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HOW TO BUILD AN IRISH ARTIST:
JOYCE'S FIRST PORTRAITS OF DUBLIN

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JOYCE'S FIRST PORTRAITS OF DUBLIN

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RESUMO

James Joyce é um dos escritores mais famosos do século 20, sendo sua obra muito comentada por leitores e acadêmicos, especialmente devido ao alto nível de complexidade de *Ulisses e Finnegans Wake,* os romances da fase madura. O foco da presente dissertação, todavia, são os primeiros livros de Joyce que, apesar de serem mais acessíveis ao público em geral, também contêm toda a elaboração linguística e simbólica que caracteriza o autor. Trato especificamente do volume de contos *Dublinenses* e do romance *Um Retrato do Artista Quando Jovem*, utilizando para análise deste o suporte oferecido pelo outro romance anterior, não publicado em vida, *Stephen Hero*. O objetivo da pesquisa é investigar aspectos presentes na prosa de Joyce que revelem a formulação e a aplicação de sua teoria estética. Como a cidade de Dublin surge como uma metáfora sobre as circunstâncias de ser irlandês, interessa ao leitor adquirir alguma familiaridade com a cultura e a história daquele país e com as relações existentes entre os irlandeses e sua terra natal, especialmente no que tange às questões sobre religiosidade e sobre a dominação inglesa. A dissertação vem estruturada em quatro capítulos. O primeiro apresenta James Joyce tanto como pessoa quanto como escritor em formação, nascendo e crescendo em Dublin na virada dos séculos XIX e XX. São analisadas as influências exercidas pelo contexto católico de sua criação e pela crise social e econômica enfrentadas tanto pelo país quanto pela família do autor. O segundo capítulo lida com *Dublinenses*, o conjunto de contos que apresenta a visão de Joyce sobre a cidade de Dublin. Esses contos podem ser lidos individualmente, mas a obra assume um significado maior quando considerada de forma unificada em termos de linguagem, simbologia, estratégias narrativas e objetivos, em um plano de evolução que abrange fases da infância, da adolescência, da maturidade e da vida pública. As personagens compartilham características comuns: paralisia, falta de perspectivas e incapacidade de entender ou de reagir aos fatores históricos e sociais que os colocam naquela posição. Entre tais fatores predominam três, a cultura católica, a dominação inglesa e a inabilidade das pessoas para reagir de maneira criativa e produtiva aos problemas que se apresentam. O terceiro capítulo analisa a evolução do fazer artístico de Joyce a partir do binômio *Stephen Hero* e *Um Retrato do Artista Quando Jovem*, tendo como elemento comum a ideia do *Künstlerroman*. No quarto e último capítulo, apresento um comentário sobre as marcas de individuação de Joyce em relação a alguns de seus contemporâneos que também tratam sobre questões envolvendo arte, história e tradição. Ao término do trabalho, espero que a minha percepção sobre o conjunto de fatores que propiciaram o surgimento de um autor como Joyce possa ser de utilidade para pessoas que, como eu, acreditam tanto na importância estética quanto na relevância política e social desses três primeiros livros, os primeiros retratos de Dublin que James Joyce produziu.

Palavras Chave: 1 James Joyce; 2 *Dublinenses*; 3 *Stephen Hero*; 4. *Um Retrato do Artista Quando Jovem*; 5 Irlanda.

ABSTRACT

James Joyce is one of the most famous writers in the 20th century, whose work is very commented both by readers and scholars, especially because of the high level of complexity of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, the two mature masterpieces. The focus of the present thesis, however, lies on the first books written by Joyce, because they are more manageable for reading, and yet bear all the linguistic and symbolic sophistication that marks Joyce's production. The corpus of the research comprises the book of short stories *Dubliners* and the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, using as support to the analysis of the latter, the previous novel, never published in life, *Stephen Hero*. The aim of this thesis is to investigate aspects of Joyce's prose that expose the stages of construction and application of his aesthetic theory. The city of Dublin comes as a metaphor about the condition of being Irish. As a consequence, some familiarity with Irish history and culture is relevant for a better understanding of the books, and of the complex relations involving the Irish and their land, especially in matters concerning Catholicism and English domination. The thesis is divided in four chapters. The first draws on James Joyce, considered both as a person and as a writer in progress, born and raised in Dublin in the turn of the 19th into the 20th centuries. The chapter centres on the relations involving the influence of the Catholic context of his formation and the economic and social crises experienced by Ireland and by the Joyce family at the time. Chapter two is about *Dubliners*, the collection of short stories that presents Joyce's view about the city of Dublin. These stories can be read independently from one another, but they acquire a finer meaning if considered as a unit in terms of language, symbolism, narrative strategies and goals, besides following a plan of evolution from childhood to adolescence, and to maturity, and public life. The characters share common characteristics: paralysis, lack of perspective, incapacity to understand or to react to the historical and social factors that put them in that position. Among those factors we have the Catholic tradition, the English domination and the inability of the people to react to circumstantial problems in a creative and productive way. Chapter three analyses the evolution of Joyce's craftsmanship through the duo *Stephen Hero/A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, using the notion of *Künstlerroman* as a starting point. In the last chapter I deal with the peculiarities in Joyce's style, contrasting them to the practice of some other contemporary authors who also state their views about art, history and tradition. As an aftermath to this thesis, I hope that my comments about the body of elements that propitiated the rise of Joyce as the author he is may prove useful to other people like me, who believe in the relevance of his contribution to the aesthetics of literature and to the discussion about political and social issues related to Ireland, in the first portraits of Dublin displayed in Joyce's three first books.

Key Words: 1 James Joyce; 2 *Dubliners*; 3 *Stephen Hero*; 4. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; 5. Ireland.

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INTRODUCTION

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce, one of the best known Irishmen in the world, lived most of his life outside Ireland. Paradoxically, he was the man who reshaped Ireland in all literary maps of the twentieth century with his controversial novels. Besides him, several other Irish writers have reached a good degree of fame, such as Jonathan Swift, Laurence Sterne, William Butler Yeats, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett, George Moore, among others. Joyce's dimension in the English speaking canon comes from his innovating use of language and from the complexity and freedom with which he addresses Western Culture. The city of Dublin recurrently rises as a vital source in his literary material, displaying its unavoidable problems and its paralysed air of decadence, even after Joyce lived for decades in many cities around Europe. This self-imposed exile can be seen as representing the need of the artist to step back to a certain distance from his object so as to better apprehend it and shape it aesthetically.

The aim of the present thesis is to revisit three early texts by Joyce, *Dubliners*, *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* considering issues of authorship so as to identify certain stages in the development of Joyce's aesthetical theory which, later on, led him to write *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. The focus lies on the personage Stephen D(a)edalus, who figures both as a character in Joyce's fictional world, and as his penname in the actual world[1]. Both Stephen Daedalus (with an "ae"), an alias in the actual world, and Stephen Dedalus (with an "e"), the recurrent character in the fictional world, indicate directions in this self-reflexive formulation of an aesthetic agenda to be followed by the young artist (an amalgam

[1] I borrow the expressions *Real World* and *Actual World* from Umberto Eco, as used by him in the book *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* to refer to the frontier between life and art. As the discussion of Joyce's poetics is complex, leading into vast fields as History, Philosophy and Religion, my thesis will relinquish the presentation of a theoretical chapter. Theory will be used here as an instrument. Whenever (such as in the case with Eco) a specific terminology is used, I will refer to its source of signification and line of interpretation in a footnote as this.

of Joyce and Daedalus), who examines the context of the art and literature existing in his time, so as to decide to what extent he will subscribe to it, and/or change it. As for Dublin – the fictional representation of the actual city –, it becomes a metaphor for the condition of being Irish, and is to be treated as such in this thesis.

In his work *Poétique du Recit*, Roland Barthes (BARTHES, 1977) reminds us about the relevance of properly separating the layers in the structure of a narrative work. The person who writes is one thing, and the author is another; also, the narrator is one thing (not always identical to the narrative point of view), and the character (sometimes protagonist) is yet another thing. This case can be exemplified with the first book published by Joyce, the collection of short stories *Dubliners*, written several years before its publication. Due to difficulties in finding a willing publisher, and because Joyce kept reshaping and rewriting the work, it only came to light in 1914. The reluctance on the part of the editors came from the fact that they were apprehensive that Irish readers would feel offended to see the city of Dublin portrayed in such a decadent, derogatory way – which they eventually did, in fact.

Developing on Barthes's discussion, we can consider that the historical person is James Joyce, a young man trying to open his way as an author. The first story in *Dubliners*, "The Sisters", had been published ten years previously by Joyce under a penname: Stephen Daedalus. So, we first meet Stephen Daedalus in the actual world, as an author[2]. This is also the first time that we meet Joyce's city of Dublin, in the fictional world, as mimesis[3]. In *Dubliners*, the first three short stories, "The Sisters", "An Encounter" and "Araby" form a narrative unit that can be said to have the same narrator, a boy whose name is never mentioned, but whose life experience and style remind us of Stephen Dedalus as a boy in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* This young narrator seems to evolve in age along the three stories, as if from nine to thirteen years old. Therefore, this boy/character/narrator mirrors Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as much as many elements in Stephen's life experience and aesthetic agenda remind us of the counterpart in the actual world, in the life of the person and the philosophy of the author James Joyce. Thus, the danger and the thrill of dealing with such subtleties in Joyce.

[2] "The Sisters" was first published in *The Irish Homestead* on August 12, 1904.
[3] The word *mimesis* is used here in the Aristotelian sense.

Stephen Hero is an exercise in writing which originally reached more than one thousand pages and was progressively shortened and shaped until if finally became the plot basis for Joyce´s first published novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which was first serialised in the magazine The Egoist. Two years later it was printed as a book in New York. The protagonist of *Stephen Hero* is a boy growing into a young man, who decides he will be a writer. The writing of the book both triggers and serves as a space for the aesthetic experiments this young author makes in writing. Some of the results are excellent, others are not. The name of this boy/author/character is Stephen Daedalus (with an ae). The plot is the same plot we have in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, but the style is completely different. *Stephen Hero* is as emotional, partial and personal as, for instance, D. H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers; whereas A Portrait is as aestheticized and controlled as a work signed by Joyce is expected to be. Although approximately one-tenth of the original text of *Stephen Hero* still remains, and although it has been posthumously published and is now available for purchase, the work was never published by Joyce. People who study James Joyce know how particular he was about his production, and also know that he had complete control over his materials. According to the editors of the New Directions edition of *Stephen Hero*, Theodore Spenser, John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon, Joyce was very much aware of what would happen to the manuscript after he died, so he destroyed what he considered was not good enough for publication, and probably even created the legend about the fireplace. According to that story, Joyce, dissatisfied with the work, threw it into the fireplace. Part of the manuscript would have been rescued either by his wife or by one of his sisters. Only that there is no mark of fire in any of the remaining pages, which are carefully annotated so that any interested researcher might extract from there the aesthetic project proposed by Daedalus and by Joyce. Joyce gave the remaining parts of the manuscripts as a present to Sylvia Beach, the American owner of the French bookstore Shakespeare and Company, as a token of friendship and thankfulness for her having the courage of dealing with all the problems involved in the publishing of *Ulysses*. Much later, Sylvia Beach sold the manuscripts to save her bookstore from bankruptcy, and that is how *Stephen Hero* became available for publication.

Many characters from Joyce's early production return in other works. Some of these characters appear in different short stories in *Dubliners*, or jump into the novels. Many are

met by Leopold Bloom in his walks through Dublin, in *Ulysses*, and, arguably, participate also in *Finnegans Wake*. The self-reflexive attitude about the use of language is also concurrent, as respects to sound, style and the facts that the language used is English, and that the underlying metaphysics derives from Western Catholic tradition. Although the line pursued by Joyce in all his production (short stories, songs, poems, drama, novels) is consistently the same, the range of complexity varies immensely. For this reason, and because of the limitations in time and scope inherent to the nature of a thesis, I concentrate my comments on a restricted corpus, representative of the first stage of Joyce's narrative production: *Dubliners*, *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. These three works can serve as a monad for Joyce's posterior production, because all the elements that mark the style of the author are present there, from the care with the use of language to the themes that obsess him: Irish nationalism, the fascination with the capacities and the limits of words and sounds, Catholicism, English imperialism, the provinciality of Ireland, and the experience of perception of the world. Also of crucial importance is the notion about the role of the artist in a society, or apart from it, as an exile. In all instances Stephen represents the image of the young artist, struggling towards the grasping of the notion of what being an artist represents, especially in his time and place.

Stephen is inextricably connected with the notion of youth. He relates to a phase, in Joyce's production, in which issues of identity and authorship predominate. In Joyce's later novels, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, the earlier themes are presented as less predominant. Stephen is the third character in importance in *Ulysses*, he is not the protagonist anymore. All his rhetoric and poise seem immature and minor when contrasted with the silent experience and patient wisdom of Leopold Bloom; or with the insignificance of man in the flux of time and planets, as evoked in *Finnegans Wake*.

This thesis is presented in four parts. Chapter One centres on Dublin as a metaphor for Ireland, and concentrates on the social forces in action at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. These subjects are approached from the life and experience of James Joyce, the person who becomes the author, and through his connection with the social and historical aspects of the place. Those decades were of fundamental importance for the definition of the Republic of Ireland as we know it today. The nationalist movements were very influential among the people in the political arena, and in the cultural field the efforts of the Revival and the Celtic Twilight were trying to recover an Irish sense of myth, music,

literature and language, to empower a local culture distinct from that of the British coloniser, and with merits of its own. Influential people followed different lines of action in those times, some believing in taking arms against the British; others, like Lady Gregory, William Butler Yeats and John Millington Synge – leaders in the Literary Revival movement – preaching a cultural and aesthetic line of action. Joyce's relation with them was not an easy one.

After contextualising Joyce's works historically and biographically, I put them in context in Chapter 2, which is fully dedicated to *Dubliners*. The social forces in action at the time are filtered through Joyce's crafty style in the composition of a book that has much to offer to the understanding of the complexity of the issues there reflected. The emphasis lies in the richness and relevance of the details, the carefully planned evolution of the characters – from childhood to adolescence, and then to youth and adulthood, old age and death, in public life situations, – as well as in the literary devices Joyce uses to reach his goals. One could stay forever commenting on the stories from *Dubliners*. Here again, because of the constraints of temporal limitation, I restricted the discussion to five stories mainly: "Clay", "An Encounter", "Ivy Day in the Committee Room", "After the Race" and "The Dead".

Stephen stands as the center of the discussion in Chapter 3, which is dedicated to *Stephen Hero* and to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Both works, especially the former, have this characteristic of being self-reflexive. So, as Stephen formulates his own aesthetic philosophy and agenda, we can observe the ways in which that project comes to shape in the writing of A Portrait. The fourth and last chapter comments on Joyce's style, discusses both the impact it has in (modern) Art and the (political and social) service it did to the discussion of his country's issues. Joyce's style and contrast is also compared to the practice of other outstanding contemporary modernists.

1 JOYCE AND IRELAND

And the battles just begun
There's many lost but tell me who has won?
The trenches dug within our hearts
And mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn apart!

U-2, *"Sunday Bloody Sunday"*

1.1 Joyce's Ireland

This first section of the thesis is about the complex situation involving Ireland in the turn of the 19th into the 20th century. It addresses James Joyce both as a person being born and growing there, and as an author in formation. There are many different ways to approach this subject, all valid, each highlighting a certain perception of things. I decided to visit the Ireland of the formative years of Joyce's life through the means of Art and Literature, emphasising the cultural efforts made by a group of young Irish people to renew a sense of Irishness into a population which was at the time forlorn and disheartened. Except when expressly acknowledged otherwise, most of the factual information here granted comes from Richard Ellmann's prised biography of James Joyce. My intention here is to present the choices available at the time for any artist with strong political opinions, so as to highlight the multiple roles James Joyce decided not to play, so that he might eventually find his own aesthetic means of expression.

