

# *James Joyce: The Daedalus Connections*

Bruce Stewart

**Abstract:** *In 1904 James Joyce began using the pseudonym “Stephen Daedalus” both as a nom de plume and a signature in letters to his friends. In the autobiographical novel Stephen Hero, the name is given to the protagonist while in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916) it is simply contracted to “Dedalus” – the “strange name” that which Stephen recognises as his own and the “queer name” which his college friends attribute to him. Stephen Dedalus lives on in Ulysses and has a mirror-life as Shem the Penman in Finnegans Wake. We think we know that Joyce discovered his pseudonym in the eighth tale in Ovid’s Metamorphoses from which he took the epigraph for A Portrait. It may not be so. This article explores the Dedalus connections in various works such as Giordano Bruno’s writings and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s writings on Bruno.*

## I

When the editors of a newly-founded Dublin journal *Dana* rejected his high-flown autobiographical essay called “A Portrait of the Artist” in January 1904 (Ellmann 211-18), James Joyce embarked on a novel in the same vein. Whereas the protagonist of the 1904 “Portrait” essay was without a name – presumably as being identical to his author – the central character of *Stephen Hero* was called “Stephen Daedalus,” afterward abbreviated to “Dedalus” in *A Portrait*. From the outset, egoism was an important weapon with which Joyce supplied his autobiographical character as the most effective means of defence and attack in a hostile intellectual world in which he planned to play the role of “first national apostate” which Joyce had assigned himself in the history of Catholicism in Ireland, as he hints sardonically in “Shem the Penman”, the self-portrait chapter of *Finnegans Wake* (171). We first hear of it in the 1904 “Portrait”: “It was part of that ineradicable *egoism* of which he was afterward redeemer that he imagined converging to him the deeds and thoughts of the microcosm” [SH 39; *my italics*].<sup>1</sup> In *Stephen Hero*, this sentence is reproduced without only one small alteration (Coleridge 202). No wonder that Richard Ellmann has said of the passage in question: “While the writing exhibits both candour and presumption, presumption has the better of it” (150). Throughout *Stephen Hero* we hear of egoism *ad nauseam*:

His family expected that he would at once follow the path of remunerative respectability . . . . He thanked their intention: it had first fulfilled him with *egoism*; and he rejoiced that his life had been so self-centred. He felt however that there were activities which it would be a peril to postpone. [SH 53; my italics.]

– and again:

He was *egoistically* determined that nothing material, no favour or reverse of fortune, no bond of association or impulse or tradition should hinder him from working out the enigma of his position in his own way. [SH 214; my italics]<sup>2</sup>

Yet this *egoism* must not be thought of simply as a personal failing or even a reaction to the humiliating circumstances brought on by his father's abysmal management of family fortunes which challenged his son to paradoxical feats of self-assertion. For *egoism* is a definite trope within the literary tradition to which Joyce allied himself: the anti-authoritarian tradition of the English Romantics and, more pointedly, the anti-clerical tradition of the Renaissance apostates upon which the Romantics based their own rebellion. It is the purpose of this article to demonstrate that *egoism* was something Joyce discovered in Bruno and which he found elaborated with great force in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's commentaries on Bruno in his *Literary Remains* (1836). More exactly, I want to demonstrate that Bruno's writings as relayed to Joyce by Coleridge supplied the source of the pseudonym, literary alter ego, or *nom de plume* Daedalus/Dedalus which is so closely synonymous with the mentality of Joyce himself as a youthful artist.

## II

In recounting the circumstances in which Joyce started writing *Stephen Hero*, Stanislaus tells in his diary for February 1904 that the title was his own suggestion but does not trouble to explain the allusion involved beyond saying that "the title, like the book, is satirical" [CDD 19]. He also tells us that Joyce himself had already decided upon the name "Stephen Dedalus" [sic] for the central character [CDD 12]. Now, Dedalus is, as Stephen remarks in *A Portrait*, a "strange name" [AP 173] – and even, as a fellow pupil less amiably suggests, a "queer name" [AP 25] for an Irishman to have, if only because it is not not actually Irish but rather Greek, without any familial history to account for it. Thus, the Greek artisan Daedalus did not settle in Ireland after the sad demise of his son Icarus and spawn another family there – perhaps the MacDaids, or even "Doodles Family" [FW 299] as a footnote in the *Wake* suggests (McHugh 150).<sup>3</sup> Bloom at least can explain *his* name as a translation of the Hungarian Virag which pertained to his own father Rudolf of that style, born in Szombathely in 1866 [U 797]. Nor was it inevitable that Stephen should be called Daedalus. Joyce once played with the name Murphy –

presumably as a cognate of *Metamorphosis* – and, at the point when he began to revise Stephen Hero as *A Portrait*, he seriously contemplated re-christening the protagonist “Daly” – a credibly Irish abbreviation of “Daedalus” [JJ 274].

