Her slate-blue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face. (*P* 171).

Ovid frequently writes of the transformation of humans into birds, such metamorphoses occurring over forty times. Scylla and her father change into birds in the narrative prior to the Daedalus narrative, and Daedalus' nephew becomes a bird in the passage immediately after Icarus' drowning.

### Portrait of the Artist/Artificer

The last paragraph of the novel specifically evokes Ovid's Daedalus: "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead" (*P* 253). In one sense, Stephen Dedalus is Icarus, the son of Daedalus, since the person he now calls "father" is Ovid's "old artificer." In another sense, Stephen himself is the mythic Daedalus, since he is about to cross the sea into exile, and to become an artist, an artificer. Joyce's sentence is multivocal, with even additional identifications. The concluding words ("stand me now and ever in good stead") sound like a prayer. Sidney Feschbach has argued that the Platonic dialogues provide a structure for *Portrait*. In reference to the final chapter of *Portrait*, Feschbach writes that the "chapter's divine mode suggests that Stephen's final appeal to the 'old father and old artificer' is directed not only to Ovid's Daedalus, but also to Plato's more divine demiurge."<sup>14</sup> In the 1871 translation of *Timaeus* by Benjamin Jowett, a work that would have been available to Joyce, the demiurge, the creator of our world, uses these precise words to describe himself to the other gods: "gods, children of gods, who are my works, and of whom I am *the artificer and father*, my creations are indissoluble if so I will."<sup>15</sup>

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14 Sidney Feschbach, "A Slow and Dark Birth': A Study of the Organization of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 4 (Summer 1967): 289–300, at 296.

15 Plato, *Timaeus* 41a, trans. Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato* (1871; rpr. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1924). Italics mine.

Joyce actually compares the fictional word he constructed to the world created by the demiurge, suggesting that his fictional world is superior since he has thought more carefully about the order. The Swiss journalist and critic, Jacques Mercanton, recalled the following, in an article published, appropriately, in the Geneva journal, *Labyrinthe*:

Il est curieux d'observer d'ailleurs que ce maître de l'équivoque ... avait ... besoin de l'ordre dans le monde....

Désordre, oui, désordre vivant qui vient troubler notre ordre stérile, mais soumis à ces lois implacables que Joyce ne cessait de scruter.... [!]  
... me demandait: — N'est-ce pas? C'est bien ainsi que doit pratiquer le démiurge pour fabriquer notre beau monde? ... il ajoutait: — Peut-être, en somme, qu'il réfléchit moins que nous.<sup>16</sup>

It is curious to observe, however, that this master of ambiguity had need for order in the world....

Disorder, yes, a living disorder, which could upset our sterile order, but one submissive to these implacable laws which Joyce did not cease to scrutinize. He asked me, "Isn't this the way the demiurge must operate to make our beautiful world?" ... He added, "Perhaps, after all, he [the demiurge] reflects less than we do."

Two collections of Platonic dialogues are known to have been in Joyce's personal library in Trieste while he was writing *Portrait*. One of these volumes, *Socratic Discourses by Plato and Xenophon*, contains a translation of Plato's *Euthyphro* by Florence Stawell. In *Euthyphro*, the eponymous participant compares Socrates to the philosopher's ancestor Daedalus. Joyce was well aware of this attribution since an archival note while he was writing *Portrait* (VI.B.1.16) refers to *Euthyphro*, noting that one of the ancestors of Socrates was the master craftsman.<sup>17</sup> The dialogue identifies Socrates with Daedalus because the philosopher's words keep changing their meanings just as Daedalus' statues were reputed to move on their own. *Euthyphro*, in the translation in Joyce's

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16 Jacques Mercanton, "Les heures de James Joyce," *Labyrinthe* (14 October 1944): 2.

17 R. J. Schork, *Greek and Hellenic Culture in Joyce* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1998), 286, n.11.



collection, says to Socrates, “you are our Daedalus” (the Greek text has ὁ Δαίδαλος, more correctly “you are the Daedalus”), prompting this reply:

Then, my friend, I must think myself so much the better artist than that great man, insasmuch as he only made his own works move, but I, it appears, can give this power to the works of others too.<sup>18</sup>

Here is the original Greek text of *Euthyphro* 11d, followed by my translation:

κινδυνεύω ἄρα, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀνδρὸς  
δεινότερος γεγονέναι τὴν τέχνην τοσοῦτω, ὅσω ὁ μὲν  
τὰ αὐτοῦ μόνα ἐποίει οὐ μένοντα, ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς τοῖς  
ἔμαυτοῦ, ὡς ἔοικε, καὶ τὰ ἀλλότρια.