The two first books that James Joyce published, *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, now considered notable examples of modernist fiction, found at first a dubious response from critics, publishers and readers. Under a surface of colloquial realism, the stories of *Dubliners* reveal layers of possible interpretation that during the following decades of the 20th century became theme of academic and critical debate. These two first

works were obfuscated by the appearance of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, and it took some time for them to find their rightful position in the Joycean canon.

As the public and researchers had access to Joyce's letters and manuscripts, as well as to some excellent studies about the person and the academic production on his books, Joyce's strategies and accomplishments became less obscure, and the high level of elaboration of the books became more clearly perceptible. For this author, the literary material is first taken directly from life, then worked upon and aestheticized through careful and skilled techniques so as to become an exemplary means of artistic expression. Life is worth to the extent that it can provide the matter from which fiction can be made of. Life, in this case, is the reality of Ireland in the final decades of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, with its troubles, lack of opportunity and all sorts of predicament.

What Joyce defines and criticises as "paralysis," in the first story in *Dubliners*, is not only the product of the Catholic Church and the English imperialism, even though they are central elements in the process. Paralysis means also, to a great extent, the effect of several devastating occurrences of the middle of the 19th century. If in the 18th century the Famine had been caused by weather conditions, the Great Famine of 1845 – 1852 was brought about by a potato disease known as potato blight. It left Ireland impoverished, when 25% of the population died or emigrated. The social, economic and psychological impact this left on the country remained for decades as an important trauma in Irish life and culture.

W. Steuart Trench, writing in 1868, points that "Half Ireland was stunned by the suddenness of the calamity, and Kenmare was completely paralysed…" (TRENCH, 2011, p. 113). As we can see, Joyce did not invent that specific usage of the word paralysis. He borrowed it for his purposes. Trench goes on saying that "The local gentry were paralysed, the tradesmen were paralysed, the people were paralysed". (idem, p. 114) What else could they do after such a disaster? The people who were made "unable from hunger to work, and hopeless of any sufficient relief from extraneous sources, sank quietly down, some in their houses, some at the relief works, and died almost without a struggle" (ibidem, p. 114).

Of course, the famine was not the only cause of Irish paralysis, as viewed by Joyce. There were a number of other elements, one of them being the Parnell case, which made Joyce disappointed with the Irish attitude towards politics, and guided his political views in the decades to come. Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish political leader who became a prominent figure in the fight for the Home Rule, was a hero in the life of young Joyce. Parnell grew to represent, in Joyce's literature, a martyr, a hero and ultimately the very spirit of Ireland, which other authors chose to represent by resurrecting the image of long forgotten legendary mythic characters. Elected to the House of Commons, Parnell helped the Fenians in their efforts to free Ireland from the British rule, but ended up deserted by members of his own party, after being involved with a divorced woman. The morality of the time did not approve of such a liaison, and the private affair became a public scandal, leading to a traumatic split in the Irish Parliamentary Party. Echoes of that split could still be found in much of the Irish political arena in the decades to come, and they appear very explicitly in some passages in Joyce's books. The political activist that Joyce could have become soon realised how sordid and provincial politics was in his native land, and that is probably the reason why he devised another, more idiosyncratic, way to serve his country, through Literature.

To his disenchantment with politics, we can add Joyce's distaste for Irish folklore in the form as the Literary Revival proposed it. After centuries of British rule, the Irish yearned for the empowerment of their own cultural heritage. Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats are among the great names of that generation, whose interest was not only literary, but also embraced the Gaelic language, sports, art craft, folklore, every kind of Irish tradition. Yeats researched and published various books on Irish legend, his poetry being inspired by that material. Yeats became the first Irish person to be awarded a Nobel Prize in literature, which gave the Revival international status.

Young Joyce was a great admirer of Yeats's literary work. At 17, he loved Yeats's controversial play *Countess Cathleen* and even set the text to music, praising it as "the best lyric in the world" (ELLMANN, 1983, p. 78). In the years to come, Yeats also became an admirer of Joyce's work, and helped him in times of difficulty. It was Yeats who introduced Joyce to Ezra Pound and the literary circles of Paris, and it was also Yeats who helped Joyce to receive money from the Royal Literary Fund. Later, Yeats invited Joyce to join the Irish Academy of Letters, which he was founding. Yet, in spite of all the mutual admiration, Joyce

refused to join Yeats's institution. Joyce's literary project was bound towards a different direction.

There are many reasons for Joyce's refusal. We could mention his tendency to be an isolated martyr, or his disbelief in literary societies. We could point that, being for so many years away from Ireland, he felt more like a European than belonging to any specific nationality. Joyce's own words are at once firm and vague. In a letter to Yeats, he states, "My case, however, being as it was and probably will be, I see no reason why my name should have arisen at all in connection with such an academy" (GILBERT, 1957). Of course, before this passage Joyce thanked Yeats properly, and ended the letter in a very polite way, but his case was there. As it was and probably would be. He would not belong in an Irish academy, the same way he did not belong to the Irish Literary Revival when he was younger. Joyce lacked the enthusiasm for what he considered a kind of medieval, naive and blind nationalism.

The Literary Revival, aiming at recovering traditions and uplifting Irish folklore, brought back an attitude towards art which was strange to Joyce. He did not care for the honour and value of the Irish peasant because he was too urban and cynical for that. His fight was the fight of a loner, while the Revival demanded a spirit of collectiveness which he could not embrace.

Yet, Yeats's group do not represent the only effort towards Irish nationalism. The Gaelic League, founded in 1893 by Douglas Hyde, put more emphasis on the Irish language as the medium to recover the "real essence" of Irishness, founded in the Gaelic and Christian traditions. While the Literary Revival's most prominent members came from an Anglo-Irish background, the Gaelic League was undoubtedly Catholic, contradictions which in Ireland usually meant trouble.

For Joyce, if the submission to the English (the *Sassenach*) was humiliating, more so was the submission to the Catholic Church (The Roman). The Church, with its control over education, practices and fears, and its determination to fight superstitious beliefs with the "Devotional Revolution" was a very strong political influence in Ireland. Paul Cullen, the bishop who

became the first Irish cardinal after 1400 years of Christianity in Ireland, and the man who created the idea of the papal infallibility at the first Vatican Council, was the mentor of that "revolution". From his appointment in 1850 to his death in 1878 the Catholic Church in Ireland tightened its grip on the people with a very conservative approach. It was Cullen who initiated the habit of Irish priests wearing Roman collars and being called "father" instead of "mister" by the parishioners. The people were turned into "children" then, and the heavy hands of the "fathers" were felt everywhere.

Paradoxically, the Catholic Church gave the Irish a sense of identity as opposed to the Protestants from Ulster and from Britain. The Protestant (Anglo-Irish) landlords had for centuries dominated social and economic life both in the city and in the country. They controlled politics, universities, professions, unions and a lot more. Trinity College was not open to Catholic students. Many strategic professions were dominated by the Anglo-Irish, even if they were numerically a minority.

To the Catholic population, being "really Irish" meant honouring the native traditions, but also belonging body and soul to the Roman Church. The Anglo-Irish, who were the descendants of the English and had Protestant ascendancy, belonged to a different Church: the Church of Ireland, a branch of the Anglican Church. Three crucial figures, two in literature and one in politics, had to deal with the challenges of being Anglo-Irish in those times: no less than Yeats, Synge and Parnell.

Yeats felt the pressure of his condition when his play *The Countess Cathleen* was booed and hissed at the Abbey Theatre because of its seemingly unorthodox approach to Christian traditions. The heroine of the play sells her soul to the devil in order to save Ireland from starvation, which made critics think that was not proper. Yeats was upset, but the reviews of many critics were favourable, including English ones, and the play followed its path to being one of the most successful in the history of the Abbey Theatre. A chant from the play is sung by Stephen Dedalus in the first chapter of *Ulysses*, and a line from it is quoted by him in *A Portrait:* "Bend down your faces, Oona and Aleel..." (YEATS, 1999).

John Millington Synge's case is peculiar because in spite of coming from a Protestant background, he was more interested in the Catholic peasants and the in the pagan elements

that were part of their culture. Like Yeats, Synge had his most famous play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, booed at the Abbey Theatre. The first accusation was its lack of morality, since the play deals with a son who attempts to kill his father and is praised as a hero for that. Also, the play was considered un-Irish in two levels: its author and its content. A member of the Protestant ascendancy did not have the right to portray the life of the Irish peasantry, especially in such a critical way.

Synge's previous play *The Shadow of the Glen* had already caused trouble showing a woman in a rural community who marries an older man by convenience, but falls in love and elopes with a tramp who seduces her with his poetic language and his connection with nature. One of the main critics against the play was Arthur Griffith, founder of the political party *Sinn Féin*. He wrote that an Irish woman might marry by convenience and occasionally had a broken heart, but she would never go away with the tramp. Synge did not mean to offend the sensitivity of the emerging Catholic bourgeoisie, but the attacks were so strong that when he wrote *The Playboy* he said "Very well then, the next play I write I will make sure I will annoy them" (SYNGE, 2008 p. 24).

And so he did. *The Playboy* shows a stranger called Christy who arrives in a small town in rural Ireland, claiming to have killed his father. Instead of being ostracised for it, he is regarded as a hero, and is a favourite among the local young women. It is eventually revealed that he is a liar, but Pegeen, the girl he likes, is still fond of him at the end. The reaction of the audience was so violent and noisy that the episode became known as "The playboy riots". The detractors were not so much from the Church, but mostly Arthur Griffith and the nationalists, who claimed that it lacked political activism and was "a vile and inhuman story told in the foulest language we have ever listened to from a public platform" (PRICE, 1961). Yeats had to come from Scotland to address the audience at the theatre on the third night of the play, in order to have it staged. Synge was reported to be having fun with the expected protests.

The killing of the father, even if twice attempted and not accomplished as in the play, was a strong metaphor against the Church. Also, Synge was as acid in criticising rural Ireland as Joyce was about Dublin. To him, the rural communities were blinded by the artificiality of modern life and organised Church. He feared the commercialism and industrialism that the

emerging bourgeoisie would bring, and grieved the decay of the "real peasantry" which he could only identify in the Aran Islands, in the extreme west of the country. He saw in those peasants, untouched by modern life and "the heavy boot of Europe" (SYNGE, 2008 p. 4) an example of life, passion and dynamism, absent in almost the whole rest of Ireland.

Joyce, who criticised Dublin's paralysis, did not find refuge in any island, but like Synge and Yeats, he used the power of words to achieve a level of freedom that the conventions and the social structures of the time would not allow him to have. Now regarded as two geniuses of Irish drama and poetry, Yeats and Synge had a good share of suffering when their works were first presented to the Irish audience. Both were trying to grasp the life of rural Ireland with its contradictions, its mix of paganism and Christianity, its coarse reality. Yeats tended to a more mystical view, being interested in spirits and secret societies. His great friend and supporter Lady Gregory said "I have longed to turn Catholic, that I might be nearer to the public, but you have taught me that paganism brings me nearer still" (FOSTER, 2003, p. 170). In the countryside old pre-Christian beliefs were still very strong, and they also permeated much of the urban sphere of Dublin, where Joyce collected material for his books.

Those pre-Christian beliefs were embraced by the Gaelic League, as long as they did not interfere much with the Catholic faith. One of the League's most influential members was Patrick Pearse. A poet, an educator, director of a school for boys in Dublin (the St. Enda's, where the Irish language, sports and folklore were taught), Pearse became one of the leaders and martyrs of the 1916 Easter Rising. He was a magnetic speaker, and his lectures in Ireland and the United States brought him popularity and a lot of financial help to his cause. In case the revolution had been successful, he might have been the first president of the republic.

Pearse and his supporters are, according to Seán Farrell Moran (MORAN, 1989), better understood when situated in the broader context of Europe in the second decade of the 20th century. There was in many European countries a strong reaction against modernity and reason. Nationalist movements in Poland, Italy and other countries reflected a period of tensions which ultimately led to the Great War. Pearse, a shy and complex person, filled with passion and a capacity to attribute mythical characteristics to reality, acted as a catalyst against the British domination, and against modernity and a failed rationality which instead of bringing universal peace only caused domination and servitude. The idea of the hero/martyr

dying for a noble cause and bringing freedom to his people fascinated him, and he had the chance to enact it in the Easter Rising. If Stephen Dedalus wanted to awake from the nightmare of History, Pearse willingly dove into it and let his mark on its strange and modern face. His insistence on the Gaelic language and the Irish traditions approached him to the Literary Revival, and Yeats refers to him in the poem "Easter 1916" as the man who "had kept a school /and rode our winged horse" (PRICE, 1961) showing his dual enterprise as a man of letters and a man of action. Pearse and the Easter Rising form the beginnings of IRA's armed forces, which represent another mode of resistance, an alternative to Yeat's cultural proposal. Stephen in *A Portrait* interacts with both proposals, and ends up rejecting them.

The common interests shared by the Literary Revival and the Gaelic League, however, were not enough to avoid the tensions and to hide the different ideas of Irishness permeating all those groups. The Anglo-Irish background of Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory was never forgotten by the members of the Catholic organisations. Their Protestant ascendancy indicated they belonged to another world which existed in a sort of parallel universe inside the same country, but which rarely had a chance to cross the bridge to the other side. Yeats's sister, Lily Yeats, expresses this distance so,

> I saw the elderly women coming out and slipping into the city chapels for mouthfuls of prayer, seedy men coming out and slipping into greasy public houses for mouthfuls of porter – but of their lives I knew nothing. (Watson, 1979, p. 29)

The situation of the Anglo-Irish was a complex one. On the one hand they had the feeling of superiority their English origins had taught them to have, but on the other hand there was a sense of marginalisation and of not fully belonging either to Ireland or to England. Yeats spent his whole life searching for an answer to the identity question, and his idealisation of the peasant was a part of the process, a way to try to approach the other.

Synge's answer to that question had some similarities to Yeats's: he found the "essence" of uncorrupted Irishness in the Aran Islands, a place untouched by the bourgeois values and by the dreaded industrialisation and modernity. The only play Synge wrote which was not booed

or severely criticised by the catholic nationalists was *Riders to the Sea*, the only one set in the Aran Islands. Not that it was an idyllic pastoral portrait. It was tragic, violent, and the connection with nature was shown as brutal and merciless. Even so, it showed great respect for the values and the honour of the peasants, which, according to him, was to be found nowhere else in Ireland. He was free to criticise all the decay, false morality and corruption in Ireland, but he had the moral reserve of values safe and preserved in one set of small islands in the extreme west coast.

Yeats had his refuges as well: County Sligo, the lake isle of Innisfree, as we can read in his poem called "Lake Isle of Innisfree":: "I WILL arise and go now, and go to Innisfree/ And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made" (YEATS, 1998 p. 86). Joyce, however, had nothing of the kind. His portrayal of Ireland was that of a cracked looking-glass, full of fragments and loss. No illusions of glorious or virtuous Ireland, no claims for a revival of the Celtic myth or Christian values. Instead, his work offers a clinical and detailed portrait of urban Ireland, with all its defects, sordidness and frustration.

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Another reason for the Irish paralysis was deeply rooted in History, in the minds and attitudes of the Irish: the English domination. After eight centuries living under a foreign rule, speaking a foreign tongue, feeling as if they were second-class citizens in their own land, the Irish at Joyce's time were more than tired of trying to solve things by diplomacy. Repeated failures at that brought about the emergence of groups that were in favour of armed resistance, leading to the events of 1916.

