

Joyce, Shakespeare, and Paternity in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake

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Kirstin L. Krumsee

The Ohio State University
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Project Advisor: Assistant Professor Laura Bartlett, Department of English

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Introduction

“Ah, there’s only one man he’s got to get the better of now, and that’s that Shakespeare!”

-Nora Joyce

In a rather astute comment made to Frank Budgen, Nora Joyce remarks on her husband’s need to outdo the writers of the Western literary canon. She implies a desire on Joyce’s part to defeat every writer in the English language, a colossal attempt at becoming the greatest writer in history. It is my objective in this piece to use the text of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake in correlation with Harold Bloom’s theory of the “anxiety of influence” to emphasize Joyce’s desire to surpass William Shakespeare, the last barrier he sees in his quest to conquer the Western canon.

Much of the theory of the “anxiety of influence” centers on the notion of a filial conflict existing between a young writer and his literary predecessor (Anxiety 26). Harold Bloom’s theory suggests that all major writers see the works of the writers before them and know they have been influenced, much as a son may see the influence of his father in himself (Anxiety 26). Bloom suggests that the natural instinct of the young writer is to rebel against the poetic influences of his precursors. Through the Freudian process of sublimation, he suggests, of purifying and improving upon the works of those who have come before, that the writer may surpass those influences (Anxiety 9-10). This certainly seems to be what Joyce attempts with his works. In Ulysses he uses Shakespeare via his protagonist Leopold Bloom as a father figure for Stephen Dedalus,

Joyce's alter ego, throughout Ulysses. Leopold Bloom mirrors William Shakespeare in his usage of quotes from the Bard and their similar history through the loss of a son (Schutte 127). In the same way Leopold Bloom mirrors William Shakespeare, Stephen Dedalus acts as a mirror to James Joyce. Through Stephen, Joyce must also deal with the themes of paternity. Early on in Ulysses Stephen Dedalus compares himself to Shakespeare's most widely praised character, the prince Hamlet. Many critics have made historically based arguments suggesting the character of Hamlet is based on Shakespeare's own son Hamnet, who died in childhood (Bloom, Greenblatt, Schutte). Due to the similarities that exist between Bloom and Shakespeare, and also the similarities between Stephen and Joyce, I move to the theory that as suggested by the importance of paternity in Ulysses, Joyce's objective is to portray himself as the son of William Shakespeare

Very much in the way that Harold Bloom suggests in The Anxiety of Influence that all young writers suffer under the burden of knowing what has come before them, Joyce suffers under the extraordinary burden of Shakespeare's masterworks. Harold Bloom argues that "poets as poets cannot accept substitution, [they] fight to the end to have their initial chance alone," of being truly original, of having no influences (Anxiety 8). Knowing the work of the precursors makes it even harder for a young writer to begin. Not only does a writer long to live up to his forbearers, he wants to surpass their accomplishments. This desire to go beyond the works of the forefathers is evident throughout Joyce's works. "History," Joyce's alter ego "Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (U¹ 2.377-2.378). Joyce is forced to live with the pressure of seeing what Shakespeare has done before him and continue to write. Joyce

¹ Ulysses. Ed. Hans Gabler. New York: Vintage, 1986.

however does not want to merely write and be on par with Shakespeare, he means to surpass the works of his literary precursor. Joyce needs to outdo all that history has granted Shakespeare; he must first write a phenomenal piece and then have it become as respected as that of his predecessor. History is on the side of Shakespeare, and no wonder both Joyce and Stephen are trying to wake up from it. However, Joyce does not ultimately choose to wake up from the nightmare of Shakespeare, he goes deeper into the world of his precursor with Finnegans Wake.

I see Finnegans Wake as another example of Joyce trying to surpass William Shakespeare. Finnegans Wake once again shows Joyce's anxiety of influence regarding Shakespeare. Not only is Finnegans Wake Joyce's attempt to outdo his previous work, Ulysses, but Finnegan's Wake is another attempt to outdo Shakespeare. Joyce feels himself capable of entering the mind of his great literary precursor and writing him a dream. He knows Shakespeare well enough to create something extremely complex, to build a dream world unlike anything ever devised before. Finnegans Wake is the "Great Shapersphere," the tale with no beginning and no end, the Globe for Shakespeare (FW 295.04).

Finnegans Wake becomes the night to Leopold's Bloomsday. As Harold Bloom notes, Finnegans Wake "begins where Ulysses ends: Poldy goes to sleep, Molly broods magnificently, and then a larger Everyman dreams the book of the night" (Western Canon 422). It is the last portion of Harold Bloom's statement that I disagree with.

There is no reason why the Everyman that is Leopold Bloom could not embody the "Here Comes Everybody" or HCE of Finnegans Wake (FW² 32.18-19). Every man becomes more than he is in a dream world. The single everyman, Leopold Bloom, can take on the

² Finnegans Wake. New York: Penguin, 1939.

larger identity of the everybody that is HCE, especially when that dreamer possesses the extraordinary mind of Shakespeare. As the events of Ulysses occur on June 16, and Finnegans Wake is the night after the events of Ulysses, Joyce has in effect, with Finnegans Wake, written Leopold Bloom's and thus William Shakespeare's very own midsummer night's dream.