By mid-1904 Joyce was signing letters “Stephen Daedalus” [sic], as he did in a note to Oliver St. John Gogarty of 3 June and ditto in another to Constantine Curran of 23 June, varying this with “S.D.” in another missive to the latter a few days later (L 54-55). In mid-August 1904 the first story of the *Dubliners* appeared in *The Irish Homestead* under the by-line “Stephen Daedalus”.<sup>4</sup> In *My Brother’s Keeper*, Stanislaus explains that Joyce was prompted to adopt a pseudonym by “an adviser” other than himself (as he tells us with some emphasis). As to the provenance of the name, “[h]e had taken [it] from the central figure of the novel *Stephen Hero*, which he had already begun” [MBK239], he writes, adding that Joyce was so keen to enforce the identity of author and protagonist in *Stephen Hero* that “he announced his intention of appending the signature *Stephanus Daedalus pinxit* to the last page of the novel” [MBK239].

But why “Stephen Daedalus” rather than any other pseudonym that Joyce could have adopted? We may *think* we know that Stephen is a member of Clan Dedalus on account of the epigraph from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* affixed to *A Portrait* (VIII. 188).<sup>5</sup> This is not without problems. Firstly, Ovid’s Daedalus is driven to invent wings to escape King Minos who has taken over his homeland,<sup>6</sup> a scenario that fits the case if King Minos is an allegorical counterpart of the British imperium or the Catholic Church – either of which potentates might be said to steal the island in much the way that Prospero usurps Caliban’s birthright in Shakespeare’s famously postcolonial play. Secondly there is Icarus who fails to grasp the dangers of flight (*ignarus sua se tractare pericla*) (*ibid.* II.1236). having learnt that fateful art from his father (*damnosaque erudit artes*) (*ibid.* 1215) and consequently plunges to a watery death observed by insouciant pastoral figures and mournful father. Is this a proleptic glance at the fate of Stephen, the failed voyager in *Ulysses*?

Failure was a very real risk for the artist as a young man when he first left Ireland in 1902, and then left Ireland for good in 1904. At those times he must have thought often of W. B. Yeats’s letter of December 1902 in which he warned the younger writer that other “men have started with as good promise as yours and have failed, and men have started with less and have succeeded,” (Yeats III. 249-250) and it is something of an answer to that minatory note when Stephen shrugs off the depression of the morning to cry out in the “Circe” episode: “No, I flew. My foes beneath me. . . . *Pater!* Free!” [U 675]. Yet that cry is not more like Icarus in Ovid’s fable than Giordano Bruno in a host of sonnets where he rises above his enemies, while the father in “*Pater!*” has as much of something of Christ’s words on the cross as Icarus’s *cri de coeur*.

### III

Joyce read Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* for the Intermediate Examination at the age of sixteen and it may be assumed that he learnt a good deal by heart. At the Royal

University he took Italian as an optional course in his second year. In *Stephen Hero*, Joyce tells us that the decision to do so was due to his “desire to read Dante seriously” as well as to escape the “crush of French and German lectures” [SH 174]. It was also a boldly autodidactic strategy which set him free to dictate his own syllabus in ancient and modern literature. The 1904 “Portrait” supplies a brief account of his reading in the newly-acquired language in the immediate wake of his departure from the Catholic Church – a departure triggered in real life by the sudden death of his younger brother George from typhus and peritonitis in April 1902, after which he skipped the Easter Duties for the first time in May of that year [JJ 98]. In the autobiographical essay this is compounded with a pantheistic – or, more likely – a sensual impulse and Stephen is said to leave the Church through the “gates of Assisi” [PSW 214].

Extravagances followed. The simple history of the Poverello [i.e., St. Francis of Assisi] was soon out of mind and he established himself in the maddest of companies, Joachim Abbas, Bruno the Nolan, Michael Sendivogius, all the hierarchs of initiation cast their spells upon him. [PSW214]

It is highly conspicuous, in retrospect, that Giordano Bruno – who is mentioned here – is absent from the corresponding list in an episode of *Stephen Hero*.