Britain's domination over Ireland, which had started in the middle ages with the Norman king Henry II, got stronger after the Act of Union from 1800, which created The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The country was ruled by the English parliament, and especially after the Great Famine, many nationalist groups emerged, trying to break the bonds with the English. It is relevant to put the English point of view at the time in perspective. In the 19th century, the British Empire was at its peak, and Ireland was only one among many colonies to

worry about, while to the Irish the English were *the* problem. Victorian England did not have the Irish in great consideration, as some opinions of writers from the time collected by G.J. Watson show. Typically, the Irish were considered wild, indolent, superstitious and clearly inferior,

> The Irish hate our free and fertile isle. They hate our order, our civilization, our enterprising industry, our sustained courage, our decorous liberty, our pure religion (…). Their fair ideal of human felicity is an alternation of clannish broils and coarse idolatry. Their history describes an unbroken circle of bigotry and blood (Watson, 1979 p. 16)

The Irish claims for Home Rule were, according to that logic, absurd. They would never be capable of ruling their own country for their sheer incapacity to do so. That was the thought of the 19th century British Empire. One of the earliest activists to rebel against the state of things was Daniel O'Connell, who by political and pacifist ways, fought for Catholic emancipation. He was the first Catholic to be elected to Parliament in 1823, but did not take his seat because he would have to take the Oath of Supremacy, which was inconsistent with the Catholic faith. Afraid that it might cause a revolt in Ireland, the prime minister of England, the Duke of Wellington, made King George IV sign an act of Catholic emancipation, allowing Catholics to take seats in the Parliament without taking the oath. As it was not retroactive, O'Connell could not take advantage of his conquest.

O'Connell also fought for the end of the Act of Union, unsuccessfully. Like him, Parnell attempted Home Rule through peaceful ways, but other organizations such as the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Citizen Army and *Sinn Féin* (which would end up creating the Irish Republican Army, the well-known IRA) abandoned the diplomatic ways to take weapons. While England was worried about World War I, those armed organisations promoted an armed insurrection, which was a failure and had many of its leaders killed, but became very inspirational to the population. It was called the 1916 Easter Rising, and one of the leaders executed was Patrick Pearse.

Fighting against the English domination was common to almost the entire population of Ireland, with the exception of Ulster. Besides the diplomatic, political or armed ways, there were the cultural, symbolic and linguistic ways, all of them with their gains, losses and compromises. Joyce's option was obviously exile and the fight in the linguistic field. Here is where he will find his positions, his weapons, his manifestos. His battle is not against the English domination: it is against the effects that the domination left in the people of Ireland, their lack of dignified reaction and their narrowed minds.

1.2 Joyce's Life

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce was born in Dublin in 1882. He was a child when the Parnell case happened, and that is one of the childhood events which marked him for life. Joyce was the first of many brothers and sisters, and his family, like that of Stephen Dedalus, decayed financially as the years passed by. Seventeen was the number of times his mother got pregnant, successfully or not. This subsection of the work refers to people from real life who shared intense important personal moments with Joyce in his childhood and youth. Many of these life experiences were experimented upon by Joyce the author, sometimes for years, until they finally reached the literary format which operates as a monad, translating raw material from one individual's experience into the timeless artistic expression they now represent.

Mary "May" Joyce, former Mary Murray, was a religious person. She participated in church groups all her life, and little James would usually associate her to the image of the Virgin Mary. In *Ulysses*, we see Stephen Dedalus having to deal with the memory of events previous to his mother's death: at her deathbed, Stephen refused to kneel and pray at her request, and now he is tormented by that fact. A Christian mother connected with the ideas of guilt and tenderness, and over-protective of her son. When James Joyce was six he received some verses in a quatrain from his neighbour Eileen Vance, and that displeased his mother profoundly. The quatrain had actually been written by her father, and is reproduced with a slight change in *Ulysses,* in which it is addressed to Milly Bloom. According to Edna O'Brien, the one Eileen gave him was something like,

O, James Joyce, you are my darling.
You are my looking glass from night to morning.
I'd rather have you without a farthing
Than Harry Newell with his ass and garden.(O'Brien, 1999, p. 43)

It is obviously childish and humorous, but the girl remained in his memories and appeared in his books several times. The fact that she was from a Protestant family only came to add to his mother's distaste of her. Joyce's work is made out of such pieces of reminiscence, the revisiting of facts and moments from his personal life which become only really significant and valuable to the extent that they can be reused to the accomplishment of his consecrated aesthetic project.

James Joyce's father was called John Joyce, and he was very proud of his family name. While the name Murray, which was May's name before the wedding, was not tolerated, the name Joyce was boasted in the house with pictures and symbols of his ancestors. He was a good tenor, and Joyce's love of music was inspired by him. John Joyce was also an enthusiast of Parnell, and got bitterly disappointed with the attitude of the Church at the time. Young Joyce absorbed those paternal characteristics, as well as another, which would accompany him through all his life: the difficulty in dealing with money. John Joyce spent all the money he inherited from his family in Cork in pubs and other dissipations, while the family's standard of living just decreased. That was not uncommon with Irish fathers of the end of the 19th century, not even of the whole of the 20th century.

From the fancy south of Dublin, the Joyces moved to many places north of the Liffey, areas where poverty was widespread. Material poverty at least, because the literary material that James collected was abundant, and would serve him for the rest of his career. From a very early age he was obsessed with maps, geographical locations, details, characters and their environment. Meanwhile, the family had to run away in the middle of the night many times because they could not afford to pay the rent, and then John would sing arias to cheer them up in the process. They borrowed and never paid, rented and never honoured their duties.

James Joyce had ten surviving younger brothers and sisters, of which Stanislaus is related in biographical surveys as being the one closest to him. It was with him that James lived the adventure at the pigeon house later portrayed in "An Encounter", in *Dubliners*. The two boys escaped from the monotony of their daily lives searching for the thrill of adventure, and found a pervert old man instead. Stanislaus was Joyce's constant companion in childhood games, and his attentive listener when they were teenagers. Joyce shared his doubts, frustrations and philosophical ideas with him, and later when Joyce left Ireland Stanislaus joined him and Nora in Trieste, ending up teaching English at the same place his brother was teaching. As Stanislaus was more organized, he kept a journal with his thoughts and those of his brother as well between 1906 and 1909, which he called *Book of Days*, and which proved important material to feed scholars in the future.

More stable than Joyce, Stanislaus kept a position as the University of Trieste, and helped his brother financially in some occasions. He also wrote a biography of his famous brother called *My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years* (JOYCE, 2003) besides having helped his brother's most famous biographer, Richard Ellmann, in the biographical masterwork *James Joyce* (ELLMANN, 1983).

Another important member of the Joyce household was James Joyce's "aunty" Hearn Conway, whom he called "Dante" in *A Portrait*. She was a fanatical Catholic, and she was literarily immortalized in the famous Christmas dinner scene in the first chapter of that novel. It was this aunt who taught Joyce how to read, as well as his first notions of arithmetic and the very important geography. This pattern of Catholicism and scientific teaching from authoritative figures is the same one that Joyce would find later in his formal Catholic education.

The first school Joyce knew, when he was six years old, was Clongowes Wood College, a Jesuit school. Many scenes from *A Portrait* are taken from his experiences there, in that large and a little scary building in the middle of county Kildare, formerly a castle with a history of resistance against the English domination. The bullies Joyce had to face, the homesickness, the subtle homoerotic innuendoes, the broken glasses and his illness, all happened in that first school. The Jesuits had his respect and his admiration as a child: he became a devotee of the

Virgin, and willingly took part in school plays and processions. The ecclesiastic ritual impressed him a lot, as well as the discipline and knowledge the Jesuits possessed. He also had piano and singing classes there, which added to his love of music.

However, the bullies came down heavily on him, including some teachers. The classmates made fun of him because of his impoverished condition, and asked him embarrassing questions he was not able to answer. As Edna O'Brien tells, one day one of his classmates pushed him into a stream because he would not swap a *snuff-box* for a conker. Because of that, he broke his glasses and was accused by one of the teachers of having deliberately done so in order to avoid studying. He was punished physically with a pandybat, and humiliated in front of the whole class. (O'BRIEN, 1999, p. 14). The educational system - both in Catholic and Protestant schools - of the end of the 19th century considered these things normal and necessary for the education of the children, unaware of, or careless about, the traumas they could provoke in the students. Well into the 20th century, the British singer Roger Waters talks about that in his songs, "When we grew up and went to school/ there were certain teachers who would hurt the children anyway they could/ by pouring their derision upon anything we did/ exposing every weakness however carefully hidden by the kids." (WATERS, 1979).

The germs of rebellion were beginning to form inside young James Joyce. His initial reaction was to recur to an authority he still acknowledged and respected inside the school: the rector, reverend John Conmeee. The rector listened attentively to the boy's complaint, and promised to speak to his aggressor, a fact that Joyce considered a great victory. In *A Portrait*, the scene appears with a triumphant tone, as the first of the five epiphanies that we have, one at the end of each chapter, when young Stephen Dedalus is carried on the shoulders of his classmates in a moment of glory.

After his third year at Clongowes, Joyce's father lost his job, and this financial decay forced the family to take Joyce out of this now too expensive school. For some time Joyce studied by himself at home, and observed the mysteries of the world. He started to explore the streets of Dublin, going each time further from his house. The meticulous descriptions of the city we find in *Dubliners* began in those times of wandering and elaboration of his world view.

Finally, thanks to some contacts and influences, his father managed to matriculate him for free at another Jesuit institution, the Belvedere school. There, Joyce continued as an excellent student, excelling at all subjects, especially in languages. Two episodes marked this phase for him: he was accused of being heretical in a text he wrote for the school, and he was beaten by two classmates because he refused to admit that morally impeccable Tennyson was a better poet than Byron, a crossed-out author in the Catholic *Index*. His conflicts still had a physical manifestation, but the intellectual reasons were becoming more evident. The polemist was spreading his wings, and the rebellious artist was starting to take shape. Also when he was at Belvedere he won some school prizes, and the money was used to help his family in those difficult times.

His devotion to the Virgin was still strong, and his dedication to the studies still solid. However, the child was growing and his biological impulses conflicted with Catholic education. When he was 14 Joyce met a prostitute on the street, and started his sexual life. Anxiety, guilt, pleasure and confusion became from then on part of his life. The boy was becoming a man, and the devout Christian was embracing what for him became another form of religion: Art. He thought of himself as a poet, and fell in love with a girl he met in a friend's house. Her name: Mary. Very appropriate to him. Mary Sheehy appears in many scenes in *Stephen Hero* as Emma Cleary, and has a discreet but important participation in *A Portrait*. She is the muse of his poems, the object of his love and desire. He is jealous of the attention she gives to the priests, especially one of them who is younger. Because of her, Joyce shows some interest in the Gaelic language, and even attends some classes, just because she was there.

At the end of his Belvedere years Joyce's performance as a student was not so praiseworthy as it had been before. Too many things happen in the life of a teenager for him to keep his concentration and good grades. At the same time, crises of religious fervour still haunted him, and he oscillated between the appeal of an ecclesiastic life and the bohemian ways of the artist. Joyce was invited by one of the priests from the school to follow a supposed vocation for priesthood, and was praised by his good work and good grades. He was to decide what kind of man he would be. His becoming a priest would represent the end of the economic

problems affecting his family, as the Catholic institution would certainly provide for all of them. But that would also represent that, from then on, James Joyce would take the role of the father in the family, keeping his own father John Joyce and all his household. This conflict is one of the central themes in Joyce's fiction, the complicated relations involving father and child, creature and creator. It is dealt with from within Christianity, through Stephen Dedalus's relations both with his father and with his God in *A Portrait*; and also from outside Christianity, in the image involving Daedalus and Icarus, as in the scene where Stephen meets his drunken father in *Ulysses*, or when he is associated with Telemachus in relation to Jewish Leopold Bloom in the same novel.

A crucial point in Joyce's decision not to join the Church came one day when he was walking along the shore in Clontarf, Dublin Bay. This scene, as described in *A Portrait* has a special appeal to Brazilian readers, because of the sentence "He was unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life" (JOYCE, 1996, p. 195), is used by Clarice Lispector in the title of her first novel *Perto do Coração Selvagem* (LISPECTOR, 1998), written when she was only 19 years old, when she was young, like Stephen, and like the girl he saw walking on the shore, and who is described in a highly symbolic way with the green and the bird associations, but also in a very sensual way. That ultimate experience of earthly and transcendental beauty made Joyce more certain about the artist's path he would choose. The religious arena had its attractions, but it was only through art that he could achieve higher manifestations of the body and the spirit. Only art would put him near the very heart of life, with its wild intricacies and its layers of meaning that he knew so well how to explore in the years that followed that experience.

When Joyce entered University College, the process of abandoning conventions got more radical. He skipped classes, did not pay attention when he was present, took part in pranks, stopped bathing and proudly cultivated lice in his hair. He dedicated himself to other intellectual efforts: learning foreign languages, including Norwegian, so he could write a letter to his new idol, Henrik Ibsen. The Scandinavian writer was execrated by the Church for being immoral, and for dealing with themes like adultery and women's liberation. Joyce considered Ibsen a genius of the same magnitude as Shakespeare, and higher than Goethe. After the disillusionment with the Parnell case, he had found an idol outside the realm of politics, one who dealt with politics through more elevated means of artistic expression.

Ibsen wrote a sentence in a poem without a title that served as a mantra to Joyce: "WHAT is life? a fighting /In heart and in brain with Trolls/ Poetry? that means writing/Doomsday-accounts of our souls." (IBSEN, 1912). Willing to fight with the trolls of provincial life and mediocrity, the young Joyce adopted Ibsen as a mentor and a beacon in the darkness of his solitary journey, a journey that became not that solitary after all, when he found his companion for life, his partner, his lover, the mother of his children. Nora Barnacle, a country girl from Galway, became the model for the character of Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*. She and Joyce had very different personalities and cultural background, and their life together was not easy. Being in company does not mean being necessarily happy. Nora did not understand his passion for literature, and did not accompany him in philosophical debates. They argued frequently, especially when the financial situation was not good (which was often the case). She accused him of being a bad father and a drunkard. Nevertheless, Nora is immortalised through the celebrations of Bloomsday around the world, which marks the first day she and Joyce went out together, the historic June 16, 1904.

The couple lived together in many European cities: Trieste, Paris, and Zurich are the places where they stayed longer. In his volunteer exile Joyce tried to work in a bank, but was not very successful. Then for many years he worked as a teaching of English for the Berlitz school. Nora and Joyce had two children, one of which suffered from schizophrenia, to the family's great distress. Joyce himself had serious eye problems for many years. He returned to Ireland in two occasions to visit the family, to open a cinema, to see the old places and acquaintances again. The city of Dublin and its people were always his thematic field of study and the main object of his books.

2 *DUBLINERS*: THE FOUR STAGES OF PARALYSIS

> *She set with her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.*
>
> **James Joyce**, "Eveline"

Much attention has been given to Joyce's major works *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, which are considered mature and elaborate pieces of art, and about which a great amount of literary criticism has been produced. The production from Joyce's first stage is both less sophisticated in its experimentations and, consequentially, less difficult. Nonetheless, the elements that will lead up to the second phase are present there, and have also been much studied by specialized criticism. *Dubliners* (1914) is a collection of stories written by Joyce in the beginning of the last which portrays sketches of the life of the inhabitants of his city in tints which clearly reveals its author's opinions about the moral and economic decay of his place.