Paternity: Joyce and Shakespeare in Ulysses

Previous studies on Shakespeare and paternity in Ulysses have been mutually exclusive: scholars have focused either on the presence of the Bard in the novel or the matter of the father. Much research on Shakespeare has concentrated solely on the surface level presence of Shakespeare's words and influence on the text. William Schutte's pioneering volume, Joyce and Shakespeare, largely catalogues the numerous quotations and references to Shakespeare in the text of Ulysses. However, Schutte's research falls short regarding the greater question that should be asked when looking at Shakespeare's presence in Ulysses: the question of why so many quotations and references are there.

Other researchers that have pursued Shakespeare (though none in so much detail as Schutte) have acknowledged the presence of Shakespeare in Bloom's nature (Ellmann, Peake). Harold Bloom includes Shakespeare in a list of substantial authors that he believes make up Leopold Bloom's character (Modern Critical Views 1). He considers Dante, Shelley, and Wordsworth along with Shakespeare to be the basis for Joyce's most complex character. Despite the influences that Dante, Shelley, and Wordsworth may have had on the formation of Leopold Bloom, it is the objective of this piece to focus exclusively on the significance of Shakespeare, the author I see to bear the greatest influence in the shaping of Ulysses.

Scholarship has also been devoted to a "Hamlet" structure that exists within the novel. This structure overlaps Stephen with Shakespeare's Danish prince, Bloom with the ghostly king, and Molly with the unfaithful queen Gertrude (Ellman, Keller,

Fagnoli). The notion of a “Hamlet” structure suggests that along with the overarching presence that Homer’s *Odyssey* offers the text that Ulysses exists within Shakespeare’s realm as well. The “Hamlet” structure plays well into the theory that Bloom acts as a symbolic father to Stephen. As Rudy exists as the true son for Bloom, Stephen does the same for Simon Dedalus, but regarding the symbolic father/son relationship Bloom is more of a father to Stephen (Rabaté 84).

By giving Bloom the role of the ghost, Joyce connects Bloom with Shakespeare. Numerous sources suggest that Shakespeare himself may have acted the role of the ghost on the stage in early productions of “Hamlet,” a role he may have felt a strong connection with after the death of his son, the similarly named Hamnet (Greenblatt, Wood). The connections between Bloom and Shakespeare are greatly intensified through the biographical sketch of Shakespeare that Stephen presents in “Scylla and Charybdis.” William Schutte notes a comparable structure in circumstances of marriage, the birth of a daughter then son, the subsequent loss of the son, and finally to the status of cuckold caused by an emotional or physical separation from the wife (127-128). There is no doubt that the relationship between Bloom and Shakespeare is intended, just as is the relationship between Stephen and Joyce.

Since the first publication of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and then Ulysses, critics have argued that the character of Stephen Dedalus is meant to be James Joyce. The similarities are far too numerous to assume anything less. Both were forced to leave Paris to sit by the side of a dying mother, both lived in a Martello tower, both worked as a teacher, Joyce even published several stories under the pseudonym of Stephen Daedalus; they are one and the same (Miller 7-11). Joyce is very much the

author and character. However, the character is not the Joyce at the time when he wrote the novel, but that of a younger self.

All previous research has stopped at the line of Bloom's similarities to Shakespeare (Schutte) and Stephen's similarities to Joyce (Miller). Scholars have noted the father/son relationship that exists between Stephen and Bloom (Rabaté), and left it at that. My objective is to combine these two previously separate arguments within the vast array of Joyce criticism. I aim to show that not only does Bloom act as a stand-in for Shakespeare and Stephen as a stand-in for Joyce, but also that these two authors, who lived hundreds of years apart, fit within the theme of paternity in the text. Finally, I want to emphasize that Shakespeare can be a father for Joyce, "a necessary evil" (U 16.742) as Stephen puts it, not only required for his existence as a writer, but as an extraordinary influence to be usurped.

Stephen Dedalus seems to gladly connect himself with Shakespeare's Danish prince. In Ulysses Annotated, Gifford notes the similarities in dress between Stephen and Hamlet. Both continue to wear the apparel of one in mourning far after those around them have ceased to dress in black. Buck urges Stephen, as Hamlet's mother does, to wear a brighter shade and escape his sorrows (U 1.121). Stephen, however, continues his Hamlet parallels with the sighting of his mother's ghost. He observes in his dreamlike state "Her glazing eyes staring out of death, to shake and bend my soul" so much like Hamlet's reaction to his father's apparition (U 1.273). Stephen also connects himself to Shakespeare through the usage of many quotations. He identifies himself with the image of the young Hamlet, the brooding, sorrow-filled, constantly mourning, prince of his Martello tower, his tower of Elsinore. With the role of Hamlet, Stephen becomes

connected with Hamnet, Shakespeare's son. As Daniel Ferrer says, "For many reasons, the idea of Shakespeare is linked, for [Stephen] with the idea of his father" (230). Joyce chooses to portray himself as the son of William Shakespeare. In the words of Jennifer Levine, "Stephen may be cast as Telemachus, but he thinks he's playing Hamlet" and Joyce may have been born the son of John Stanislaus Joyce, but he means to play Hamnet, the son of William Shakespeare (132).