Stephen Daedalus was not the only Irishman who was reading Joachim Abbas at the turn of the century, and the passage which conveys the details of his antiquarian curriculum suddenly refocuses as a bibliophilic narrative in which Stephen finds “on one of the carts of books near the river an unpublished book containing two stories by W. B. Yeats” [SH181-82]. That book was *The Tables of the Law* [and] *The Adoration of the Magi*, privately printed in one hundred and ten copies by A. H Bullen in 1897 after he had had second thoughts about including such dubious matter in Yeats’s collection *The Secret Rose* which he issued in the same year (Marcus 56). To lay hands on it was a bibliophilic triumph indeed. More interesting for Joyce than the volume was its contents, for this is the *locus classicus* of Irish lore about that hieratic medieval prelate Joachim but also, more tellingly, a touchstone for the stylistic development of James Augustine Joyce and arguably the most important influence on the style of the 1904 “Portrait”.

One of these stories was called *The Tables of the Law* and in it was mentioned the fabulous preface which Joachim, abbot of Flora, is said to have prefixed to his Eternal Gospel. [SH 181-82]

To suppose that Joyce discovered Joachim of Flora of his own accord is to invest extraordinary faith in his youthful appetite for medieval arcanity through the medium of his lately-acquired Italian. Certainly, on meeting Yeats, he made it known how much he admired “The Table of the Law” (Ellmann 86-89; JJ 107-8). *Stephen Hero* suggests that Joyce attended Marsh’s Library “a few times in the week to read Italian books of the Trecento” [SH 181]. The Library records tell otherwise: his only visits were on two

consecutive days between his final exams on 6 October and the graduation ceremony day at the end of the month, which fell on the 30th October. More likely, when Joyce descended on the library at St. Patrick's Close he had already been led into the ways of heresy by the imaginative flights of Yeats's mystical fiction and more specifically "The Tables of the Law" (1897) which Joyce used to recite from memory to his friend Vincent Cosgrave – the Lynch of *Stephen Hero* [SH 182] – but also to others such as Padraic Colum and George Russell [JJ 85].

In an act of explicit homage in *Stephen Hero*, Joyce makes Stephen Daedalus quote what he calls a "beautiful passage" at the conclusion of Yeats's story: "Why do you fly from our torches which were made out of the wood of the trees under which Christ wept . . ." [SH 184] (Yeats 1995. 101-121; 211). In fact, no work of Joyce's is uncoloured by Yeats's poetry and prose. To take a minor instance, where Yeats's narrator (very like the poet himself) characterises Aherne as "the supreme *type of our race*, which, when it has risen above, or is sunken below, the formalisms of half-education and the rationalisms of conventional affirmation and denial, turns away . . . from practicable desires and intuition towards desires so unbounded that no human vessel can contain them" (*Ibid.* 201), he is thinking of the Irish Catholic whom he believes to be the possessor of a mystical soul trapped in a feudal body. Those remarks established the tone of Joyce's use of the term "race" in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where Stephen responds to the liberated conduct of the young woman who "calls the stranger to her bed" in Davin's story of a lonely country road, calling her a "*type of her race and of his own*, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy . . . ." [AP 186-87; my italics]. Yeats's reaction to Joyce's enthusiasm for "The Tables of the Law" is well known: when he reissued them in a new edition in 1904, he wrote prefatorily that "a young man" he met in Dublin had "liked them and nothing else that [he] had written" (Foster 278). No one has ever doubted that the young man in question was James Joyce.<sup>7</sup>

In Yeats's telling of the matter, Joachim is credited with the possession of an arcane secret to the effect that the artists, not the priests, will bring on the "Kingdom of the Spirit" since they are the "instruments for that supreme art which is to win us from life and gather us into eternity like doves into their dove-cots [sic]" [WBY 206]. This great secret, so close to the hearts of literary types on Bedford Square, was purportedly preserved in a book called *Liber Inducens in Evangelium Aeternum* where "the freedom of the Renaissance lay hidden, until at last Pope Alexander IV had it found and cast into the flames" [JJ 203] according to Yeats's narrator – much as Bruno was bodily cast into the flames in Rome in 1600. It then materialises that Aherne has gained possession of the only surviving copy by fortuitous means (much as Joyce took possession of Yeats's hermetic volume. For Joyce, the idea of substituting artistic for priestly powers so powerfully suggested in this story – whose "atmosphere is heavy with incense and omens and the figures of the monk-errants" [SH 183] contributed significantly to his own strategy as an Irish Catholic who had refused the noviciate because he felt that art and literature had more authority over his spirit. Consequently he harvested Yeats's

language in “Rosa Alchemica” to furnish Stephen with a view of himself as “a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life” [AP 225], as we see in Chapter IV of *A Portrait of the Artist*.