The structure of the book comprises short stories that can be read either isolated from the other ones, or considered as part of a wider scheme, conceived according to the phases of human growth. So we have two stories predominantly dealing with childhood ("The Sisters" and "An Encounter"), three dealing with adolescence ("Araby", "Eveline" and "After the Race"), two about youthful relationships ("Two Gallants" and "A Little Cloud") one focusing on public life ("Ivy Day in the Committee Room"), and seven focusing on mature life ("The Boarding House", "Counterparts", "Clay", "A Painful Case", "A Mother", "Grace" and "The Dead"). Reading the stories as parts of a single work gives the reader a sense of wholeness. Joyce's project evokes the structure of those medieval or renaissance pieces of literature, such as Boccaccio's *Decameron*, or Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, which offer - like in a patchwork - a variety of displays of different layers and instances of life in their time. Another trait Joyce borrows from medieval scholarship is the apparent simplicity of the

design. Behind this superficial simplicity a more attentive researcher can easily identify the superposition of different layers of meaning and the refined use of language.

Leah Ann Connor (CONNOR, 2006), in her study of the story "Araby", indicates three main threads in the criticism of the story which predominate since the early sixties: the symbolic thread, which analyses the cyphered meanings in the text, the theoretical thread, which offers different theoretical approaches to it, and the pedagogical thread, which uses the story as an ideal model for teaching literature. For the objectives and scope of the present work, I have chosen to use the symbolic thread, linking it to the context of Ireland's political and social forces of the time. I will use this thread to refer not to "Araby", but to other five stories from *Dubliners* that illustrate my point: "Clay", "An Encounter", "Ivy Day in the Committee Room", "After the Race" and "The Dead".

2.1 "Clay"

"Clay" is one of the stories of *Dubliners* in which we can observe the opposing and complementary forces of paganism, Christianity, imperialism and modernity. The main character has the appropriate name of Maria, and the story takes place on Halloween eve. Maria is described as if she were a witch, with her small body, long nose and long chin. In spite of that, she is very aware of the modern urban city when she calculates the precise time she will take from one place to another on the tram.

The discreet English element in the story is the gentleman in the tram who either distracts her and makes her lose her plum cake, or - in a more malicious reading - the man who might have stolen her cake while making her think he is a gentleman. He is described as being "colonel-looking", not a real colonel, and he makes a point of mentioning the "bag full of good things" she was carrying. This self-delusion is coherent with the construction of Maria as a peace-maker, a person who avoids conflict and who, as an old maid, lacks the love of a man or of children.

The pagan traditions are introduced in the story by the neighbour girls' game. As Halloween coincides with the end of the Celtic year, it is important to have divinatory activities to deal with the uncertainties of the future, to predict and try to avoid calamities (such as the Famine). The blindfold game they play only offers its participants three options: the prayer book, indicating the religious path, the water, a sign of emigration, and the wedding ring. Would any of these solutions fit Maria, the old virgin? To make matters worse, the girls next door make a prank and put a "soft wet substance" in one of the saucers, which Maria touches and fails to understand. The game has been subverted, the tension rises, and only with the intervention of an adult it is released. When Maria finally gets the prayer book, everyone seems relieved.

There is no consensus over the symbolism of the substance, which is probably the "clay" referred to only in the title of the story. Margot Norris notes that, in spite of many critics associating clay to death, such an interpretation would not be coherent with the Joycean work: "When Joyce does want a story read through a tropology of "death" (as in "The Dead" or in "Hades"), he weaves a complex texture of incident and allusion to guide us to his meaning." (NORRIS, 2006, p. 88). Instead, she associates the children's prank with the hostility they felt towards Maria, after it was suggested that they might be responsible for the disappearance of the lost plum cake. The clay she touches would be then an old children's trick: she would imagine dirtier things and would be shocked before discovering it was only clay, when her own "dirty mind" might have imagined other things.

Norris points that the narrator seems to omit some of the significance of the scene, making a "narration under a blindfold" in which "the narrative voice's failure to explain to us what really happened represents, metaphorically, the blind spot that marks the site of Maria's psychic wound, her imaginary lacks and fears." (Idem, p. 90) The narrator puts himself in a position that is not so much above that of the characters, as if he also has "blind spots". He does not try, with a superior attitude, to point his finger at the defects of the characters. At times he seems lost as well. These are narrative devices selected by the author, who uses that his modern, not omniscient narrator to have a limited power over the story, as if to create the atmosphere of uncertainty intended for this story.

In psychological terms, there is a defence mechanism called repression, to which Maria resorts a lot. She represses the idea that the man on the tram is just an old drunkard, preferring to take him for a gentleman. She refuses to accept that her pseudo brothers hate each other, and refuses to recognise that she has been the victim of a prank, and exposed to ridicule. According to Norris, the shocking idea she cannot deal with is "the recognition that her only 'family' - like the rest of the world - treats her like shit". (Ibidem, p. 92) Not precisely "death", then, or in a certain kind of social death.

Later, when there is music and she is invited to sing, she "forgets" to sing the second verse of the song, the verse which would explicitly affirm she is a lonely woman who has no man to love. The song is by M.W. Balfe (1841), and the part Maria omits is this, it goes like this:

I dreamt that suitors sought my hand,
That knights on bended knee,
And vows no maiden heart could withstand,
They pledged their faith to me.
And I dreamt that one of that noble band,
Came forth my heart to claim,
But I also dreamt, which charmed me most,
That you loved me all the same.

The children do not seem to find anything strange in the song, but a certain embarrassment is felt on the part of the adults.

The choice for a narrative voice which keeps silent about so many things creates gaps, which can be filled differently by different readers. Margot Norris's reading, referred above, stresses the mechanisms of repressions put to use by Maria so that she can keep going, within the miserable life she is meant to live.

On the other hand, the liberty granted us by this choice of narration also allows us to interpret things the other way round: Maria is a solitary Catholic spinster who has worked as a domestic in the past and who now works as a scullery maid for a Protestant charity

organization, named the Dublin by Lamplight, a chain of laundries that actually existed in Dublin and offered support to homeless former-prostitutes. Those women washed and ironed for the institution in exchange of boarding and food. As for Maria, she is the servant who serves the ex-prostitutes their meals. Maria is not young, she is not wealthy, she is not beautiful, she is not especially intelligent, and earns her living by serving degraded people. She can either do as Norris indicates, face the immensities of her tragedy, get desperate and depressed, or, as a strategy of survival, she can concentrate on counting her blessings. She does not do harm to anyone and spends her days being useful to other people.

Although her nose is long and twisted and almost touches her chin when she smiles, she has always a happy open smile to greet people with. The women she serves at the institution seem to like her, show gratitude, admiration and affection towards her. She clings to the happy trait in her nature, and seems proud of being able to manage by herself. At Thanksgiving Day she crosses the city to be with her friends, she uses the little money she has to buy them treats, she even tries to help them solve their personal problems. If they cannot answer her back in the same way, so much the worse for them. Whenever she meets strangers, like the man she meets in the bus, Maria is willing to think the best about them. Sometimes she is wrong, and that is a pity. If the other people do not want to, or cannot, treat her as well as she treats them, that is a pity too. But the fault is on their side, not on hers. All things considered, having as little as Maria has, she still seems to have so much more than many of the other characters we meet in *Dubliners*. Maria is not a living person, she is a fictional character. As such, she is timeless and immortal. But within her fictional world she represents a human being, and like all human beings she is made of clay, inflated with life and dreams for some time, but doomed to revert back to clay eventually.

2.2 Gnomons, Paralysis and Simony

Repression can be understood both at the psychological level of the characters and at the sociological level of the Irish context. At the narrative level, there is a similar mechanism used frequently by Joyce and commented on by Phillip Herring. It is the *gnomon*, one of the three words that appear at the beginning of "The Sisters", alongside the words *paralysis* and

simony. Herring says that according to the Oxford Dictionary *gnomon* means "a parallelogram with a smaller parallelogram missing in the upper right-hand corner" and also "a sundial which tells time by casting part of a circle into shadow". Both definitions have in common the idea of something missing, some kind of ellipsis, which Joyce applies to the structure of his stories, that being the novelty about Herring's approach,

> For this word *gnomon* I claim more than my predecessors, because by perceiving gnomonic principles at work, readers can gain new insight into character, structure and narrative technique - not in all of Joyce's texts necessarily, but in enough of them to warrant systematic examination of these principles. Joyce probably knew that in Greek the word means 'indicator'. (Herring, 1993, p. 132)

The gnomonic structure is one from where some strategic pieces have been consciously removed to create aesthetical effect, differently from repression which is an unconscious mechanism. However, the parts of the text that have been "repressed" or edited by the writer's hand are as important to the stories as the repressed psychological contents are to the personality. Socially speaking, the trauma of both famines was too strong to be dealt with directly, hence the various mechanisms that the individuals and the society had to develop. *Dubliners* and *A Portrait* are books full of gnomons.

If in *Stephen Hero* we have detailed explanations and development of characters, in *A Portrait* there is a radical work of careful distillation. Instead of the sketches with various characters that form *Dubliners*, *A Portrait* brings the individual struggle of Stephen Dedalus against this tendency towards paralysis. Besides the repressed content of Irish society, Stephen has to deal with things which are very explicit: domestic and religious oppression, his incipient sexuality, and the appeals of the nationalists. His struggle is shown through a careful selection of significant scenes, words and supporting characters. Many times, at a first reading, we may get lost with the gnomons. Only in a second or third reading can the reader have a clue of what is happening in some passages. Re-reading Joyce's books is usually better than reading them for the first time.

The third word Herring comments on is *simony*, a specific kind of corruption in the buying or selling of a church office or ecclesiastical preferment. In almost all the stories of *Dubliners* and throughout *A Portrait* the Catholic Church is ubiquitous. Its imagery, political influence, aesthetics and corruption are used by Joyce to make his point. In "The Sisters" the narrator is at the same time fascinated and repelled by the figure of father Flynn, and the priest's death gives him shock and some relief. When the boy goes to see the dead man, he remembers some moments of their relation, objects, favours he did for the old priest and lessons he received from him. He finds it curious that he is not in a mourning mood, and even has a sensation of freedom. He does not have courage to enter, and instead goes out on the street reading all the theatrical advertisements.

The knowledge controlled by the Church appears here for the first time as opposed to popular knowledge. The priest used to instruct the boy in the intricate mysteries of the Church, and somehow his death releases him from the responsibility of dealing with these questions. Knowledge in this case seems to be something heavy, hard to obtain and reserved to a few chosen people. The theatrical entertainment, which was often attacked by the Church, is a consolation and fascination for the boy. It is well known that one of Joyce's heroes, Ibsen, was a playwright condemned by the Church as immoral.

2.3 "An Encounter"

Such an opposition will appear again several times throughout *Dubliners*. The boys in "An Encounter" read the popular literature of the time, and are censored by the priests. Of course, there is here also a class issue. If the narrator on the one hand wants to be free, to read cowboy stories and live real adventures, on the other hand he is aware of class distinction when he meets the "ragged girls" and when he tries to appear cultivated to the stranger they meet, to be treated differently from his foolish friend. The ragged children confuse the narrator and his friend with Protestants because they are well dressed, causing the narrator to feel at the same time pride and shame.

Considered by critic James Degnan as Joyce's most thoroughly Freudian work, the story is indeed open to psychological reading. The young narrator, who thinks about himself as intellectually refined, despises his friend Mahoney because he is a little rude, a classical opposition between the man of thought and the man of action, which Stephen will have to face later in *A Portrait*. This cleavage shows in the mixture felt in the narrative voice of delight with the American Wild West stories and the sense, acquired through the prejudice of the priests at school, against that type of lower entertainment. Our narrator is also prone to detective stories which occasionally show beautiful girls, in which he could find the intellectual stimulation he needed, associated with the appeals to his lust. The Wild West stories were in his words "remote from my nature but, at least, they opened doors of escape" ("An Encounter", p. 19).

The narrator admits there is nothing wrong with the stories, but anyway the priests condemned them emphatically, calling them "rubbish". The primitive instincts and desires they portrayed were out of the sphere of what was acceptable by the Church, so they were considered as enemies as Ibsen or the pagan traditions. From those times the role of the mass media products in education, and their relation with the intellectual world was already an issue, and the responses were different. While the Church refused them completely, a proto-intellectual like the narrator positions himself ambiguously, choosing among the mass media products the ones which suited his needs. However, when he sees Leo Dillon getting caught by the priest and receiving a harsh reprimand, it "…paled much of the glory of the Wild West for me, and the confused puffy face of Leo Dillon awaked one of my consciences". (Idem, p. 19) One of the attacks thrown by the priest to the ones who read those magazines was that they were things for National School boys, i.e. the Protestant school. It is with mixed feelings that he goes on the journey with Mahoney.

When they meet the stranger, the narrator's attitude remains dubious. At the first moment there is a clear attempt of seduction on both parts: he tries to show how cultivated he is, and the stranger tries to get the boys' complicity by mentioning sweethearts. When left alone with the narrator, the man makes a point of emphasising how similar they are – men of thoughts, and how different they are from rude Mahoney. However, such complicity is soon broken when he reveals himself as a pervert. Disappointment, frustration and fear arise again, and it is up to the "rude" and foolish Mahoney to save him. Like Davin is to Stephen in *A Portrait*,

the simple Mahoney works as the Sancho Panza that the narrator needs at that precise moment. Intellectual superiority dos not guarantee moral superiority, be it in the church, in a free thinker like the stranger, or even in the narrator, who is clearly a conceited person.

Another evidence of how blurred the apparent borders among the social forces acting in Dublin becomes is Joe Dillon being called to priesthood. The same Joe Dillon who had introduced the popular magazines to the other boys ends up having a vocation, which surprises the narrator and everyone around. The boy who could only scream "yaka yaka yaka!" in his childish games, goes on to speak the language of the Church – would that also be another type of "yaka yaka"?

2.4 "Ivy Day in the Committee Room"

The Church has a discreet participation in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room", a story in which politics takes the main role. The story is very explicit in its approach: paralysis in a political committee of the National Party, which once supported Parnell, and now is supporting a candidate for municipal elections called Richard Tierney. The members of the party are not enthusiastic about their candidate, and reminisce about the past while gossiping about their present allies. The narrative technique is peculiar, with practically only dialogues showing the action, or in Joyce's terms, the lack of it. There is a great deal of Irish slang and historical references, which make the story difficult for non-Irish readers.

I had the opportunity of travelling to Ireland, and to participate in a reading group in Dublin, in which this story was read out loud by natives. Some passages acquired a very different meaning from the times I had read it silently, and the irony became much clearer. The spits, the grumping, the subtle offences, the clumsy gestures, and the tone of voice used in the dialogues, all contributed to the ironic mood of the story, despite its sadness. The comic is what is left when greatness has abandoned us, or has been sent away by the stupidity of the people.

The story takes place on October 6th, 1902, exactly eleven years after the decease of Parnell, when the tradition of wearing an ivy leaf in the lapel in remembrance of "the Chief" was starting. Among the several names mentioned while the characters talk, there is reference to a number of politicians who did not live up to the memory of Parnell's Nationalistic cause.

It is the time for the Municipal elections in Dublin and Mr O'Connor, as well as several other people, are being paid to go canvassing for one candidate, Mr Tierney. As it is raining, and as these men are more interested in the money they will get than on the results of the elections, instead of going canvassing on the streets, they recede to the headquarters of the Nationalist Party, where a committee room with a fireplace is available for them. They sit there and talk, waiting for one of Mr Tierney's agents to come with their pay. As the story opens, Mr O'Connor is talking to Old Jack, the caretaker. Old Jack is complaining about his nineteen year-old son, who does not respect his parents and spends his life drinking. The next to enter is Mr Hynes. The men sit there, with the fragile fire they manage to make from the remaining coal. The emphasis of the scene lies in the contrast of this atmosphere of decay, paralysis and apathy and the way things were eleven years previously. They sit there in the dim room as if they were in a dark cave, like Plato's cave, observing the lights outside. The walls of the place are bare, there is a mess around, everything indicates deterioration.