Then, my friend, I run the risk of turning out to be this much more awesome than that man in my artistry, in that he made only his own works move while I, it seems, cause the works of others as well as my own to move.

Daedalus in this dialogue is an artist who can make statues move, but Socrates is much more awesome (δεινότερος, *deinoteros*) since his words can shift meaning. The adjective *deinoteros* is the comparative form of *deinos*, which has multiple connotations, including “tremendous,” “wonderful,” “skillful,” “clever,” “marvelous,” “strange,” and even “terrible.” Joyce’s prose could also be called “words that can shift meaning.” In becoming the artist/artificer Daedalus, Stephen also becomes the creator demiurge and the wise man, Socrates.

Joyce applies “artificer” to the mythological Daedalus both in the last sentence of *Portrait* (“Old father, old artificer,” P 253) and in the passage where Stephen accepts the implications of “the name of the fabulous artificer” (P 169). The adjective “fabulous,” as McBride notes, suggests the teller of fables, bringing the reader back to the first words of *Portrait* following the epigram: “Once upon a time” (P 7).<sup>19</sup> R. J. Schork comments that Ovid never describes Daedalus with the term *artifex*, the Latin equivalent for “artificer,” instead using *opifex*. Referring to Latin

18 Plato, *Euthyphro* 11b-d, trans. Florence Stawell, *Socratic Discourses by Plato and Xenophon* (London: Dent, 1910), 300-320, at 313. Greek text at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0169>.

19 Margaret McBride, *Ulysses and the Metamorphosis of Stephen Dedalus* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2011), 15.

dictionaries, Schork speculates that Joyce understood *artifex* to mean a master in the liberal arts, and *opifex* a craftsman in the manual arts.<sup>20</sup> The noun “artificer” is significant because of its close phonetic association with the protagonist, the “Artist as a Young Man.” Schork’s distinction, however, is not clear-cut in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*,<sup>21</sup> where the first definition given for *artifex* is the “practitioner of any art,” and only definition 4 is “a craftsman in one of the fine arts,” and definition 1 for *opifex* is “Craftsman, artificer,” to be followed by 2, “one who works with his hands, a craftsman, artisan (often disparagingly).” In addition, while Ovid does not refer to Daedalus as “artificer,” he does apply that name to himself in *Tristia* 3.14.6, writing of his *Art of Love*) that injured its artificer (“artifici quae nocuere suo”).

It could be argued that Stephen at the conclusion of the novel cannot be identifying with the mythological Daedalus, because Stephen is just starting to become an artist, while after the death of Icarus, the father is no longer an artist because he “cursed his arts” (“devovitque suas artes,” *Met.* 8.235). In this passage, however, Ovid does not specify whether the *artes* include Daedalus’ sculpture and architecture, or only the “unknown arts” (“ignotas ... artes”) (*Met.* 8.188) that led to the building of a flying apparatus. Having studied Vergil thoroughly, however, Joyce was familiar with a description in *Aeneid* 6.14-33 of Daedalus’ artistic creation after his son’s death, and thus Joyce knew that Daedalus continued as an artist, carving sculptures on the doors of a temple in order to tell the story of the Minotaur, the labyrinth, and Daedalus and Icarus. Vergil describes Daedalus, however, as trying twice to portray the death of Icarus, but *bis patriae cecidere manus*, “twice the hands of the father failed.”

### Ovid’s Sphraxis and Joyce’s Conclusion

Ovid’s proem concludes with his desire that the gods will inspire him to compose a “continuous song / from the world’s first origins to my own time” (*Met.* 1.3-4). Compare the penultimate paragraph of Joyce’s *Portrait*. About to leave Ireland for European exile, Stephen Dedalus writes in his journal: “Welcome, O life, I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my

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20 Schork, 1997. *Latin and Roman Culture in Joyce* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1997), 155.