#### IV

Joyce’s personal brief for Giordano Bruno is conveyed in *Stephen Hero* in the form of an exchange that shows every likelihood of having actually transpired with his Italian teacher Fr. Charles Ghezzi (here Fr. Artifoni), an Italian whom he took some satisfaction in identifying as one of those Italians who are “unable to associate audacity of thought with any temper but that of the irredentist” [SH 175]. The thrust of the conversation is simple. Stephen makes an “admiring allusion to the author of *The Triumphant Beast*” [SH 174-75] – that is, Bruno – to which Artifoni answers that he was “a terrible heretic”, causing Stephen to retort that he was “terribly burned” [SH 175]. In *A Portrait*, this “wrangle” is given in reported speech amid the closing diary-entries of the novel, and there Joyce reverted to the actual name of Ghezzi even though the priest would reappear as Artifoni for a further brief encounter in *Ulysses* [U 293].<sup>8</sup>

In January 1901 Joyce had a stage-success in an amateur play by his friend Margaret Sheehy, and considered adopting the professional name of “Gordon Brown” should he go on to work as an actor – an obvious clue that he had already developed an attachment to Giordano Bruno by that date (MBK 132). Nine months later, in October 1901, he issued his pamphlet “The Day of the Rabblement” attacking the management of the Irish literary theatre. While the title of the pamphlet itself involves an allusion to the anti-populist mania of the Italian thinker, the opening sentence is culled from the pages of Isabella Frith’s *Life of Giordano Bruno the Nolan* (1887) (Frith xii). Thus, where Frith quotes Bruno as saying, “No man truly loves goodness and truth who is not incensed with the multitude,” (*Ibid.* 165)<sup>9</sup> Joyce writes: “No man, said the Nolan, can be a lover of the true or the good unless he abhors the multitude, and the artist, though he may employ the crowd, is very careful to isolate himself.” (Ellmann 1966. 69). Joyce would obliquely acknowledge Frith’s study in his subsequent review of Lewis McIntyre’s “The Bruno Philosophy” for the *Dublin Daily Express* on 30 October 1903 (McIntyre. xvi). Whether or not he plucked that book from the editor’s shelf unprompted, the commission perfectly suited his affinity with the “heresiarch martyr of Nola,” as he calls him in the opening sentence [CW 132-34].

Behind the urbanity of style which marks the review, there is a sense of enthusiastic engagement with the subject, even if the actual judgements are at no great variance from McIntyre’s in accordance with the usual method of reviewers. Joyce lets it be known at the outset that he has read Frith’s study of 1887, which he calls the only “considerable volume” [CW132] on Bruno to have appeared so far in England, though he dismisses it in the same breath as “a book the interest of which was chiefly biographical” [CW132]. For the most part, that sentence is a reiteration of another in

McIntyre's preface,<sup>10</sup> yet Joyce unchivalrously omits to mention the author's name – strangely enough, given his indebtedness to her for the opening sentence of his 1901 pamphlet. Clearly, at any rate, he is happier with McIntyre whose book devotes “less than a third” of its length to Bruno's life and the remainder to “an exposition and comparative survey of his system” [CW 133]. For McIntyre, Bruno was interesting as a neglected philosopher – at least in England – who epitomised the spirit of liberal humanism at its point of origin. To Joyce, in contrast, the impact of Bruno's life and thought is more strongly felt as befits a reviewer in a nation still in thrall to the tyranny of conscience whose overthrow McIntyre, as a Scot, takes very much for granted.