All over the story one can feel the heavy absence of Parnell, the paternal figure which could have redeemed the nation and led it to freedom, but who was despised at his time. They are so lost that they do not know how to behave, where to start from. They remember the episodes that led Parnell to be ousted from his party, say a poem, and use his name in all possible ways, to defend both the reaction against the English and the submission to them as well. Parnell is equated simultaneously to Christ and to a Fianna warrior[4], the priests to Judas, the men now agree, then disagree, while they drink and toast to Parnell's anniversary.

[4] The Fianna warriors are the mythic group of hired soldiers led by the legendary Finn MacCumhaill. The Fianna, like King Arthur in English mythology, are not dead, they are asleep in a fort by the sea, and they shall awake whenever Ireland is in need of them. (Seamus Deane, 1985)

They focus of their argument relates to the news that, in the following year, "Edward Rex" is to visit Ireland. Should they expel them from their country, or diplomatically receive him? They are referring to King Edward VII, who actually visited Ireland the following year, in 1903, where he was heartily welcomed. King Edward's mother, Queen Victoria, deceased in 1901, never visited Ireland in her 63-year-long reign. On the one hand, welcoming the "German monarch" would mean being too submissive with the enemy; on the other hand, the royal visit would guarantee an influx of money into the country. Mr O'Connor is worried about what would Parnell would Parnell do in this case. Mr Henchy brings the issue to personal terms,

> Parnell, said Mr. Henchy, is dead. Now, here's the way I look at it. Here's this chap come to the throne after his old mother keeping him out of it till the man was grey. He's a man of the world and he means well by us. He's a jolly fine decent fellow, if you ask me, and no damn nonsense about him. He just says to himself: The old one never went to see these wild Irish. By Christ, I'll go myself and see what they're like. And are we going to insult the man when he comes over here on a friendly visit? Eh? (*Ivy Day*, p. 148)

To ratify his point, Mr Henchy adds that King Edward is "an ordinary knockabout like you and me. He's fond of his glass of grog and he's a bit of a rake, perhaps, and he's a good sportsman. Damn it, can't we Irish play fair?" (Idem, p. 148)

Suspicion contaminates the environment as well. After Mr Hynes leaves, they gossip about him as a possible spy for the rival parties. They also suspect a strange-looking priest who passes by. They cannot tell whether the man is just a common priest or if he is a spy for the English government, because he has been seen in dubious company. Suspicion is predominant among those men. The priest only hovers around at the threshold of the door, uncertain,

indicating that not only in politics but also in other areas people are not committed, not sure of what to do. Ivy Day is not a day to be celebrated, as it would seem.

The men in the committee receive bottles of stout from the pub. They drink, they gossip and receive other two visitors, one of them precisely the one being gossiped at. His name is Crofton, a professional canvasser. He used to work with the conservatives, but is now working with Tierney, the Mayor, for convenience. As they do not have a corkscrew, they manage to open the bottles near the fire, causing occasional "poks" which are used ironically to illustrate some of their sentences. Haynes returns, and the man who was raising suspicions about his being a spy is the most enthusiastic to welcome him back, asking him to read the poem about Parnell.

This poem is an insertion of a poem Joyce himself, in his childhood, wrote to Parnell. It places Parnell as one of the heroes of Ireland, and accuses his traitors vehemently. Like the song Maria sings in "Clay", the poem triggers emotional reactions in the audience, which are mentioned and not much developed. It is a rare occasion in which we see Joyce acknowledging one of the Irish traditions he fought against through all his life, at this specific case the art of reciting poems one knows by heart.

The final impression the story leaves is of nostalgia, impotence, indifference and paralysis for the loss of the great leader and sadness about the corruption that now prevails. The Irish political arena was extremely divided, full of contradictions and unusual associations of former opposites. The "poks" of the bottles being opened give a peculiar effect, especially when one of them happens during the solemn silence after the reading of the poem.

Mr Crofton, when asked about the poem, gives a dubious answer, which is the last sentence of the story: he says it was a "fine piece of writing". We do not know if he, as a conservative, said that to avoid talking about Parnell, or because he is deeply touched by the reading.

2.5 Where are the British?

Even when it is not present directly, personified in characters, the Church marks its presence in language, symbolism, intention, or even in the millenary bond that connects Church and State (in this case, the Catholic Church and the English State). Only that, in Joyce's work, the condition of those presences differs: the influence of the Church is ostensible, whereas the ruling of the British is discreet, almost mute. Trevor Williams calls this a paradox: "since British power is the ultimately determining factor upon the forms of Irish economic and political life, one might expect this power to be more insistently manifest in Joyce's literary production" (WILLIAMS, 2006 p. 102). In *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait* the main character has a chance to reflect upon the English colonial power and to have illuminating dialogues with one of them, the Dean of the university. In *Dubliners*, however, apart from subtle allusions or overheard dialogues, that presence is almost unnoticed. "The Dead" brings some more direct references to them, but we cannot forget it was written some years after the other stories. The attitude of the protagonist is more mature about the circumstances than Stephen's, and perhaps this fact allows him to articulate his feelings about the question into verbalized sentences and impressions. The English presence is a huge gnomon in the book, the one which would explain many of the situations dealt with. However, the indirect allusions to their presence are good indicators of the construction of some characters and the structure of the stories.

An example of that is Farrington's boss in "Counterparts". Mr Alleyne comes from Belfast, which at the time represented the differences between English and Irish rule: the northern capital was more developed economically and, being closer to the imperial power, it had privileges that the *Dubliners* lacked. Mr Alleyne's voice is very authoritarian, and has total control over Farrington. The frustration and anger Farrington gets from listening to the orders of this boss are processed in his throat along with the sensation of thirst, which leads him to drinking. Symbolically, the lack of voice swells the throat, and frustration has to be worked with alcohol. Such a lack of voice comes from a clear source: the Ulsterman's superior position and attitude. Later in the story other indicators of British rule are shown in the pub when Farrington gets fascinated with the London girl who barely notices his presence, and

when he is beaten twice at an arm wrestling by the English acrobat. The title of the story comes not only from the contrast in power involving Alleyne and Farrington, but also what happens at the end of the story. When Farrington, drunk, irritated and hungry, gets home, he finds out that his wife Ada is not there, she has headed to the Chapel. But his little son Charlie is at home, to become the repository of all Farrington's rage and frustration. This is arguably the most violent scene in the whole book, and a substantial representation of the slow process of degradation that can affect a whole people, after centuries of humiliation and discouragement.

The two scenes reveal some contradictions in the relations between the Irish and the colonisers. There is the unbalanced power that frustrates and causes the Irish to be aggressive, but there is also the fascination and the inspiration that the English exert over the Irish, like in Little Chandlers' pathetic efforts to please English literary critics by creating works with a Celtic flavour suited to the English taste in "A Little Cloud". The relations between coloniser and colonised are not black and white, and the nuances are captured in many small scenes or even in quick references.

2.6 "After the Race"

When a member of the Dublin upper classes tries to blend in with other Europeans the result is the same frustration. The story "After the Race" brings Europe to Dublin, as Joyce wrote, "through this channel of poverty and inaction the Continent sped its wealth and industry" ("After the Race", p. 44). A car race puts together a French bourgeois, his Canadian Cousin, a Hungarian and a Dubliner called Doyle. Adam Saxton states that most critics do not consider this story has the same level of the others because Joyce wrote about a class he did not know well (SAXTON, 2003). However, the story is coherent with the scheme of the others, and all the elements present in the other stories can be found in this one.

The Gordon-Bennett Race actually took place in Ireland, on July 6th 1904. It was won by Camille Jenatzy, the first man to surpass the limit of 100 km/h in 1899. In Joyce's story the

Irish are happy with the result, because they associate Belgium to France, and France as the foil to England. The main character, Jimmy Doyle, is the son of a former nationalist, a butcher who became known in Dublin as a "merchant prince". Jimmy was sent to study in England, and he enjoys music and cars. The fact that Jimmy has wealthy and important acquaintances makes his father proud. The Frenchman Ségouin is rich, and the Hungarian Villona is very poor, but talented and charming. Being seen by the *Dubliners* in the company of cosmopolitan Continentals was also a reason for Doyle to be proud.

Jimmy's paralysis is not very apparent, but it is there under the surface, perceived in his awkward situation of not belonging. He is moving fast, in a car, but he goes nowhere, for it is only a race car, whose goal is not to arrive, but to go round and round. He is in good company, but he does not seem to fit among his companions. He cannot hear well what the two cousins say at the front seats of the cars, and the Hungarian's humming of a melody confuses him, as well as the noise of the car. Going home when the race finishes, he and his Hungarian friend walk with "a curious feeling of disappointment in the exercise" ("After the Race", p. 47).

Dublin that night "wore the mask of a capital". In spite of being in his home city, Jimmy seems to be the guest at the occasion, being given a secondary role in Europe's feast, probably only because of his father's money. They end the night in a yacht anchored by the harbour, another symbol of paralysis. The gentlemen eat, drink, dance and have a good time. For Jimmy "this was seeing life, at least" (Idem, p. 50).

Jimmy's joy does not last long, though. When he plays cards he does not know well what is happening, but he feels that he is losing. The bets are high. Villona, who knows better, does not take part in it. Jimmy and an American are the biggest losers in the game, while the Englishman Routh is the great winner. The former colony and the present one still have to pay to the English.

The final description of Jimmy is ambiguous. He is glad, even knowing he would regret everything in the morning. He has a "dark stupor that would cover up his folly" (Ibidem, p.

51), and he rests his head between his hands, feeling the beat of his temples. This could be simply a headache or a hangover after so much food, drinking and money losing. It could also be a gesture of desolation and conscience of his position in the European context.

Valente (VALENTE, 2003) argues that Jimmy trains himself to rely solely on his eyes, while Villona is a totally auditory person. But Jimmy's eyes fail him when he needs to understand the cards, and he ends up losing a fortune. If money is the only thing that could put him close to those people, the tendency to losing it may signify that he may not last for long amid that companion.

Villona is a counterpart to Jimmy. He is poor, but also a talented musician who has learned to live among those rich people. He surprises the Englishman by speaking about the English madrigals. He is respected and admired by Jimmy's father, and he refuses to play cards with the others. Instead, he plays his piano and goes to the deck to watch the dawn. He has learned to survive in a more effective way than Jimmy. The last line "Daybreak, gentlemen!" spoken by Villona brings to light Jimmy's failure. The day is breaking, and all possible regrets and losses are arriving.

2.7 "The Dead"

The last story in the collection shows Joyce in a more mature diction. As it was written some years after the others, we can notice a transition from the elliptical and concise style of the previous stories to one which resembles the style Joyce adopts in *A Portrait*, with dialogues marked in the continental fashion, with dashes instead of quotation marks, alternated with brief descriptions and interior monologues.

We follow the conscience of the main character, Gabriel, who is usually considered autobiographical, something like what Joyce himself would have become had he gone to live in London. Gabriel is a portrait of someone who succeeded in escaping the decay and

paralysis of the city, and returns to face old acquaintances and ghosts, as Joyce did in the two times he travelled to Ireland, in the years of self-exile.

The Irish hospitality and the Irish nationalists are depicted in the first part of the story with a critical eye, but also (and finally) with some acquiescence. The three ladies who receive him are seen through Gabriel's eyes with both their weak and strong qualities: they are provincial and insignificant, "What did he care that his aunts were only two ignorant women" ("The Dead", p 219), but also the dignified keepers of an ancient tradition: "…our country has no tradition which does it so much honour and which it should guard so jealously as that of its hospitality" (Idem, p 231).

The nationalists and their radical attitudes are mildly criticised in the figure of Miss Ivors. Joyce attacks the Irish Revival explicitly in her figure: her stubbornness and intolerance are as exasperating as Mrs. Kearney's in "A Mother". She demands a lot from Gabriel, and tries to embarrass him about being so acquainted with foreign things. At one moment he keeps silent, and she thinks that it is because he has nothing to say and she has won the argument. But Gabriel's silence goes deeper than that. It is the silence of someone who, like Joyce, thinks that "Literature was above politics" (Ibidem, p 214), but fears to say such a grandiose phrase aloud. In times of political unrest, and in a country of passionate actions like Ireland, Art is best not to be discussed in some situations. In spite of her stubbornness, Miss Ivors is also shown as an attractive person, as if in spite of its limitations and inefficacy, the charm of the Irish Revival still deserves to be acknowledged. One of the problems with Miss Ivors' attitude is that she is harming what is seen by Gabriel as the great treasure of the Irish, their welcoming hospitality. In this sense, being so radical does more harm than good, in the sense that it does not change things ultimately, doing more harm to the aggressor than good to the cause defended. This politics of Tolerance has been proposed in recent decades in Ireland, especially in Northern Ireland, with movements such as the Field Day and the efforts to revitalize the city of Belfast.

This is one resounding criticism that Joyce makes of the Dublin of his time: its lack of interest for real Art, and the difficulty in being an artist in such a society. The subject will be developed later in *A Portrait* and in *Ulysses*, in which Stephen Dedalus lives the

contradictions of growing up in Dublin and trying to become an artist. Other characters with artistic or intellectual inclinations had been shown previously in *Dubliners,* like Little Chandler, James Duffy and Mr Doran. Gabriel's difference is that he is just a visitor to his country, while the others stayed there.

Gabriel is aware of the difference between himself and the others in the party: "The indelicate clacking of the men's heels and the shuffling of their soles reminded him that their grade of culture differed from his" (*Ib.,* p 203). For this reason, he hesitates in quoting poetry to people who would not understand it. He has already had difficulties in communicating with Lily in the beginning of the story, and then he had the confrontation with Miss Ivors. Gabriel tries to fit, to maintain a dialogue, to make himself understood, but he fears failure might follow. His speech, and the doubts that surround its creation and reception, can be seen as an allegory of the writer in his society: one suffers the anguish of being an artist, having something to express and not knowing exactly to whom and in what tone or even at what moment. Gabriel thinks about escaping, imagining how good it would be to walk outside alone, but he stays there and faces the situation, helped by the sudden escape of his opponent, Miss Ivors. Without her, the way is clearer for him.

Gabriel finally manages to make a steady speech: humble, praising the hospitality of the three Graces, criticising discreetly the rudeness of the new generation which only cares for social change and forgets hospitality and the Irish values. His moment of triumph is obliterated by a scene that could come from a canvas: his adored wife, who until then had had a discreet participation, on the stairs in the shadows, seems to be listening to distant music, as if thinking of someone else. The singer also only appears now that the dawn is coming and everyone is ready to leave: the time to let the secrets come out to the dim light.

Gabriel is fascinated, and at that moment he wants his wife as a woman. But she, unaware of his sudden desire, is involved in the memories of her long dead youth lover. That competition is not fair. The snow is falling, as she remembers someone who died for her: what could be less stimulating to her desire for Gabriel? He emigrated, but one can notice that his marriage also suffers from the same paralysis of the other characters, which demonstrates again that escaping per se might not be the solution to all troubles.

The tension shifts from the relation of Gabriel and his Irish audience to the more basic tension between a man and the woman he loves, who happens to be his wife. The epiphanies displayed here seem to follow different routes: Gabriel realises how he adores Gretta: "…she turned towards them and Gabriel saw that there was colour on her cheeks and that her eyes were shining. A sudden tide of joy went leaping out of his heart" (*Ib.*, p 242), and Gretta has a nostalgic impulse, triggered by an old Irish song. We do not have access to Gretta's flow of consciousness (as we do with Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*). Only through Gabriel's perceptions can we have access to her: "He longed to be master of her strange mood". But he is not, and only when they talk does he find out what she has been thinking of. His attitude of lust and adoration acquires darker shades: "A dull anger began to gather again at the back of his mind and the dull fires of his lust began to glow angrily in his veins" (*Ib.*, p 248).