Beyond the simple fact that Stephen is Hamlet lies the verity that throughout "Scylla and Charybdis" he compares Shakespeare to King Hamlet, the ghost, Hamlet's father (U 9.159-9.173). By clearly deeming Shakespeare as the ghost and Stephen as the prince, Joyce requires that the reader sees him as a son to Shakespeare. He, thus, must be seen as the heir to Shakespeare.

Joyce uses Leopold Bloom as the Shakespeare for his pages. In addition to their comparable histories Joyce gives other signs of Shakespeare's presence in Bloom. Stephen names Shakespeare "Christfox" in "Scylla and Charybdis," (U 9.337) a term comparing Shakespeare to the rogue George Fox (Gifford 216; Schutte 131). Bloom draws the same comparison in the "Circe" episode when the mob addresses him as "Mr. Fox" (U 15.1761). Bloom's immediate response to the name of "Mr. Fox" is to throw out several Shakespearean references; he immediately quotes both Twelfth Night, and Cymbeline, further solidifying his connection with Shakespeare (Gifford 480). Throughout the text Bloom speaks forty direct quotes or slight variations from the Bard to emphasize his knowledge of Shakespeare's works and maintains the connection for the reader; however Bloom's memory for quotation cannot be compared to that of Stephen with his one hundred and eighteen (Schutte 191). Joyce must outdo the master.

When Stephen is finally coerced into presenting his theory of Shakespeare he reveals not only Bloom's connection with Shakespeare, but also his own, thus Joyce's anxiety over Shakespeare's enormous influence on literature in the English language.

--What is a ghost? Stephen said with tingling energy. One who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change of manners.

Elizabethan London lay as far from Stratford as corrupt Paris lies from virgin Dublin. Who is the ghost from *limbo patrum*, returning to the world that has forgotten him? Who is King Hamlet? (U 9.147-9.151)

Immediately Shakespeare is identified, the player performing the role of King Hamlet, the ghost in death. Also Joyce presents the father Shakespeare, choosing to live away from his family, residing in London over staying at home in Stratford, a ghost in absence. He is of far less consequence in Stratford than in England, a resident of *limbo patrum*, the realm of the patriarch between heaven and hell (Gifford 203). Here Joyce also inserts himself, the writer who left his "virgin Dublin" for Paris and returns, just as Stephen is unhappily forced to do. Finally Bloom enters in as well, the ghost "through change of manners," the newly cuckolded husband who cannot move beyond the loss of his long dead son. Bloom is not the man he once was, though the man he has become is Shakespeare.

Stephen continues by theorizing a production of *Hamlet* where Shakespeare plays the role of the king. "It is the ghost, the king, a king and no king," a line suggesting that through Stephen's definition of a ghost, Shakespeare is himself more ghost than man (U 9.166). Shakespeare, Stephen says, is "a king and no king," or a father and no father to the children he left behind in Stratford.

Continuing his Shakespeare analysis Stephen says: “To a son he speaks, the son of his soul, the prince, young Hamlet and to the son of his body, Hamnet Shakespeare, who has died in Stratford that his namesake may live for ever” (U 9.171-9.173). In this sentence the parallels that exist between Stephen/Hamlet/ Joyce and Bloom/Ghost/Shakespeare become clear. Stephen strives to play the role of Hamlet, not on the stage, but in life, which suggests his desire to be Shakespeare’s son. Bloom, already established as a ghost like Shakespeare through Stephen’s definition, echoes the Bard again with Rudy, Bloom’s lost son whom he is able to see at age eleven (the age at which Shakespeare’s son died) in the play-like design of the “Circe” episode. Stephen, in “Scylla and Charybdis,” enquires, “Is it possible that that player Shakespeare, a ghost by absence, and in the vesture of buried Denmark, a ghost by death, speaking his own words to his own son's name (had Hamnet Shakespeare lived he would have been prince Hamlet's twin)” (U 9.174-9.177). Stephen, maintaining his Hamlet role, stands with Bloom in “Circe” and watches as Bloom calls out to his own dead son. It is exactly as Shakespeare, in his ghostly form in Hamlet, calls out his lines to Burbage, the player described by Stephen as young, who is playing the role of Hamlet. Burbage is the illusion of Shakespeare’s deceased son, Hamnet.