In his concluding sentence, Joyce writes: “For us the vindication of freedom of intuition must seem an enduring monument, and among those who wages so honourable a war, his legend must seem the most honourable, more sanctified, and more ingenuous than that of Averroes or of Scotus Erigena” [CW134]. To reach this conclusion with him, he asks us to put aside the “vehement temper” and “quarrelsome” habits of the Italian philosopher since these are apt to produce an “inadequate and unjust notion [of the] great lover of wisdom” that he really was. [CW133]. And even if his writings on morality and on memory (after Raymond Lully) are valueless in a modern perspective, while his “idea of an ultimate principle . . . related to any soul or any material thing, as the *Materia Prima* of Aquinas is related to any material thing” is “unwarranted . . . in the view of critical philosophy” [CW 134], his life and work had the quality of “consistent spiritual unity” [CW133]. Finally, he was “among those who loftily do not fear to die” [CW134] – in a coinage which we can tentatively attribute to Coleridge's view of Bruno since Coleridge speaks of his “a lofty and enlightened piety” in the passage that gives us the name of “*Daedalus*” [sic].

All of this shows Joyce negotiating the pros and cons of neo-Platonist cosmology with considerable adeptness, but there is surprising little to suggest that Bruno might supply the structuring principle of any of his works, least of all his last. Yet we know that Bruno, along with Giambattista Vico were the main intellectual influences on the design of *Finnegans Wake* (Atherton 36-37). The principle in question is the theory of “Coinciding Contraries” of which McIntyre says: “This is in truth, the key to Bruno's system” (McIntyre 301).<sup>11</sup> Oddly enough, Joyce doesn't mention that theory by name in his review although he quotes Samuel Taylor Coleridge's definition of it at some length. Significantly, at this point, Coleridge's sentence is nowhere quoted in McIntyre – nor in any other commentary available to Joyce, though Isabella Frith alludes to a very different passage on Bruno in Coleridge's *Table-talk or Omniana* in her 1887 life of Bruno which he certainly read before writing the review – probably a year earlier.<sup>12</sup> This suggests that Joyce read Coleridge's thoughts on Bruno at first-hand, if possibly on her direction, or simply because Coleridge was sufficiently well-known as the English writer *par excellence* who shared with Joyce an intense imaginative affinity with the humanist-martyr – although their angles of vision were inevitably different.

## V

How deeply Joyce had read in Bruno's works we cannot accurately tell.<sup>13</sup> James Atherton did not do very well at all since Bruno "is one of the most verbose of all writers" (Atherton 37); yet years afterwards, remembering Bruno's theory of contraries, Joyce "[p]robably then looked up Bruno again and found him just what he was needing [when] planning *Finnegan Wake*" (*Ibidem.*). At this point he adds: "It also seems probable, from various hints in the *Wake*, that Joyce also consulted Coleridge's translations of parts of Bruno's works in *The Friend* (1809-10, No. VI: 81-82)" (*Ibidem.*). This is a problematic identification, since No. VI contains a lengthy Latin quotation from Bruno with a translation and some remarks by Coleridge which had no utility and scant interest for Joyce. To complicate matters, No. VI in the original series became Essay XVI of *The Friend* in the 1818 edition, and afterwards remained so in the editions of 1837 and 1863 respectively prepared by Coleridge's nephew Henry Nelson Coleridge and his son Derwent on the basis of papers that Coleridge left to a niece.

In that essay – by whatever name – an extended Latin quotation ("*anima sapiens non timet mortem ...*") serves Coleridge as a pretext to sermonise on the folly of fearing our necessary end: "The higher a man's station, the more arduous and full of peril his duties, the more comprehensive should his foresight be, the more rooted his tranquillity concerning [121] life and death" (*Ibid.* 122).<sup>14</sup> In the original journal of 1809 and the first book-form publication of 1812, this is peppered with anti-Catholic asides from Coleridge with his nephew later removed and substituted with his own editorial apparatus. Following quotation and translation, all in a footnote, Coleridge makes his most extended profession of attachment to Bruno, though typically in the form of an unfulfilled promise:

I purpose hereafter, to give an account of the Life of Giordano Bruno, the Friend of Sir Philip Sidney, and who was burnt under pretence of Atheism, at Rome, in the year 1600, and of his Works, which are perhaps the scarcest Books ever printed.