The two motivations are revealed to be conflictive, and a new tension grows inside Gabriel. He tries to be ironical, but that does not work. He feels as if he was being compared to another man, and pities himself. Step by step Gretta reveals her story with the dead man Michael Fury, while the emotions in conflict inside Gabriel pass before the reader's eyes with astonishing realism. Joyce shows how, like magic, Gabriel turns lust into anger, and anger into a wider comprehension of his relation with his wife.

After she sleeps, he analyses his outburst of emotions in a new light. Death is present again in the book, along with the snow: something that freezes you and leaves you still. In the end, it covers the whole country, connecting Gabriel to all the people he thought he no longer had anything to do with. The snow, frozen water, is the feminine element that unites all, the living and the dead, the ones who have a love and the ones who have lost it, or have never found it. It covers all, and it will melt eventually, like the lives of all of us. Even not displayed through a radical process, like in *Ulysses*, Gabriel's flow of consciousness is a mark between the other stories of *Dubliners* and Joyce's new adventures with language.

3 A PORTRAIT OF THE NET

> *When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets.*
>
> **James Joyce**, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

3.1 The Christmas Dinner

Joyce's first published novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is an elaborated and greatly changed version of his previous experimental study *Stephen Hero*. Although the plot line is basically the same in the two novels, it took Joyce almost ten years of reworking and reshaping his material so that what was once personal and emotional might become adequate to the aesthetic agenda devised both by him and by Stephen Daedalus. As a consequence to that, in *A Portrait* there are more gnomons, ellipses, interruptions, changes of style, interior monologues, different experimentations in genre (sermons, a poem a journal); all these elements make of *A Portrait* a book more complex than *Stephen Hero*.

The first page of the book has been defined by Ezra Pound as one of the most brilliant pieces of literature of the twentieth century (POUND, 1970, p. 87). As in *Dubliners*, here also the narrative starts with the point of view of a child trying to understand the world of the adults. The language follows the perceptions and experiences of little Stephen Dedalus, whose imagination, from the very beginning, is permeated by politics and art. Baby Stephen sings and dances, as he will in the future, as he is introduced to the political symbolism in everyday objects: Dante has a maroon brush for Michael Davitt (a minor politician, ally of Parnell for a

time, who defended that the land should be owned by the nation, not by the peasants) and a green one, for Parnell.

Two other elements are also present from the start: his fascination with women and the religious tensions. Stephen likes the neighbour girl Eileen, from a Protestant family, without even knowing what a Protestant is. When he says that when he grows up he will marry Eileen, everybody laughs, gets embarrassed, and he is told to apologize, or "the eagle will pull out his eyes." (p. 8) There are many layers of repression the boy is being introduced to here, respecting religious divisions and moral and sexual practices. The "eagle" referred to in the scene is meant to signify something like "sandman" or any of those creatures that haunt childish nursery-rhymes. But we cannot forget the fact that the eagle is also the symbol of the Roman Empire and, as an extension, an icon for Western Culture and its practices. Stephen later compares Eileen's soft white hands to a tower of ivory, an image he has found in the litany of the Virgin Mary. As it happens many times in *Ulysses*, the fascination with Mary is first likened to a fascination with or attraction to a woman, whereas later in the book it will be associated to aesthetic epiphanies. From the first pages Stephen interacts with the world through his senses, the sounds he listens to (the voice of his father telling a story, the music from the piano, the voice of his mother singing), the images he sees or imagines (a green rose, a moo-cow coming down along the road), the way things feel (Dante's velvet brushes, the wet bed, first warm and then turning cold), the way they smell (the child's urine on the oil-sheet) or taste (Dante's cashews, Betty Byrne's lemon plats). As he assimilates things from his senses, Stephen will consider them, and form his own opinions and accept them or not. That seems to be his practice from his early start. This independent position about things may cause him to be considered a rebel in many occasions, and a conservative in other occasions, because his quest is neither the quest of the Fathers at school, of the British Government in Ireland, nor the quest of the Irish revolutionaries. He will grow to do things his way.

Stephen's first experiences at school show a reserved boy sometimes bullied by his colleagues. First in a subtle way, as in the scene in which he is asked if he kisses his mother. The affirmative answer makes the elder children laugh; when he gives the negative answer, they laugh too, which is very confusing to him. Stephen is yet to learn what answer might satisfy them. Soon the bullying is also physical: "It was Wells who had shouldered him into the square ditch the day before because he would not swop his little snuffbox for Wells'

seasoned hacking chestnut…" (*A Portrait,* p. 15). The physical aggression hurts and makes him uncomfortable, but the kiss question, which sounds like a riddle, is what bothers him the most. He even tries to find a solution by considering the sound made by the word. This phonetic exploitation with sounds will turn into a recurrent practice with Stephen. Language intrigues him a lot. Stephen wonders about words like "suck", "hot", or "cold". At this moment he does not elaborate between the origin of different words, which are foreign or which are not, or about the questions involving Ireland's relations with England. The story starts from the beginning, showing merely a child having the first contacts with meanings and their vehicles. Stephen's own name is questioned by his colleagues: "- What kind of a name is that?" (*A Portrait,* p. 9). His Greek-sounding family-name is not enough to satisfy his classmates, who are interested in more concrete proof of wealth, and ask questions as "What is your father?", "Is he a magistrate?" Little Stephen does not know about those things, he can only answer that his father is a gentleman.

Geography and foreign countries fascinate him already, anticipating his decision to leave Ireland. Stephen feels happy looking at a book with pictures about Holland, full of "strangelooking cities and ships" (*A Portrait*, p. 29). His position in the school, the country and the universe are another source of wonder for him. He still does not have the intellectual tools to elaborate theories about identity, and the narrative follows his childish attempts in a very honest way.

As the line of our comments here highlights the political thread, one crucial scene to be discussed in Chapter One of the novel is the famous Christmas dinner scene which takes place precisely when Stephen, as the elder brother, is first allowed to take part in it. This is a solemn occasion, and he is dressed accordingly. The adult members of the family are all there: his father Simon, his mother Mary, his uncle Charles and their friend Dante Riordan. There is another guest, Mr John Casey. Everything is going well at first, but then a terrible argument issues, involving those two combusting ingredients, politics and religion. Stephen lacks the context of the discussion, but he understands that his mother is trying to keep the peace, his father and Mr Casey are for Parnell, and Dante (who used to have a brush for Michael Davitt and another for Parnell at her dressing table), is now for the Church and against Parnell. Religion and Politics seemed to go together Church in the past, but now it seems as if they parted and one should take sides. Dante defends the blindly, and states that it is the duty of the

priests to interfere in politics and tell the people what to think. Mr Dedalus and Mr Casey would rather have the priests worry about God's businesses only. Mrs Dedalus tries to calm them down while Uncle Charles only complains this is "too bad," and worries that Stephen is listening to it all.

The more they argue about the Parnell, the more heated they get. Mr Simon Dedalus and Mr Casey complain that Parnell has been abandoned, but Dante insists that, as a public sinner, he was not entitled to lead the Irish people. The tension rises, and they make a last effort to avoid arguing, more because of Stephen, but when Mr Dedalus tries some small talk, he is received with a passive-aggressive silence, and he cannot help saying his Christmas dinner has already been spoiled. Dante proceeds with her attacks to the point of hysteria, and the irony of her opponents is followed by more aggressive responses. At one moment, the narrative shifts to Stephen's struggle to follow the argument. About Mr Casey, whom he likes a lot, he thinks "…why was he then against the priests? Because Dante must be right then" (*A Portrait*, p. 39).

But Stephen also remembers his father's opinion about her: "…that she was a spoiled nun, and that she had come out of the convent in the Alleghanies when her brother had got the money from the trinkets and the chainies. Perhaps that made her severe against Parnell" (*A Portrait*, p. 40). Also, Dante did not like Eileen, who was very dear to him, and that is an important reason for his decision about what side to choose in the future. Sensual passions over religious dogma, very much his style.

After Stephen's conscience's brief escape the dialogues return, with Mr Casey telling an anecdote about a spit. With Simon's support, they resume the ironic tone about when he met on a train station a drunken old lady who was bawling about Parnell's mistress, Kitty O'Shea, the one who caused Parnell's political downfall. The old woman offends Kitty O'Shea with a name Mr Casey cannot repeat at a dinner table, and Mr Casey in order to silence her, spits into her eyes the tobacco he had been chewing.

After that anecdote the aggression returns, and with insults and fists clashing at the table, Mr Casey, pressed by Dante to choose between God or Parnell, claims "No God for Ireland. We have had too much God in Ireland. Away with God!" (*A Portrait*, p. 44). That is too much for Dante, who stands up briskly and leaves the table, shouting from the door: "We won! We crushed him to death! Fiend!" (*A Portrait*, p. 44), and slamming the door violently. The dinner section ends not with a bang but a whimper: Mr Casey sobs and cries bitterly, and Stephen sees tears in his father's eyes as well.

3.2 Money and Lust

As Stephen grows, and his family decays financially, he feels estranged from them. As it happens with teenagers, Stephen feels disconnected and isolated. "He had not gone one step nearer the lives he had sought to approach nor bridged the restless shame and rancour that had divided him from his mother and brother and sister" (*A Portrait*, p. 111). They appear very little in the book, in fact, mostly by allusions. In order to help them, Stephen takes part in some school contests, which he wins. He gets thirty three pounds for an essay and his participation at an exhibition. With the money he helps at home, not only with material goods: he takes them to the theatre, in an effort to approach them to his world. During some nights they go and see foreign plays, eat imported chocolate, and soon the money is spent with those extravagancies.

Stephen, like his father, lacks financial discipline. This can be taken in the negative light, indicating that he has no savings, no plans for the future, and squanders what he gets in search of immediate pleasure. Or in the positive light: without Stephen's money, the family would not have experienced the exquisite pleasures that art, culture, and elaborate food can grant. Around this time Stephen discovers another kind of pleasure that at the same time will torment him and make him blissful: eroticism. He starts to wander the streets of Dublin and wish for sex, which in that culture can also be called sin: "He wanted to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin" (*A Portrait*, p. 113). While in *Stephen Hero* the boy makes a clumsy and grotesque proposal to Emma for

them to have sex and sin together, in *A Portrait* he keeps Emma discreetly at the background, and concentrates the sin part in the prostitutes.

Stephen meets one on the streets, and goes to her bedroom, where he has extravagant emotional reactions like weeping and staying in dumb silence. Also, he refuses to kiss her, even when requested to. He refuses to bend to kiss her - the very arrogant and stubborn young man who embraces physical lust and intellectual elaboration, but has problems dealing with emotions and acts of kindness. He is tormented by the intensity of his desire, but seems to ignore the values he learned from the priests: "He cared little that he was in mortal sin" (*A Portrait*, p. 112). He wanders the streets, and when desire gives him some pause he fantasises about *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the Romantic book he loves.

The reference to Dumas' story of betrayal and revenge is not gratuitous at this part of the novel. Both Edmond Dantès, the protagonist of the novel, and Stephen, have a perfect start in life, but then suffer a blow. In Stephen's case, this blow is represented by the bankruptcy of his family, which causes him to be removed from school. As to Dantès, he is betrayed by friends, loses his fiancée and is sent to prison for many years because of some political plots. Eventually, Dantès manages to escape and find a treasure on Monte Cristo. He then goes back for revenge, returning as the Count of Monte Cristo, to find his former fiancée Mercedes married to the friend who plotted his imprisonment. This Mercedes is the woman Stephen fancies in his wanderings. The estrangement from his family, country and church acquire heroic tones through the story of this Count, whose refusal to fall in love again is equated to a noble gesture of someone who has lived enough adventures.

In the same paragraph, Stephen remembers another literary hero who returns form the exile to reach his goals: Claude Melnnote, from the play *The Lady of Lyons*, the one he took his family to see. *The Lady of Lyons*, also known as *Love and Pride*, is a melodrama written by Edward George Bulwer-Lytton in 1838. Those literary allusions are important for Stephen in two senses. First because they serve a cathartic purpose involving his sexual impulses, which are both very strong and considered sinful and forbidden outside marriage, according to himself, to his Church, and to the morality of the society he is raised within. Second, because this world of imagination operates as haven which distracts him from the degraded and

decadent reality his family are now immersed in. From such moments of peace amid the storm, the ideas of exile and refusal start to take shape in Stephen's minds.

Both in *A Portrait* and in *Ulysses* there are references to how Stephen refused to comply with something his mother asked him at her deathbed, that he kneeled and made peace with God. By the end of *A Portrait* refusal becomes a predominant trait in Stephen's personality, sometimes at a high cost. His affirmation as an artist demands this refusal. Ironically, in spite of the notion that to become a priest a man must leave his family for a higher family, i.e., mankind, in Stephen's case, deciding to become a priest would mean the economic salvation of his family. He would be, in both senses, the "father" figure to provide for their sustenance. Stephen, however, chooses not to become a priest - and consequentially not to rescue his family - because he has a higher task to accomplish, a sacred cause to serve, the cause of art. The God Stephen serves is the God of Art. As Joyce did.

Stephen's adolescence is marked by unbalance. He moves in fits, sometimes through periods of complete self-restraint, and other times completely throwing himself into sensual fulfilment. Out of the seven capital sins, the two Stephen has greater difficulty in dealing with are lust and gluttony. His is a very Catholic reaction: he does not seem to see other alternatives than diving blindly into sin or denying sensual pleasure through the mortification of the senses.

The chapter on the Jesuit Retreat is very heavy. After his sensual adventures, he listens to sermons thinking that every word of them is meant directly at him as a sinner. A deep religious crisis follows, and he goes to confession, the ritual in which the repentant sinner reveals his sins to a religious authority who hears, gives advice and establishes what must be done as penitence in order to purify the sinner. That is what Stephen does: he confesses masses missed, lies, gluttony, vanity, anger, disobedience…then he finally confesses his sins of "impurity" with himself and with women. The priest, with an old and weary voice, tells him he is too young for that kind of sin, and that sin is the cause of crimes and misfortune, and that if he keeps committing that sin he "will never be worth one farthing to God" (*A Portrait,* p. 165). He must pray to Mary for help when temptations come.

Stephen leaves the confession feeling relieved, peaceful and purified. The beginning of chapter 4 shows his efforts to reach beatitude and grace through self-imposed discipline and mortification of the senses. In spite of his efforts, Stephen has trouble controlling his anger as well as his lust. Then comes one important moment of the book: he is called by the director and asked if he has a vocation for priesthood. He admits having thought about it, but when a real offer appears, he has to reason and put everything in his life into perspective. And that is the moment when the artist is called to take over, and for the artist the sensual pleasures are not something to be ashamed of: they are part of his inspiration. A scene which represents this is the one in which, after bearing with so much self-imposed restraint about practically everything: women, food, intellectual pleasure; he simply lets everything go and gloriously rolls on the floor fighting the classmate who dared suggest that morally impeccable Tennyson was a better poet than Byron, the immoral, depraved, dissolute author who was crossed-out in the Catholic *Index.*[5]

3.3 Stephen's Interlocutors

As mentioned before, the tone of *Stephen Hero* is more personal and emotional, and the narrative point of view is closer to the point of view of the protagonist. There, Stephen Daedalus has to deal with a peculiar kind of censorship, when his lecture about Ibsen upsets the priests, not because it is popular or pseudo-intellectual, but because it is blasphemous. Stephen is accused for using his intelligence in a deviant way. Joyce and Stephen seem to share the same opinion about the Church: it is intellectually respectable, but wrong in its focus and actions.

In *A Portrait* there are many scenes showing Stephen's relations with the Church. The whole of the third chapter is dedicated to the torture of his religious fervour. In the first part of chapter 4 he tries to mortify his senses and become a more pious man, but unsuccessfully.

[5] The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was a list of prohibited books, issued by the Catholic Church from 1559 until 1966, when it was finally abolished by Pope Paul VI. The *Index* aimed at protecting the faith from immorality.