“[I]s it possible” Stephen enquires, “I want to know, or probable that he did not draw or foresee the logical conclusion of those premises” of Shakespeare calling out to the deceased Hamnet “you are the dispossessed son: I am the murdered father: your mother is the guilty queen, Anne Shakespeare, born Hathaway?” (U 9.177-9.180). In this passage Joyce is in effect creating a history for Shakespeare. There is almost no knowledge about the specific details of Shakespeare’s life, and Joyce uses the text of

Hamlet to fill in the holes. Devising a history for Shakespeare is probably the easiest way to make him more human, to relieve his anxiety of influence. Stephen suggests that like King Hamlet (and Bloom) that Shakespeare was a cuckolded husband, and somehow less of a man for it. It is an attempt to diminish Joyce's anxiety over what Shakespeare has done before him, to bring the father down to the level of the son.

--But this prying into the family life of a great man, Russell began impatiently.

Art thou there, truepenny?

--Interesting only to the parish clerk. I mean, we have the plays. I mean when we read the poetry of *King Lear* what is it to us how the poet lived? As for living our servants can do that for us, Villiers de l'Isle has said. Peeping and prying into greenroom gossip of the day, the poet's drinking, the poet's debts. We have *King Lear*: and it is immortal. (U 9.181-9.188)

Stephen is immediately doubted for his views, for wanting to know what Shakespeare was like beyond his works. A line from *Hamlet* follows though it is not spoken (Gifford 205). The line insists on truth in the play, Hamlet's demanding silence on behalf of his friends after seeing his ghostly father, Shakespeare. The passage also serves as a reminder to Stephen of the money he owes to Russell. Before the squabble over money between Stephen and Russell begins, Russell finishes his critique of Stephen's theory by saying Shakespeare's work, without knowledge of his life, is immortal, and thus his biography is unnecessary. The creation of a history could damage that immortality, and, again, bring Shakespeare down to Stephen's or Joyce's level. However, when Eglinton

suggests that in marrying Anne Hathaway “--The world believes that Shakespeare made a mistake and got out of it as quickly and as best he could” (U 9.226-9.227). Stephen does not take kindly to it. “--Bosh! [he] said rudely. A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery” (U 9.228-9.229). He is like a child willing to criticize his parent, but when someone agrees with him he is immediately affronted and protective of that lineage.

Joyce does not want to stop at successor or heir to Shakespeare’s throne; he wants to surpass, to be the “usurper” as is the lonely last word and line from the “Telemachus” episode. Common analysis suggests that Buck Mulligan is the usurper of Ulysses. By taking Stephen’s keys, Mulligan is taking his home and thus usurping his place. The term, however, is incredibly vague in the context of “Telemachus” and could also suggest that Joyce, via Stephen, embittered after his encounter with Mulligan, means to play the usurper as writer. Mulligan is the witty center of attention in the novel as Shakespeare is the witty center of Western literature. Mulligan may easily be able to usurp Stephen by being liked by all, but Mulligan’s popularity is not going to keep Joyce from trying to usurp the Bard. Joyce’s goal is to go beyond what Shakespeare has done, to do better and more difficult things than his father figure has managed. The word being wholly isolated in the text emphasizes a greater meaning beyond the implications of Stephen’s eviction from the tower. Stephen is to play the usurper.

Analyzing Bloom as Shakespeare may be difficult, but Joyce provides a somewhat subtle way into the understanding of this. When Molly enquires into the meaning of metempsychosis, Bloom answers that it is “the transmigration of souls” (U

4.341-4.342). In its standard definition, metempsychosis implies that a soul would travel from the body of a dead individual into a living one, but this is not the case in Ulysses. Shakespeare's soul travels into literature, into Bloom himself. In his continuing explanation of metempsychosis Bloom says "that we live after death" (U 4.352). Shakespeare is able to live on after death in his works and via transmigration joins with the soul of Bloom. Stephen requires no transmigration to make him Joyce, but the ability to surpass death is very much what Joyce desires in his quest to usurp Shakespeare. For defeating Shakespeare will ensure his place in history.

Joyce's need to be associated with Shakespeare can also be seen in the "Cyclops" episode where the unnamed narrator mentions Patrick W. Shakespeare in his list of Irish heroes (U 12.190-12.191). Aside from the implication here that Shakespeare is Irish and thus of a similar background as Joyce lies the fact that there was no Patrick W. Shakespeare. However, there was a Patrick W. Joyce who "was an Irish scholar and historian" (Gifford 324). This strongly emphasizes the association that Joyce desires the reader to make between himself and the Bard. Interestingly, he does not choose to make Bloom the symbol of Shakespeare here, nor Stephen. It is the surest sign of the writer's, Joyce's, needing to be compared to his idol.

The very scale of Ulysses illustrates Joyce's need to out do. He has taken The Odyssey and shrunk it down, diminishing Homer. He has gone from a tale spanning some thirty years and whittled it down to a single day in the life of Leopold Bloom. It is a task Joyce attempts again with Hamlet. Hamlet is not a story that can be scaled back in size so Joyce takes a different route. Joyce means to outthink it to prove that he is the better writer. He needs to be the son that can outrun his father.