More is then said about their interest as "portraits of a vigorous mind struggling after truth amid many prejudices [in] the Roman Church," and for their "lively accounts" of "the rude state of London" when he visited it in 1585. Here he trails off with some remarks about his own good fortune in having read six out of the eleven extant titles by the "unhappy Philosopher of Nola" and the probable existence of a complete collection in the Royal Library at Copenhagen: "If so, it is unique".<sup>15</sup>

In fact, the locus of the Coleridgean definition of Bruno's theory of contradiction – or "coinciding contraries" – which Joyce quoted in the McIntyre review is Essay XIII of *The Friend* – the ruminative "weekly paper" which Coleridge issued during his rural sojourn of 1809-10, and afterwards published in London 1812. From the Joycean standpoint, the kernel of that essay – which broadly concerns the relation between justice and charity (or law and religion) – occurs when Coleridge summons Bruno in a lengthy



footnote as a witness to the urgent point that no contradiction need be found between those two principles in contemporary British society. In that context Coleridge writes: “There is, in strictness, no proper opposition but between two polar forces of one and the same polar power” (Rooke 97).

Joyce dares to reproach Coleridge for confounding Bruno’s doctrine of contraries according to which everything contains its opposite in the ontological plane, with the purely temporal order of the Heraclitan flux. Thus Coleridge’s formula implies *succession* rather than *coexistence*, converting a state of constant being into the similitude of Heraclitus’s river which never brings the same thing twice but may very well bring round its opposite in time. While this might make a good plot-line for *Finnegans Wake* – as events would prove – it does not convey Bruno’s idea in any pure form.

Hence at the mechanical level Coleridge’s definition is perfectly adequate, and it is the one to which Joyce would constantly attempt to explain Bruno to others. Thus in a letter to his patron Harriet Shaw Weaver of 27 January 1925, he revisited this very sentence in an attempt to explain Bruno’s part in the design of his latest work: “His philosophy is a kind of dualism – every power in nature must evolve an opposite in order to realise itself and opposition brings reunion &c. &c.”(Gilbert 226). (Curiously, he also mentions that Bruno “was quoted in my first pamphlet *The Day of the Rabblement*” and makes no mention of the McIntyre review which was the actual occasion of the Coleridgean quotation.) With that sentence freshly in mind, in any case, he is able to produce a pastiche of it in the fourth chapter of the book which provides a philosophical explanation of procreative relations between HCE and ALP, or any male and female in the *Wake* or elsewhere, in these Coleridgean terms:<sup>16</sup>

they isce et ille [were] equals of opposites, evolved by a onesame power of nature or of spirit, iste, as the sole condition and means of its himundher manifestation and polarised for reunion by the symphysis of their antipathies.  
[FW092]

In glossing this, it is worth recalling that the word “symphysis” refers to the anatomical point where the pelvic girdle is bridged by cartilage: Joyce’s use of the word therefore suggests that the “antipathies” (or “contraries”) of male and female nature are actually resolved when pubic bones meet and – as a bonus – that this is the primary occurrence of “manifestation,” or *epiphany* in the phenomenology of human being. And this is the philosophical crux of what Margaret Solomon has called “the sexual geometry of *Finnegans Wake*” (Solomon xi).

## VI

Coleridge admired Bruno enough to plan a second volume of the *Biographia Literaria* (1817) in the form of a “critique” – his word – of the man “whom the idolaters

of Rome burnt as an atheist in the year 1600” (73).<sup>17</sup> In a letter of 16 July 1816, he wrote in the same vein: “I had in the *Friend* announced my intention of writing the life of G. Bruno with a critique on his system,” blaming the tardiness of J. C. Hare – the biographer of John Sterling – for failing to lend him some rare books necessary for the task.”<sup>18</sup> Apart from the brief assertion of an indebtedness “to the polar logic and dynamic philosophy of Giordano Bruno” that he shared with the German idealist Schelling (31), there is actually very little about Bruno in *Biographia Literaria*, and this in spite of the summary of section-titles attached to Chapter IX which reads: “Giordano Bruno – Literary Aristocracy, or the existence of a tacit compact among the learned as a privileged order . . .” (93). Yet Bruno is everywhere in that chapter in another sense since it is centrally concerned with Coleridge’s pantheon of thinkers from Heraclitus and Boehme to Kant and Schelling – all of whom bear the news of a “reconciliation” between “Platonic and Baconian principles of investigation,” as Henry Nelson Coleridge describes his uncle’s philosophical project; in his 1837 edition of *The Friend* (x); and this indeed corresponds to Bruno’s peculiar amalgam of neo-Platonism with the Copernican system in earlier times. But Coleridge had another object in mind when he espoused the intellectual cause of Bruno, for Bruno was the flag-bearer for a virulent form of anti-Catholicism which was close to Coleridge’s heart especially after his return from Unitarianism to the Trinitarian faith of the Church of England.