What Stephen cannot control, in spite of all the self-imposed discipline, is his anger. When the director of the school proposes that he become a priest, he is at first tempted to, but finally refuses the idea because "His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders…He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others"(*A Portrait*, p. 184). The solitary way of the artist was becoming clear to him. In the final chapter of the book Stephen develops his aesthetic theory, taken from his reading of Aquinas, one of the most important philosophers in Christianity.

Both in *Stephen Hero* and in *A Portrait* Stephen presents his ideas mostly through dialogues with the priests or his college friends. His interlocutors are built almost as an excuse to expose Stephen's ideas, yet they can, like in theatre, demonstrate a solid character only through speech. It is curious that in a novel which is famous for its use of interior monologue, the dialogues have such a high importance. Of course we could reduce these characters to mere elements in Stephen's conscience, but even so they show consistence enough to be treated as proper complex characters instead of only allegorical or symbolic.

All language implies the existence of an interlocutor. Sometimes this other with whom we are having a dialogue is explicit, and sometimes they are not. Stephen's dilemma is that he is dialoguing on the one hand with a Greek and European tradition of thought, and on the other hand with his immediate companions who do not follow the implications of that tradition (as if his dialogues were in fact monologues or soliloquies). His effort in the explicit dialogues of the book is to try to build bridges between his ideas and his friends, and at the same time to destroy the ties that still bind him to some of the strongest characteristics and values of his community. The dialogues work as bridges and as the means of his isolation.

If as a child Stephen only listened to and observed the disputes of the adults, like in the Christmas scene, as he grows into a teenager he starts to have his own arguments with the world. Especially after his religious crisis that takes the whole of chapter three, Stephen's voice appears more than his thoughts. The dialogue with the confessor is the precursor of the voices that will be shown, and the entrance to university contributes to that, permitting that he has qualified interlocutors as well as intellectual refinement. The final part of the book, written in the form of diary entries, well exemplifies this. From the moment Stephen becomes

the master of his own history and destiny, he also becomes the owner of his voice, when the character, so far narrated in the third person, becomes the first-person narrator in the diary entries.

The first interlocutor to be mentioned is Davin, who appears as Madden in *Stephen Hero*. He is the naïve nationalist, the simpleton with a good heart, the only person at the university who calls Stephen by the familiar form of "Stevie". The nickname Stephen gives Davin is not honourable: "tame goose". Yet, it is this simple figure who provides Stephen with an interesting story. Davin confesses his confused feelings for a strange woman who had invited him into her house when her husband was away, which Davin refused. The story has great impact over Stephen, who has never been called to a strange woman's bed himself, and who cannot tell for sure of his reaction if that was the case.

Faithful to Irish mythology and to the Roman Church, Davin represents another course Stephen is eventually to reject: the Gaelic classes Davin attends are closely connected to the folkloric and dance groups which hosted the meetings of the beginning armed arm of the *Sinn Féin*. Stephen is reluctant to embrace Irish nationalism for its contrast to his cosmopolitan ideals and for the way it was traditionally used in Ireland. Not even the genius of Yeats could convince him otherwise. A strong sentence said by Stephen to Madden in *Stephen Hero* marks this position very clearly: "It seems to me you do not care what banality a man expresses, so long as he expresses it in Irish" (*Stephen Hero*, p. 230). The Irish peasant as an idea does not please Stephen at all. He is immune to the idealistic view of a rural and authentic culture which would fight the Sassenach. To Stephen, "English is the medium for the continent" (Idem, p. 231), so he has no scruples in using the language of the invader to his own purposes, distorting it, playing with it, instead of isolating himself in an insular mentality. Nonetheless, it is through Davin that some elements come to Stephen's conscience. Even with all his restrictions to what Davin represents, he cannot help feeling affection for Davin, the person, the friend. He enjoys his dialectal way of talking, and the sincerity of the respect Davin has for him.

The next interlocutor Stephen meets condenses in one person the Roman and the Sassenach: it is the Dean of the university, at the same time an Englishman and a priest. In *A Portrait* he is

not properly named, but in *Stephen Hero* he is called *Father Butt*. Differently from Davin, the Dean is armed with intellect and sagacity, and he questions Stephen about his artistic intentions. In *A Portrait* Stephen finds him smart enough but unenthusiastic, without marks of joy or pain. The attitude is coherent with the Dean's stoic views, as we can infer from his like of Epictetus. The discussion turns to the use of words according to "the tradition or to the marketplace" as Stephen points out. They are talking about a simple object like a "funnel", which in Ireland was called a "tundish", but they are also talking about the power of owning and dominating a language, and all its political implications. The situation itself is quite confusing: an Englishman converted to the Catholic Church, living in Ireland, who does not know the meaning of a word from his own language and thinks the Irish invented it. His interlocutor, Stephen, an Irishman who thinks English is a useful means to reach his goals, and who does not feel comfortable with the cold friendliness he dean shows him.

This is the moment Stephen realises his relation with the English language: "The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine" (*A Portrait,* p. 215). The four words chosen as examples are significant. *Home,* the nation. *Christ*, the Church. *Ale*, at the same time fun, relaxation and alienation. *Master*, no doubt who was the master then. The Irish accent will never pronounce these words the same way as the British, phonetically, semantically or symbolically. Stephen then thinks "I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech" (*Idem,* p. 215). While Stephen thinks this, the Dean goes on about the aesthetic discussion they had started before, no longer engaging Stephen's attention, and Stephen silences and excuses himself to leave the room. The dual function of the dialogue, of approximation and estrangement is very clear in this section. Also, the dialogues activate the conscience of our main character, working as triggers to the interior monologues.

If things did not flow as expected with the Dean, the conversations with the friends from college have a different tone: friendliness and irony permeate them. It is Lynch who will give Stephen the opportunity to expose his aesthetic theory. The boy who swears in yellow, to Stephen's delight, ends up being an attentive interlocutor for Stephen's most important thoughts, the ones who will define him as an artist. Even without total attention or comprehension, Lynch does his best to follow Stephen's ideas, with irony: "If I am to listen to

your aesthetic philosophy give me at least another cigarette" (*A Portrait,* p. 236). Lynch has the function in this difficult theoretical part to work as the not-so-smart guy with whom the reader can relate and consider themselves smarter than he, while trying to understand Stephen's point, much like a Watson to the genius of Sherlock Holmes. He speaks the language of the common man with some smartness, differently from the very academic and arid speech that Stephen develops in this dialogue. Also, he provides comical relief, something missing in the next interlocutor. The content of the dialogue will be best analysed in the next chapter, in which I deal with Aquinas's aesthetical theory.

Through Lynch we have access to Stephen's intellectual elaborations, but it is through Cranly that we have access to Stephen's heart. Cranly, who keeps the same name in both novels, likes to express himself in Latin. He is the one who hears Stephen's confessions about his problems with his mother and religion, thus being something like Stephen's closest friend. Their discussion starts with Stephen mentioning the argument with his mother because he refused to make his Easter duty (i.e., confession). Cranly does not understand why Stephen is so revolted against everything, and suggests he should stay in Dublin and live a material life as a butcher, using his poems to wrap pig sausage. Not having been called to the vocation of the artist, Cranly represents the common man who tries and fails to understand the needs of the artist. He thinks it is too lonely and useless to live like Stephen intends, and sympathises with Stephen's mother, who feels the same. Cranly asks directly: "Do you love your mother?" (*A Portrait,* p. 273), and Stephen answers, shaking his head "I don't know what your words mean" (idem). Stephen supports his refusal of motherly love saying that Pascal, Aloysisus Gonzaga, and Jesus himself, somehow neglected their mothers, to which Cranly responds, "Pascal was a pig". Stephen's psychological issues only come to make his search for the artist's path more complex, and Cranly functions as someone who puts him against the wall with those delicate questions.

Religious beliefs are the other topic about which Cranly and Stephen disagree. Stephen is sure of his break with the Church, although he still respects it. Cranly asks if he wants to become a Protestant, and Stephen says, "I said that I had lost the faith, not that I had lost the self-respect" (*A Portrait,* p. 275), and he adds, in a prejudiced way,: "What kind of liberation would that be to forsake an absurdity which is logical and coherent and to embrace one which is illogical and incoherent?" (idem).

Stephen respects Cranly, but starts to get suspicious that he could be interested in Emma, which adds tension to their constantly off and on friendship. Cranly's aggressive behaviour toward his friends could be explained by his unease about her. Nevertheless, it is to Cranly that Stephen confesses that he must leave Ireland. Some of the novel's most famous sentences appear in their dialogues, as if the counterbalancing remarks from his friend were necessary for Stephen to formulate his *Non Serviam* creed: "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe" (*A Portrait,* p. 281), which expresses Stephen's revolt very plainly, and its continuation "…my home, my fatherland or my church". The weapons Stephen determines to use from now on are "silence, exile and cunning".

In Stephen's final diary Cranly is associated with Saint John the Baptist, the precursor, because he is the son of an old woman and because he eats belly bacon and dried figs, which are similar to the saint's diet of locusts and wild honey. What is not explicit in the diary is: if Cranly is the precursor, then who would be the saviour? It would have to be Stephen himself, the martyr, the one who came to break the old law. But such a thought would not please Stephen at all.

3.4 Stephen's Poem

After much dialogue and theoretical elaboration, Lynch announces to Stephen: "Your beloved is here" (*A Portrait,* p. 245). That is the moment when the passionate young man meets the thinker and the poet, and "His mind, emptied of theory and courage, lapsed back into a listless place." (idem). Stephen was annoyed and jealous because of the attention Emma had been giving to a priest, and wonders if he had been too harsh with her. The next sequence of chapter 5 shows his effort as a poet composing a villanelle for his muse, whom he associates with the image of a bird.

The poetic form called villanelle was popular in the English speaking world in the 19th century. It had a very stable form, which Stephen follows rigorously. Also, it was a dance,

which suited Joyce's taste for music. Stephen's struggle to write the poem is interesting because it is an occasion for Joyce to illustrate his ideas about art with his own production. Edgar Allan Poe used his masterpiece *The Raven* to do the same, in a very logical and reader-friendly way. Joyce, through Stephen Dedalus, is a little more obtuse.

Written around 1900 for his lost collection of poems *Shine and Dark,* the piece was one of the few that Joyce kept, probably for considering its quality superior to the ones he destroyed. Along with the diary and the dialogues, the poem is a part of the novel in which Stephen's voice is heard without the mediation of a narrator. This is the final result as shown on the book: (p. 254)

Are you not weary of ardent ways,
Lure of the fallen seraphim?
Tell no more of enchanted days.

Your eyes have set man's heart ablaze
And you have had your will of him.
Are you not weary of ardent ways?

Above the flame the smoke of praise
Goes up from ocean rim to rim.
Tell no more of enchanted days.

Our broken cries and mournful lays
Rise in one eucharistic hymn.
Are you not weary of ardent ways?

While sacrificing hands upraise
The chalice flowing to the brim,
Tell no more of enchanted days.

And still you hold our longing gaze
With languorous look and lavish limb!
Are you not weary of ardent ways?
Tell no more of enchanted days.

The composition of the poem began when Stephen woke up in the dawn after having experienced in a dream or a vision "the ecstasy of seraphic life" (*A Portrait*, p. 247). It was like a revelation, a transcendent experience, similar to the ones found in several religious traditions. He compares imagination to a virgin womb to be filled by Gabriel himself.

Interesting thing: the form of the villanelle only appears after Stephen had written the first verses, when he felt "the rhythmic movement of the villanelle pass through them" (Idem, p. 248). He did not think of writing a villanelle at first: it was the form that best suit his intentions after he had started.

After a very lyrical passage describing Stephen's inspiration, the narrative calls the attention to mundane details like Stephen looking for paper and pencil to write down his ideas and finding a pack of cigarettes. Then another association of objects is made to lead the memories to his beloved: the flocks of the pillow he is using remind him of the lumps of horsehair in the sofa of her parlour, where they used to meet. The narrative passed quickly from the transcendent inspiration to the materiality of everyday objects, and to memories of a dear person.

In his memories he was playing Elizabethan songs for her, and in that single moment his heart was at rest. The magic is broken when he hears the voices of other people, and remembers where they were: in the house "where men are called by their Christian names a little too soon" (ibidem, p. 249), and where he does not belong. In *Stephen Hero* that house is named "the house in Donnybrook", a place where young people socialised, and where they discussed, played games and sang. In *A Portrait* the house does not receive much attention though, and Emma's presence is the only thing that matters.

The next image in his memory is that of her dancing in a carnival ball, and her hands touched his lightly but her eyes averted his and she said he was a stranger then. He said sarcastically that he was born to be a monk, and she called him a heretic, and danced away from him. The monk image reminds Stephen of the priest he is jealous of, because he thinks she is interested in him, and he gets angry: "Rude brutal anger routed the last lingering instant of ecstasy from his soul" (*A Portrait*, p. 251). Anger breaks her fair image, and the distorted reflections of her spread in his mind. She is the flower girl, the kitchen girl who sang next door, a girl who had laughed when he stumbled. She is all the girls whom he had desired and loathed.

The next paragraph brings a sentence that could be used for Emma, but also for Mary, for the church or for Ireland: “His anger was also a form of homage” (*A Portrait*, p. 251). Especially when that anger comes from unrequited love, or from desire not fulfilled. Stephen explicitly assumes on the same page that Emma was “a figure of the womanhood of her country”, and he resents the fact that she would reveal her soul to a peasant priest like hers, instead of him, who was a priest of the eternal imagination.

The Eucharistic image brings his confused mind back to the poem, and he goes on to write another tercet. The narration reveals that the last time he had written verses form her had been ten years before, after they had a close conversation on a tram. He considers sending the verses to her, but changes his mind. He pities her, and in very sexist sentences, he thinks of “the strange humiliation of her nature” and “the dark shame of womanhood” (*A Portrait*, p. 253).

Before presenting the full version of the villanelle to the reader, the narration makes explicit that desire for Emma is leading Stephen in the making of the poem. The primitive force of desire for a woman is what initiates the whole process, and all the sophistication and symbolism come after that. He thinks of her nakedness and how it “yielded to him, radiant, warm, odorous and lavishlimbed” (*A Portrait*, p. 254).

Now let us concentrate on the poem itself. The speaker addresses a person right at the beginning of the first tercet. As Stephen had just been through strong feelings for the girl, one can presume he is writing for her only, but there is more here than a simple passionate confession of a teenager. Before the verses are introduced, the narrator of the novel says that “In the virgin womb of imagination the word was made flesh”, and mentions Gabriel in the virgin’s chamber, making it clear that it is Mary who is being addressed in the poem. The ardent ways would be the flame in her heart when visited by the angel.

According to Robert Scholes’s analysis of the poem (SCHOLES, 1964), the chronological order of the traditional theological explanations is subverted, and Mary is the cause, not the consequence of the fall of the rebellious angels. Her figure is associated to that of Eve, and

Jesus to Adam. Mary, like Molly in *Ulysses*, is the primary "yes" that generates life. If she is the lure of the fallen Seraphim, she is present in a historical or theological moment to which she would not normally belong.

The second tercet indicates the possible human level of the ardent ways with the reference to men's hearts ablaze. The fire that consumes the hearts is the same that inspires artistic creation, a human act. As the person addressed could be Mary, Eve, or Emma, one can expand the idea to the female principle which at the same time fascinates and revolts Stephen. Such a mix of fascination and revolt is clear if we consider another woman invoked as a possible inspiration to the poem, the one who called Davin to her cottage. Stephen heard his friend's story with fascination and perturbation, and the image of the woman who called a stranger to her bed when the husband was way reappears in his imagination. If she was the lure, then the poet would be the fallen seraphim, the devil.