Speaking through Stephen, Joyce presents his theory of Hamlet, that Hamlet's grandson is the grandfather of Shakespeare. As Stephen considers himself to be Hamlet, then it is only one step further to see himself as the one above: the one to be outdone by his descendant some five generations away. But Joyce is able to win again for he has the advantage of time. He may be willing to take on the role of Hamlet, Shakespeare's suggested great great grandfather, but succeeds by having been born three hundred years after his relation. Since Stephen's equation leaves no room for the ghost of the king Hamlet, he becomes the beginning of the line; he is before and after, the father and the son, the ancestor and the descendant.

In "Scylla and Charybdis" Stephen is so concerned with the familial lineage that he evidently strives to be a part of it. He denies the role of the patriarch in his own life, Simon Dedalus, which in Harold Bloom's The Western Canon correlates with the notion that "[Shakespeare] has no precursor or successor" (418). Joyce feels unknown by his own father and chooses to accept no precursor. However, he does choose to acquire a father figure in the man generally accepted as the greatest writer in the English language, the man that stands totally alone in literary history. He aims high.

In the "Circe" episode, "Stephen and Bloom gaze in the mirror. The face of William Shakespeare, beardless, appears there" (15.3821-15.3822). In Harold Bloom's analysis of this scene, he sees Shakespeare as telling the two men: "You stare in the mirror, trying to see yourself as me, but you behold what you are: only a beardless version, lacking my onetime potency, and rigid in facial paralysis, devoid of my ease of countenance" (Western Canon 425). After the Bard's implied statement, Leopold is still left waiting for the joke stemming from the mirror. With this argument, Harold Bloom

seems to suggest that Stephen is in fact older than Shakespeare by making him see the reflection of the once young literary master. Stephen, however, does not see himself in the mirror. He is face to face with the young Bard who cannot be of the same caliber as Stephen or Joyce. Shakespeare is but a young man gazing back at Stephen Dedalus, the intelligent and well informed young man of Joyce's history. Young Shakespeare can be no match for him. If Stephen were to look out at the aged Shakespeare, the balding, bearded image traditionally associated with him, then Stephen would be degraded. He would be forced to look into the face of a man that composed thirty plus plays and one hundred and fifty-four sonnets while Stephen is left having done nothing himself. Joyce is ahead here. He can see himself as more accomplished than the young image of his influence.

In the reflection of Shakespeare that Bloom and Stephen see, Shakespeare is "*Rigid in facial paralysis, crowned by the reflection of the reindeer antlered hatrack in the hall*" (U 15.3822-15.3824). Again, Shakespeare, like Bloom is the cuckold, bearing the antlers signifying his wife's adultery. Shakespeare speaks "*in dignified ventriloquy,*" for Joyce the author controls his every word (U 15.3824). "Tis the loud laugh bespeaks the vacant mind. (*to Bloom*) Thou thoughtest as how thou wastest invisible" (U 15.3824-15.3825). A misquote of Oliver Goldsmith for this young Shakespeare must again be proved lesser in quality than Stephen, or Joyce who writes him (Gifford 513).

Throughout the novel Joyce appears to feel forced into proving himself the equal of all literary minds before him. The chapter "Oxen of the Sun" demonstrates this in the usage of a multitude of styles of "imitations showing the development of [the] English" language (Atherton 315). Being that this chapter uses the technic of embryonic

development, Joyce presents his development as a writer by using so many literary styles (Gifford 408). In the words of Stuart Gilbert the episode is “a chapter of parodies.... It is obvious that one section is in the Carlyle manner, in another there are echoes of *A Pilgrim’s Progress*, elsewhere of the *Opium-Eater*” (296). With each passing style, Joyce attempts to surpass another period of literary history. In what Suzette Henke calls an “aesthetic couvade,” Joyce presents himself as the progenitor of the entire English canon. Joyce is seemingly saying “See, I can write in those styles too” and waiting for the reader to agree and deify him for his ability to write like all the canonical masters. He shows that he has developed as a writer beyond the techniques of the others to prove himself worthy and thus usurps them before he can, in his oedipal quest, take on the master of masters, William Shakespeare.

Joyce specifically takes on another literary master as Bloom leads the drunken Stephen out of the bar and walks with him. Bloom, as Shakespeare, leads Stephen/Joyce through Dublin, as is the case with Virgil leading Dante through the depths of hell. Not to be outdone by any of his predecessors, Stephen opts to be the one to leave in the end (Reynolds 124-126). Unlike the scene where Virgil, the master, is forced to leave Dante on the shores of Purgatory, Stephen makes his way out before he is even presented with the possibility of being forced to leave. He will not allow himself to be rejected by his predecessor as is the fate of Dante. His Shakespeare has to be set one step back. He will not let himself be outdone.