It is possible – even probable – that Joyce sent his Catholic apostasy to school equally in Coleridge’s and Bruno’s classrooms. In fact, *Stephen Hero* is remarkable for the studied ferocity of its author’s declamations against the Church, almost as if Joyce were intent on out-doing the anti-Catholic bigots. For Stephen, the “Roman, not the Sassenach [i.e., English] was for him the tyrant of the islanders” [SH 57]. In the most emboldened of several such passages, he compares the Catholic clergy to “the vermin begotten in the catacombs issuing forth upon the plains and mountains of Europe.” [SH 198].

## VII

Once alerted to the Dedalian allegory of intellectual heroism, Joyce might find it everywhere in Bruno’s writings whether he went directly to them or met with them in intermediate sources. He had only to read the Introductory Epistle to Bruno’s *De l’infinito universo et mundi* [*On the Infinite Universe and Worlds*] (1584) to meet with this mirror-image of his own hopes and fears:

Since I would survey the field of Nature, care for the nourishment of the soul, foster the cultivation of talent, become expert as Daedalus concerning the ways of the intellect; lo, one doth threaten upon beholding me, another doth assail me at sight, another doth bite upon reaching me . . . . (Singer 229)

Here is both the Dedalian brand-name and the spirit of paranoia which Bruno and Joyce famously shared, allowing that Bruno had every reason to suspect the animosity of powerful contemporaries as his ultimate fate adequately suggests. In the same text Bruno wrote: “[i]f you would know why, it is because I hate the mob, I loathe the vulgar herd and in the multitude I find no joy”.<sup>19</sup> In *Gli eroici furori*, Bruno borrowed a sonnet by Tansillo – which came to be regarded as his own – to frame a prediction of his fate which, quite typically, he sees in Daedalian terms: “Since I my wings to sweet desire do lead / The more the air uprises ’neath my feet, / The swifter on the gale my pinions beat / and earth despising, towards heaven I tend.”

Nor for the son of Daed’lus’ guilty end  
Feel I dismay, nay, rather boyant heat  
His deadly fall I joyfull would meet,  
Peer to such a death what life could mortal spend. (Owen 330)<sup>20</sup>

In a book that was available to Joyce at the National Library, John Owen illustrates the Dedalian complex by quoting some other lines by Bruno himself which “we may accept as his own description of his mental career” (*Ibid.* 301):

Securely to the air my pinions I extend –  
Fearless of all barriers feigned by men of old  
The heavens I freely cleave – to the Infinite I tend.

So leaving this, to other worlds my upward flight I wend,  
Aetherial fields I penetrate, with dauntless heart and bold  
And leave behind what others deem, a prospect without end.<sup>21</sup>

The section on “Magnanimity” in Coleridge’s *Literary Remains* falls shortly after another of those lapidary reflections bearing the title “Egoism” where he argues for the necessity of Egoism in “repelling unjust contempt [that] forces the most modest man into a feeling of pride and self-consciousness,” adding that this reasoning “holds good of the founder of the Brunonian system, and his great namesake Giordano Bruno” (*Ibid.* 291-92). Egotism, in this sense, is a sign of nobility since “[i]t is scarcely possible for a man to meet with continual personal abuse, on account of his superior talents, without associating more and more the sense of the value of his discoveries or detections with his own person” (*Ibid.* 291). And this brings us full circle to the egoism of Stephen Dedalus.