21 P. G. W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, rev. ed. (London: Oxford UP, 2006). Definitions of *artifex* are on pp. 176-77, while *opifex* is on p. 1253.

race" (*P* 252-53). To balance Ovid's history of the world, Joyce will forge, in a rhythm that echoes the music of Ovid's dactylic hexameters, "the uncreated conscience of my race."<sup>22</sup> The verb "forge" refers back to Stephen's words when he decides to become an artist, "forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being?" (*P* 169). While this goal of forging "the uncreated conscience of my race" may not constitute writing the history of the Irish race or of the human race, Joyce's writings will achieve a new style, summing up and transforming centuries of literary styles.

In both the conclusion to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (called a *sphraxis*, or "seal") and the ending of Joyce's *Portrait*, the writers set the stage for art that will last beyond this world characterized by metamorphoses and chaos. Ovid writes:

Now I have completed the work.  
 The fury of Jove, fire, sword, guzzling time—  
 None can destroy it.  
 Let that day arrive  
 (Claiming a right only to my flesh)  
 Which will cut short life's uncertain years.  
 I shall be carried above eternal stars,  
 My name deathless and indelible.  
 Where Roman influence extends  
 People will read my poems.  
 If prophesies by poets capture truth,  
 Then I shall live, throughout all ages.<sup>23</sup>

iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis  
 nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas.  
 cum uolet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius  
 ius habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat aevi:  
 parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis  
 astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum,  
 quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris,  
 ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama,  
 siquid habent ueri uatum praesagia, uiuam.

*Met.* 15.871-79

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22 Scansion of the clause "forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race," using the Latin rule of elision between a word ending in a vowel and the next word beginning with a vowel ("the un-created"), yields five dactyls and a trochee, a perfectly metrical hexameter, with a pause (caesura) in the third foot, after "soul."

23 This translation previously appeared as "Beyond *Metamorphoses*" in *Delos* 29-30, (1999, pub. 2003), 16.

After thousands of verses and hundreds of transformations, Ovid has arrived at something not subject to metamorphosis, namely his poem and his literary reputation. This conclusion reverses the opening lines that suggest that forms continuously change into new bodies. Permanence, from Ovid's standpoint, has finally been achieved. In the final pages of *Portrait*, Stephen's development reaches a conclusion. His last two journal entries are:

APRIL 26. Mother is putting my new secondhand clothes in order. She prays now, she says, that I may learn in my own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels. Amen. So be it. Welcome, O life, I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.

APRIL 27. Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead. (*P* 252-53)

While Stephen is not as confident as Ovid, he is determined to go into exile and to become an artist, so that the concluding sentences reverse the chaos, insecurities, and difficulties of his labyrinthine wanderings through Dublin. These two journal entries delineate the multiple identities that enable Stephen's decision. McBride claims that "Stephen's story is neither that of Icarus nor that of Daedalus. Stephen, at the story's end, is a mythopoetic writer like Ovid, telling the tale of a Daedalian artist."<sup>24</sup> Joyce, however, never limits himself to an either/or, binary exclusion: Stephen self-identifies, in part, with all these individuals. He is Ovid's Daedalus as a heroic artist and exile. He is Vergil's Daedalus in combining hopes of artistic success with fears of artistic failure, but unlike Vergil's Daedalus who cannot depict the death of his son, Stephen will be courageous in fully portraying the truth. Stephen also is Icarus in going against parental advice and warnings by rejecting his mother's beliefs and religious practices. Moreover, he is Socrates' Daedalus in that his words keep changing their meanings, and Plato's demiurge through the creation of a world that builds order out of disorder. Joyce entitled his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: it is also a "Portrait of the Artist" as shaped by the reception and transformation of Ovid, Vergil, and Plato.

24 McBride, *Ulysses and the Metamorphosis of Stephen Dedalus*, 16.

With the final paragraphs of *Portrait*, James Joyce becomes the consummate artist who perfects art by concealing art. A medieval Latin saying, erroneously attributed to Horace, states that *ars est celare artem*, “the perfection of art is to conceal art.” Joyce accomplishes this not in the sense of hiding the labor needed to make the art seem unlabored, but instead by enclosing a wealth of meaning in just a few words. Stephen subsumes a world of literary allusions to ancient texts in these two phrases, “to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race,” and “Old father, old artificer.” *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* has now become the portrait of an artist who will be modern, courageous, innovative, and rebellious, but also an artist imbued with, and contributing to, the classical tradition.