The Two Daedalian Father-Son Relationships in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

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Many critics have pointed out that, when composing *Portrait*, James Joyce had in mind the mythical episode of Daedalus and Icarus as a major element in his novel's scheme. But Daedalus has another "son" besides Icarus: Perdix, Daedalus's nephew and apprentice. So, if we are to see Stephen of *Portrait* as a "son" of Daedalus, we should see him from two different points of view: 1) Stephen as Icarus, a son who falls down and is not saved, and 2) Stephen as Perdix, a son who does fall down but is saved and takes his revenge on his foster father. This latter viewpoint has often been neglected.

Throughout *Portrait* Stephen searches for his father figue using the trial-and-error method. Each time he finds a father figure (such as Simon Dedalus, the Jesuit Fathers, the Lord, and Ireland), he feels a strange sense of incompatibility; he senses a "fosterage", to use the word in *Portrait*. These false father figures drag Stephen down from the exalted quest of art, trying to entrap him in the net of philistine social relationships. Stephen, like Perdix, is forced to fall down by his "father". When he sees the bird-like girl on the shore and is exhilarated in artistic ecstacy, his heart takes wings like Perdix, who is metamorphosed into a winged creature by the art-goddess.

As for the revenge on the father figure, Stephen takes direct action. In Chapter 5 of *Portrait*, Stephen, having been forced to fall down before, shakes down all of his foster fathers in turn, so as to attain the aloof aloneness which he believes is necessary to his Daedalian flight to where he should belong as an artist. Thus, we can look upon Stephen as an equally satisfied, but more powerful, revenger like Perdix.