The very name Joyce gives his counterpart, Dedalus, suggests his status as the inexperienced youth needing to rise to the level of master. In Greek mythology Daedalus is the father of Icarus, the young man who needed to surpass his father’s achievement of

building wings to allow man to fly (Harris 46-47). Stephen is not the first man in his family to bear the name of Dedalus. He becomes identifiable with the young Icarus rather than Daedalus himself. Given Stephen's disdain for his natural father, Shakespeare takes on the role of Daedalus, the master craftsman. Shakespeare has created great works rather than waxen wings and being that Joyce cannot fall to his doom via his ego and the hot melting sun, he will take the same path as his father figure of molding masterpieces. Joyce clearly feels the weight of Shakespeare's influence and despite the implications that go along with his character's name; he still will try to play the usurper, to let Shakespeare be the one to fall.

The name of Dedalus plays such an important part in the way Joyce sees himself, as can be seen in his using it instead of his own name in publication (Miller 11). He would not choose the name unless it specifically fit. Perhaps Joyce knew instinctively that his goal was unobtainable, that he could not possibly out do Shakespeare. He may succeed in picking up the wings of Shakespeare and flying with them, but since he was not the one to build them, he will merely remain the son, the descendant of a great literary figure who cannot be surpassed.

Paternity: Joyce, Shakespeare, and the Nature of Finnegans Wake

Much like Ulysses, little scholarship has been devoted to Shakespeare's presence in Finnegans Wake. Vincent John Cheng's Shakespeare and Joyce exists as the only extensive study of Shakespeare in Joyce's final text. Cheng's volume succeeds admirably in uncovering the hundreds of allusions to Shakespeare and his works throughout Finnegans Wake, but like William Schutte's study of Ulysses, Joyce and Shakespeare, does not explore the greater question of why so many allusions to Shakespeare are present. In Third Census of Finnegans Wake, Adaline Glasheen's states that "to my mind, Shakespeare (man, works) is the matrix of FW" (260). Glasheen makes this extraordinary claim of Shakespeare's centrality to the text, seemingly the only claim she makes in the whole census, a book designed to be a reference not a source of analysis, yet she does not elaborate as to the how or why of Shakespeare's presence. So many critics point to Shakespeare in Finnegans Wake; they see his influences, remark on the allusions, and leave them at that (Campbell, Tindall, Landuyt). My desire is to explore the question of why.

Of course, Joyce does not leave Finnegans Wake only to Shakespeare. As Leopold Bloom takes on his new identity as HCE in Finnegans Wake, Stephen Dedalus, Ulysses' Joyce, takes on the identity of Shem, the Penman. While Stephen Dedalus exists only as a surrogate child for Leopold Bloom, the replacement for Rudy Bloom or Shakespeare's own son Hamnet, Shem is the biological son of HCE: it is one of the few agreed upon elements in all of Finnegans Wake scholarship. By making Shem the son of HCE, Joyce makes himself the biological son that William Shakespeare could only dream

of and allows himself the opportunity to more directly usurp Shakespeare in his Oedipal quest for supreme literary greatness.

In Finnegans Wake Joyce continues to be haunted by his anxiety over Shakespeare's influence. Ulysses did not immediately raise him to the level of canonical master as he had hoped it would. Shakespeare's advantage of time, a life of writing centuries before Joyce's birth, aided in granting Shakespeare himself that title and it is not so easy for Joyce to try and claim it. Joyce is a latecomer to the game of literature compared to Shakespeare. With Ulysses, Joyce attempted to write a history for Shakespeare, through Stephen Dedalus, to make up for some of that lost time. Finnegans Wake is yet another attempt at surpassing the numerous extraordinary things that Shakespeare did. In The Anxiety of Influence, Harold Bloom remarks on the young writer's need to rebel against his predecessors, to prove himself different, and perhaps better, than those who have come before (22). The extraordinary challenges and uniqueness of Finnegans Wake show, once again, Joyce's need to be seen as an original, to prove himself worthy of the top position in the literary canon, of being superior to Shakespeare.

The entire notion of Finnegans Wake is that all things have happened before and all things will happen again. The book is written in a circle. Each chapter largely repeats the same events again and again. The book is the story of Tim Finegan, the man who falls and later rises, again, the tale of Joyce again, the doubts about him and his works and his quest to surpass those doubts, and Shakespeare again, the dead poet extraordinaire who Joyce hopes has been reborn in himself so that he may now, in his desires, play the role of the greatest writer in the English language.

My desire in this section is to look exclusively at chapter 1.7, the chapter Joseph Campbell refers to as “Shem the Penman” (Skeleton Key 121). I choose to focus on this section of Finnegans Wake because it is about James Joyce himself, in the guise of Shem, Shem being the Irish form of the name James (Glasheen 262). Also the chapter greatly involves Joyce’s understanding and interest in Shakespeare, man and works. While any chapter of Finnegans Wake could show these elements, looking closely at a single chapter allows me to go into greater detail than would be possible in an examination of the complete text.