## Notes

- 1 Viz., “It was part of that ineradicable egoism of which he was afterward redeemer that he *conceived* converging to him the deeds and thoughts of the microcosm.” [PSW 212; my italics.]
- 2 This is a complete census of “egotism” in *Stephen Hero*. There is no overt reference to it in *A Portrait*.
- 3 The Doodles are the topic of Roland McHugh’s *The Sigla of Finnegans Wake* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976).
- 4 “The Sisters” appeared in *The Irish Homestead* (13 Aug. 1904); rep. in Gifford 289-93.
- 5 *Metamorphosis* VIII, 188: “*Et ignotas anumum demittit in artes* [And he devoted his mind to unknown arts”].
- 6 Viz., “*Daedalus interea Creten longumque perosus / exilium tactusque loci natalis amore / clausus erat pelago. “terras licet” inquit “et undas / obstruat: et caelum certe patet; ibimus illac: / omnia possideat, non possidet aera Minos.*” (*Metamorphosis*, 8, ll.183-85.)
- 7 Yeats’s wrote in account of the meeting with Joyce as the preface for *Ideas of Good and Evil* but then withheld it [JJ 106-08].
- 8 The fictional name is borrowed from Almidiano Artifoni who was the proprietor of the Berlitz English schools where Joyce was employed in Pola and Trieste. See Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated* [2nd Edn.], 266. (California UP 1989).
- 9 Cited by Ellmann & Ellsworth, eds., *The Critical Writings of James Joyce* (1966.69) [n.3].
- 10 Viz., “Apart from The Life of Giordano Bruno by I. Frith (Mrs. Oppenheim), in the English Foreign Philosophical Library, 1887, there is no complete work in our language upon the poet . . .” (McIntyre, op. cit.vii).
- 11 He goes on: “What to some thinkers might seem contradictions and antagonisms mutually destructive of each other, he regarded as only different musical notes, which combine to make up a broad and rich harmony (symphonia). There is therefore, as you may observe, a close approximation in Bruno’s idealism to modern German transcendentalism, which accounts for the peculiar fascination he exercised on all its great luminaries from Jacobi to Hegel. (Idem.)
- 12 It is an anomaly that, whereas Joyce is presumed to have read Frith in the National Library of Ireland, the copy held there came from the estate of the Irish diplomat and poet Valentin Iremonger in 1991 and does not appear to be a replacement. When I examined it at first the pages were uncut.
- 13 A list of works on or about Bruno in the National Library in 1900-04 – when Joyce was a reader there – is incorporated in Gareth Joseph Downes’s excellent study of Joyce and Bruno. See Downes, “The Heretical Auctoritas of Giordano Bruno: The Significance of the Brunonian Presence in James Joyce’s *The Day of the Rabblement* and *Stephen Hero*,” in *Joyce Studies Annual*, 14 (Summer 2003): 37-73.
- 14 The supplied translation reads: “A wise spirit does not fear death, nay, sometimes – as in cases of voluntary martyrdom – seek it and goes forth to meet it, of its own accord. [... &c.]”. (Citing Bruno’s *De monade, &c.*)
- 15 Coleridge, *The Friend* (London: Gale and Curtis 1812), p.89 [given as “note to page 80 – a probably mistake for p.81, which is the first page of No. 6 [i.e., Essay VI] and therefore the passage to which Atherton’s note refers in *Books at the Wake* (1974), p.37.
- 16 The tryst of Tristran and Isolde in the “Mamalujo” section is the most explicit sexual “scene” in the book: “with a queeetleecree of joysis crisis she renulited their disunited . . . when . . . . Amorigas Champius, with one aragon throust, druve the massive of virilvigtoury, fhshpst the both lines of forward . . . rightjingbangshot into the goal of her gullet.” [FW395-96.]
- 17 *Biographia Literaria* [1817]; Chapter IX. The 1905 edition is a reprint of the 1817 original, with some addition pieces – viz., *Statesman’s Manual* and *Lay Sermons*.

- 18 See *Collected Letters*, IV, 626, quoted in a footnote to *The Friend*, Vol. I, ed. Barbara Rooke (118) Coleridge's excuse seems to participate in the "man from Porlock" syndrome. It is the more ironic since Thomas Carlyle – whom also wrote a life of Sterling in which the eighth chapter is given over to "Coleridge" – seems to have resented Hare's admiration of the poet. (See Anthony John Harding, *Coleridge and the Inspired Word*, McGill-Queens UP, 1985. 115)
- 19 Idem. He goes on in a more philosophical vein, "It is Unity that doth enchant me."
- 20 The remarks on Tansillo are his also. In the dialogue, the interlocutors are called Tansillo – who speaks here – and Cicada.
- 21 Idem. Cf. Paulo Eugene Memmo, *The Heroic Frenzies* (N. Carolina UP 1964): "Since I have spread my wings toward sweet delight, the more do I feel the air beneath my feet, the more I spread proud pinions to the wind, and condemn the world, and further my way toward heaven. Nor does the cruel fate of Daedalus's son burden me, on the contrary I follow his way the more: that I shall fall dead upon the earth I am well aware; but what life compares with this death?" Available online at [www.esotericarchives/bruno/furori#contents](http://www.esotericarchives/bruno/furori#contents)

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