Chapter 1.7 is largely a criticism of Shem coming from his brother Shaun. Shaun cites numerous flaws that he sees in his artistic brother. The signs of Shem’s lowness range from his being a fraud, “Shem was a sham and a low sham,” his brother says, to his preference for canned foods over fresh, with Shaun remarking that: “[s]o low was he that he preferred Gibsen’s teatime salmon tinned ... to the plumpest roeheavy lax or the friskiest parr or smolt” to depression as “the tragic jester sobb[ing] himself wheywhingingly sick of life” (FW 170.25, 170.26-170.28, 171.15-171.16). Shaun has no patience for his brother’s artistic ways. He prefers a more traditional lifestyle to the uncertainty of the life of a writer. The chapter deals with many of the issues Joyce faced with his brother Stanislaus.

The Shem chapter of Shakespeare’s dream focuses heavily on Joyce. The chapter is largely a biography of Joyce, looking at his works and remarking at their uniqueness and difficulty. The text of the Shem chapter makes reference to each of the short stories that make up Joyce’s Dubliners. Joyce references both “Clay” and “A Little Cloud” in the line of the “effects of foul clay in little clots” talking of the “wrongcountered”

(“Encounter”), “eveling” (“Eveline”) and “after the grace” (both “Grace” and “After the Race”) (186). Joyce’s self-reference do not end with Dubliners, Ulysses makes an appearance in the Shem chapter as “his usylessly unreadable Blue Book of Eccles” referring both to the title and the common criticisms of the novel as useless and unreadable, but also to Eccles Street, the road on which Leopold Bloom, the character who is Shakespeare lives (FW 179.26-179.27). Additionally he remarks on that “inartistic portrait of himself,” Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (FW 182.19) and the “chambermade music,” his book of poetry, “Chamber Music” (FW 184.04). By placing all of his own works in Shakespeare dream, Joyce implies that Shakespeare can only dream up the wonders and challenges of his own masterworks and never actually create them himself.

The “Shem the Penman” chapter includes not only numerous references to Joyce’s own works, but to those of Shakespeare as well. As Joseph Campbell states in his Mythic Worlds Modern Words, “when you go to sleep you return to the condition of the dreamer, for everything in your dream is an aspect of yourself,” and Shakespeare’s own dream would of course have to include many allusions to his own plays (197). The Shem chapter relies heavily on Shakespeare’s Hamlet, the play that Stephen Dedalus, the Joyce of Ulysses focuses on heavily in his analysis of Shakespeare’s own life.

While Joyce likes to put himself on par with his great literary precursor in the Shem chapter, there is an overwhelming sense of his own doubt in his ability to do so. The doubts take the greatest form via Shaun, the teller of Shem/Joyce’s biographical tale and the asker of the questions regarding Joyce’s abilities as a writer and creator. The question of who Shaun is gives me pause. Shaun is the Irish equivalent of John,

conceivably the father of James Joyce, John Stanislaus Joyce, playing a doubting Daedalus to his son's lofty attempts as the flying Icarus. Many critics link Shaun with Joyce's own brother Stanislaus, as Shaun plays the role of Shem's brother (Glasheen; Tindall). In a letter to his brother Stanislaus is immensely critical of Joyce's "Work in Progress" that would later become Finnegans Wake. Fitting with the Shakespeare references in the Shem chapter, Stanislaus writes his brother in a letter, "If literature is to develop along the lines of your latest work [Finnegans Wake] it will certainly become, as Shakespeare hinted centuries ago, much ado about nothing" (James Joyce 577). Joyce seems to take these doubts to heart through the Shem chapter of Finnegans Wake, to question his ability to usurp William Shakespeare.

Through Shaun's voice Joyce reports that he is "in his [own] bardic memory low" (FW 172.28). He doubts his ability to master the capital "B" Bard that is Shakespeare. Joyce opts to make a mockery of Shakespeare's works for his own benefit. The illustrious "Hamlet" is reduced to a reference to breakfast, a joke on "Ham's cribcracking yeggs" or to "Bill C. Babby ... eggspilled him out of his homety dometry ... for all his creature comfort was an omulette (FW 76.05-76.06, 230.04-230.07). Bill, William, his idol Shakespeare, Humpty Dumpty, the nursery rhyme egg who "had a great fall," and Hamlet, prince of Denmark, reduced to the status of an omelet, a whipped up egg to be dropped in a frying pan, consumed, and passed. Shakespeare becomes an easily forgettable entrée worthy of little consideration.

In Shaun's analysis of his brother's disdain for Shakespeare he remarks:

Shem always blaspheming, so holy writ, Billy, he would try, old Belly,
and pay this one manjack congregant of his four soups every lass of

nexmouth, Bolly, so sure as thair's a tail on a comet, as a taste for storik's fortytooth, that is to stay, to listen out, one twenny minnies moe, Bully, his Ballade Imaginaire which was to be dubbed *Wine, Woman and Waterclocks*, or *How a Guy Finks and Fawkes When He Is Going Batty*, by Maistre Sheames de la Plume...aware of no other shaggspick, other Shakhisbeard, either prexactly unlike his polar andthisishis or procisely the seem." (FW 177.23-33)

Shaun again sees Shem criticize Shakespeare, the holy, canonized words of Billy, Shakespeare the Bard. The passage is filled with Shaun's recognition of Shakespeare's status as master of the written word. Shaun and Shem both know those forty-two stories (It's not clear what number of plays Joyce started with to bring Shakespeare's works up to forty-two, but he must be including the long poems, "Rape of Lucrece" and "The Phoenix and the Turtle" for example). The young boys begged to be read the stories for "twenty minutes more" (FW 177.27) But then there is the current Shem, the man with the pen, choosing to criticize Shakespeare, to convey his anxiety over Shakespeare's influence.

The predominant recurring theme in Finnegans Wake is that of the fall of HCE, the fall of the father and the prospect of the rise of the son. HCE has committed some sin, and one of the main questions of the book is what that sin was. Suggestions in the text include, but are not limited to, spying on two urinating women (FW 34.19-21), exposing himself (FW 34.10-11), and being a public nuisance (FW 33.26-28). These accusations lead to nothing as they are only hearsay, but succeed in demeaning HCE's character.

The public accusations of HCE, the man who is everybody, are much like those that Stephen makes of Shakespeare in the “Scylla and Charybdis” episode of Ulysses where Stephen Dedalus gives Shakespeare a history. Stephen envisions Shakespeare as a mourning father, as a man who paces along the river Avon (U 9.171-9.173, 9.159-9.160). Shakespeare seems ordinary after being granted a history by Stephen. He ceases to be the extraordinary, almost mythologized man of the literary canon. Comparatively, the accusations in Finnegans Wake serve only to disparage HCE, to lower him to the level of the common man. Joyce seems only to be willing to make an attempt at trouncing Shakespeare when he can bring Shakespeare down to his own level. Joyce must ensure that the fall, the theme so central to Finnegans Wake, has occurred before he will make his move toward usurping the undisputed king of the Western literary canon.

It is fitting that the Hamlet references would be so prevalent when Joyce is trying to defeat Shakespeare, as Joyce so strongly allies himself with the Danish prince through his alter ego, Stephen Dedalus, in Ulysses. The elements of the father and son theme are very frequent in Hamlet, much like in Finnegans Wake. Hamlet was unsuccessful in overthrowing his own father and namesake, and ultimately fails in overthrowing his father’s successor as both Hamlet and his uncle die in the process of his attempt at taking Claudius’ place. There is a hint of the futility of trying to overthrow Shakespeare using the Bard’s own words and imagery when Joyce is trying to take Shakespeare’s own place as king of the canon.

Shaun repeatedly uses Hamlet references when referring to his brother and the futility of his quest in the “Shem the Penman” chapter. Shaun comments that Shem’s “pawdry’s purgatory was more than a nigger bloke could bear” (FW 177.04). Cheng

notes that the passage refers to the line from Hamlet where the ghostly king remarks that he is “Doomed for a certain term to walk the night” (202). To Joyce, Shakespeare, that tawdry padre, does seem doomed to continue to walk the earth. Shakespeare continues to survive in the land of men. He has not been reduced to the realm of the literary forgotten, a fear that consistently haunted Joyce’s thoughts. Joyce famously stated once that he “put in so many enigmas and puzzles [in his books] that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what [he] meant, and that’s the only way of insuring one’s immortality” (Gifford frontmatter). Joyce is striving for that immortality with Finnegans Wake, and he believes by taking Shakespeare down, he can build himself up.

Shaun continues to question the rationality of his brother’s goal as writer. “You go green in the gazer,” Shaun points out his brother’s jealousy of Shakespeare through Othello’s green eyed monster. “Do you hear what I’m seeing, hammet?” (FW 193.10-11) he asks, referring at once to Joyce’s own name as Hamlet, to Shakespeare’s own son Hamnet, and of Ham, the cursed second son of Moses (Glashenen 114). Shaun even refers to Joyce by name as “jimjams, haunted by a convulsionary sense of not having been or being all that I might have been of you meant to becoming.” He is Jim, James, haunted by a compulsory, convoluted, convulsion causing sense of not being what he wants to be, of being second, second son, second fiddle, second place finisher after Shakespeare.

Through the guise of Shaun, Joyce is aware of the futility of his attempts at defeating Shakespeare. Shaun and thus Joyce knows that history and the whole of the Western canon is on Shakespeare’s side. Finnegans Wake is Shakespeare’s dream, yet Joyce is the one writing it and thus the text becomes his own dream as well. Joyce builds

a dream world for Shakespeare where Shakespeare, through HCE, repeatedly falls, both physically and emotionally, yet despite everything Shakespeare always seems to rise again. Shakespeare is Joyce's nightmare of history, and Finnegans Wake is the embodiment of that nightmare.

No matter what Joyce writes or does Shakespeare will always be there, and this is the true nature of the anxiety of influence. As Harold Bloom states, "no strong writer since Shakespeare can avoid [Shakespeare's] influence" (Anxiety xviii-xix). Joyce has built a whole dream for Shakespeare with the hope that maybe one day he, like Stephen Dedalus, may have the opportunity to awaken from it.

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