The next tercet brings images of the church ritual: the smoke, the chalice, the Eucharistic ritual. Those images bring back the idea Stephen had of himself as "a priest of the eternal imagination transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everlasting life" (*A Portrait,* p. 212). He, as the masculine principle, is similar to both Gabriel and Satan, the fallen angel: they are all attracted to the virgin's chamber.

The idea of the Virgin Mary as a temptress could seem merely blasphemous, but Scholes refuses that idea stating that the poem is not *merely* anything. That is only one image that gives a peculiar tone to the rest of the composition. It is not the main focus. Scholes emphasizes how medieval Joyce's mind is at this point, with its imagery, types and tropes, and his fusion of the feminine principles of Eve and Mary as attractive to the masculine principle.

There is, however, one element which is not explicit in the poem, and which brings a different flavour to all that Christian mythology: the woman from Davin's story. She brings the Celtic mind to the villanelle. Davin refused to sleep with her because he was a decent man, but also because as a countryman he knew she could be something beyond what she appeared to be.

Immersed in the Celtic traditions as he was, he could not have ignored the fact that she might be a fairy. Pagan mythologies use the image of the temptress who destroys a man's life quite often. In Celtic mythology there is a fairy called Leanhaun Shee (fairy mistress), who offers her love to the mortals. If they take her, they become her slaves, but if they refuse her, she becomes their slave.

The Celtic tone would not please Joyce because of all we have seen here, but in spite of that, it is not absurd to say that through Davin's voice that world which Joyce repudiated is present at his work, as well as the whole Christian theology, which he also rejects, forms the centre of the villanelle. We must not forget also that Stephen's virgin temptress, Emma, was an active member of the Gaelic League and a Catholic.

Rejecting the female principle means affirming the artist, independently of how sexist it may sound: his mother, her religion, Emma, and Ireland herself in the shape of a woman, all were eventually rejected by Stephen one way or another. The artist is the one who can resist easy temptations and fly above the others with full conscience of his powers. He is able to celebrate his own mass, using his own symbols, chosen from whatever tradition suits his interests best. The ardent ways of earthly pleasures and kind obedience are no longer adequate for him, even if he is still struggling against them. However, his rejection is not a total one: he is inspired by female beauty, whether by Emma or by the girl on the shore, and he does not scorn the Virgin completely. There is still a hint of homage in the apparent blasphemous ways of the poem.

3.5 The Diary

The use of a piece of journal or a diary was not new in literature. There were novels which were fully written in that technique, or in the form of letters. According to Arthur Ponsonby, a diary is "the daily or periodic record of personal experience and impressions", and the two leading features of the genre are intimacy and periodicity, characteristics that we will find in Stephen's diary. (PONSONBY, 1923, p. 25)

In *A Portrait* the journal appears in the few final pages of the book, in a very concise way. Right after his long dialogues with Cranly, the final section shows Stephen's voice in the entries that start on March 20 and go until April 27. The style is telegraphic, and he reflects on the events of the day. If his voice had appeared directly in the dialogues and in the poem, it is here that Stephen will finally have an expression outside the frame of a third person narrative. Stephen Dedalus, in his final act of revolt against the world that contained him, assumes the voice of the narrative and gets ready to leave, or take flight. One of the characteristics of a Bildungsroman is the moment when the protagonist has to break with the past to assume a new identity, and that is what he is doing here.

As mentioned before, the first person introduces a different elaboration of time in the novel. The entries are dated, precise, and time seems to be at the same time running out and being more controlled by Stephen. In the rest of the novel the time indications had been vague, following some moments in the life of the protagonist very loosely. Intimacy, the other characteristic of the diary genre, is also present, even if in a ciphered way. The few pages of the diary contain confessions beside difficult references, which has put off many readers, who have considered it a true anti-climax to the novel.

One of the paradoxes of the genre is that because it tries to control time in such a tight way, it becomes difficult to be finished. A diary, for its own characteristics, hardly ever allows the progression of a narrative to a denouement and an ending. Introducing that dangerous form exactly in the final pages of a novel was certainly a tough decision to make, especially in the beginning of the 20th century.

Michael Levenson in his elucidating article "Stephen's Diary in Joyce's Portrait – The Shape of Life" (LEVENSON, 1985), discusses Stephen's inability to give a closure to things. He states that Stephen's decision to leave is affirmed many times in the diary and in his conversations with Cranly, but it does not become a fact, and ends up creating a tradition in itself. On April 16 Stephen writes "Away! Away!" (*A Portrait,* p. 288), but after ten days he is still there writing entries for the diary again. In Levenson's words "Stephen's intention to break with the past is evident, but that intention, restated from day to day, acquires a past of

its own; his romantic revolt threatens to become a tradition". The puzzlement about endings had appeared other times in the novel: as a schoolboy, Stephen worried because he did not know where the universe ended, and in his dialogues with Cranly he gets struck by Cranly's tone of closure and reopens the discussion.

Levenson affirms that the refusal to give a closure to things is a powerful motive for Stephen, and the cry of the aspiring artist for a perpetual crossing of the limits, a "resolute march to the end of the universe" (idem). At the same time it might be a risky position: that of exhaustion for too much repetition. In one of the last sentences of the diary Stephen says "I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience". The huge number could imply that he had already encountered it a couple of times, or that many others had encountered it before him. In either case, his act of individuality is a persistent repetition.

Throughout the novel there are several patterns of repetition: the verses of the villanelle, some verbal constructions like ""First came the vacation and then the next term and then vacation again and then again another term and then again the vacation" (*A Portrait,* p. 89) and other indications of series of patterns that put Stephen in a position of someone who, after doing something for the first time, would often repeat it. The priest in chapter 3 asks in the middle of a sermon why after he had fallen for the first or the second or the third or the fourth or the hundredth time, he did not repent.

The vital question proposed by Levenson (what is the shape of life?), would meet different answers if we considered the tradition of the Bildungsroman and *A Portrait*. The tradition of the genre is one of growth and of development towards an end. Stephen's patterns of repetition throughout the novel suggest a different shape: instead of an ascending one, a serialised one. The final diary would be the place where both patterns meet, and we see the "disturbingly ambiguous image of a young man finally becoming an artist for the millionth time" (idem).

According to Levenson, an evident source for Stephen's diary is Turgunev's novel *The Diary of a Superfluous Man*. Many coincidences indicate that: the protagonist of Turgenev's book

starts his diary exactly on March 20, and the diary sows his last days of life, while Stephen's one shows his last days in Dublin. The concept of Superfluous Man itself, which was influential in the 19th century in Russia, finds parallels in Stephen Dedalus. According to Ellen Chances, the superfluous man

> refers to an individual, perhaps talented and capable, who does not fit into social norms. In many cases this person is born into wealth and privilege. Typical characteristics are cynicism, disregard for social values, and existential boredom. Typical behaviors are gambling, romantic intrigues, and duels. He is often unempathic and carelessly distresses others with his actions. (Chances, 2001, p. 112)

The common characteristics are clear: from cynicism to disregard to social values, form lack of empathy to distressing others. The Irish superfluous man has his own ways though. While the Russian model could be seen almost as a nihilist or fatalist, our Irish counterpart affirms life instead of denying it. Turgunev's protagonist has a famous passage in which he says "Farewell, life!". Stephen's version in the diary appears as "Welcome, O life!" (*A Portrait*, p. 288). Other details confirm the similarity and the influence of Turgunev, but for the reader who is unfamiliar with his book the diary is still very complicated.

An example of that difficulty is the account of a dream, on the entrance from March 25,

> A long curving gallery. From the floor ascend pillars of dark vapours. It is peopled by the images of fabulous kings, set in stone. Their hands are folded upon their knees, in token of weariness and their eyes are darkened for the errors of men go up before them for ever as dark vapours. (*A Portrait*, p. 284)

The dream has no context or comment, it is just thrown there. Levenson observes that the elements present in the dream had already been introduced in the narrative. The "errors of men" had been commented in chapter 3 when Stephen went to confession. The word "vapours" appears twice in the diary and twice in chapter 3, and it is associated with the

Christian liturgy. In the confession scene there is a “soft whispering vapour,” while in the dream it becomes dark. In the confession Stephen receives a “token of forgiveness” of the priest, while in the dream the hands of the kings are folded in “token of weariness”. In the confession the hands of the priest were “raised above Stephen”, and in the dream they are folded upon the knees of the kings. What do all those inverted references mean? That the dream is a re-elaboration of the confession, and a subversion of it. Levenson affirms that “the startling method of the diary is to look past conscious recognitions in favor of subterranean relations established among words themselves”. (LEVENSON, 1985, p. 1025).

The other obscure parts of the diary could be submitted to similar scrutiny, but I will cease with that one for its significance in a book that has so many spots where one could stop and stay speculating for hours.

4 HOW TO BUILD AN IRISH ARTIST

"I'm gonna make me a big sharp axe
Shining steel tempered in the fire
I'll chop you down like an old dead tree
Dirty old town, dirty old town"

Ewan MacColl, *"Dirty Old Town"*

4.1 The Artist

The word *artist* is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as: "someone who creates things with great skill and imagination". The skill, i.e. the technical dominium of a form of expression, is associated with the imagination, the deeper view of the artist, their abilities as seers or as intuitive creators of possibilities. In broader terms, we could say the concept encompasses the romantic and the classical definitions. Throughout the centuries, the Western world has dealt in different ways with the figure of the artist. They have been patronised, ostracised, celebrated, suspected, despised and tolerated in different times and locations. Plato did not allow them is his *Republic*, while Aristotle found some good use for their skills. The Catholic Church found a place for them inside theology, especially in Thomas Aquinas' conceptions. Painters, writers, sculptors and musicians have throughout the centuries been gladly accepted by the church, as long as their work proves to be devotional enough.

As previously mentioned, in the 16th century the Catholic Church released its first *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, the index of forbidden books. Works were censored because of immorality, or supposedly wrong ideas like the scientific works of the astronomer Johannes

Kepler or the philosopher Giordano Bruno, who was burned at the stake for his works. The list of artists, scientists and philosophers in the *Index* is huge, and many of them are now considered among the best in their areas in the Western world. People like Descartes, Victor Hugo, Diderot, Francis Bacon, Immanuel Kant and John Milton, just to name a few, were listed there. Preposterous as it may sound to us nowadays, there were times when being in the *Index* meant trouble, if not risk of death. That is an extreme example of the conflict between the freedom of the artist and the constraints imposed by his environment.

The emergence of the bourgeoisie and the decline of the power of the Church in the 18th and 19th centuries brought about a new kind of relation between the artist and society. The emerging class needed to affirm itself against the traditions of nobility and clergy, and a new artistic sensitivity was required, along with new modes of thinking and making science. The bourgeois values, centred more on the individual than on God or the tradition, allowed the emergence of artistic expressions which valued the genius, the spontaneous and untamed creation, the expression of one's talent against the pressures of the real world, even if it was precisely that real world which offered the conditions to form that kind of art. In the 19th century artists were patronised, pampered, marginalised or overlooked, depending on their ability to insert themselves among the influential people, and their financial conditions.

By the end of the 18th century in Germany, a new style of novel emerged: the Bildungsroman, (from Bildungs = education, formation, and Roman = novel), a novel which centred on the coming of age of a character, and their struggles to find an identity and a place in the world. The first example of this genre is Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, about the life of young Wilhelm Meister, a son of bourgeois parents who falls in love with a woman and with theatre, thus abandoning his family to pursue a self-seeking journey, travelling through Germany with the theatre company. He eventually realises he does not have "the call" to be a real artist, and leaves the group to join a secret society called the Tower Society (Turmgesellschaft), made of aristocrats who have the goal of helping young people with some talent to fulfil their potential. The society "educates" him, and this is told many times with irony and a critical view of their influence in the life of the youngster. In spite of that, the book became a landmark and is considered the founder of the genre.

A young person who faces the challenges of abandoning childhood and entering adult life is a subject which can originate countless works of art. Starting in Germany, soon this tradition spread through Europe and beyond. A subgenre of the Bildungsroman which deals specifically with the formation of an artist is called Künstlerroman (From Künstler = artist). According to Larissa Rohde: "A subset of the traditional Bildungsroman is the *Kunstlerroman*, which is the story of an artist's growth to maturity. Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is among the most outstanding examples of this particular subdivision of Bildungsroman." (ROHDE, 2005, p. 65)

The Germans have great works in this genre, like Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* and *Tony Kröger*, or Herman Hesse's *Demian.* In English some examples of Künstlerroman are Charles Dicken's *David Copperfield* and D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. The latter is particularly interesting because it was published just one year before *A Portrait*, and there are several elements the two novels have in common. Some of these relations will be commented in the following sub-section, because of the peculiar approximations involving the works of these two authors, apparently so different, but who share so much in common, especially if we consider *Sons and Lovers* and *Stephen Hero*. The nine years of lapidating that separate Stephen Dedalus from Stephen Daedalus and from Paul Morel is what I refer to when I name this chapter `The Making of an Artist`. In subsequent sub-sections the style of Joyce will also be contrasted to the style of Ibsen and Eliot.

4.2 The Rival

Lawrence was born three years after Joyce, and was a vigorous opponent of his novels. Due to the fact that they were always quoted together as the two most important and banished writers of the time, it was natural that some curiosity about each other's work appeared. Lawrence read some parts of *Ulysses*, and realised how much it did not suit his taste. He wrote in his letters that Joyce bored him stiff, because he was "too terribly would-be and done-on-purpose, utterly without spontaneity or real life" (LAWRENCE, 2000, p. 548).

Joyce's conception of modernity was incompatible with Lawrence's search for spontaneity and real life outside the industrial world.

According to Paul Delany, one of the reasons for Lawrence's distaste of Joyce was that he considered Joyce was an heir of the 19th century's style of realism. Lawrence included Joyce along with Flaubert as a creator of works of art which had a narrow and nihilistic view on human condition. He could not stand the idea that humans were only pretentious small ants in a cruel and arbitrary universe, as he read from Flaubert and from Joyce's works as well. Delany states that there is a significant difference between Flaubert and Joyce, unnoticed by Lawrence: while Flaubert has a deep conscience of the tragic underneath the surface of conventions, Joyce has a conscience of the comic behind the appearances. His use of language and symbols is more subtle, and has different goals from those of Flaubert and the realism of his generation. Quite possibly Lawrence did not give the attention that Joyce's novels required, a problem which is not his own only: for decades, many readers have not had patience to dive into Joyce's work for prejudice, laziness or for having heard so much about him that if they do not find something absolutely wonderful in the first pages they simply give up.

Lawrence thought that *Ulysses* was obscene and ridiculous, and intended to create the anti-Molly in the character Lady Chatterley: "It is filthy. . . . This *Ulysses* muck is more disgusting than Casanova. I must show that it can be done without muck." (LAWRENCE, 2000, p. 167).

Although sexuality is a strong force in the work of both authors, the treatment of the theme could not be more different. Joyce describes the details of body functions without scandal or taboo, and in spite of that, ends up causing scandals. That point puts him close to 19th century realism, and this irritates Lawrence, who conceives sexuality as a form of knowledge and transcendence, a form of liberation. However, Joyce does not limit himself to physical description. Many times the sexual acts or thoughts of the characters come with a symbolism of the transcendent, whether through artistic beauty or religious revelation. When Stephen meets the woman on the shore, or when Leopold Bloom also meets a woman on the shore, there is art and religion intrinsically connected with the pure manifestation of the flesh.

Lawrence considers sex as something very important, but his religious background interferes in this aspect. He is a Calvinist, and as such, used to classifying people and actions as "elect" and "preterit", or the chosen ones and the forsaken ones. Sex means liberation, but not all forms of sex, and not done by everyone. Joyce, on his turn, does a very Catholic thing: he embraces all kinds of deviant behaviour in terms of sexuality as human, and acknowledges all of them as legitimate, hence Lawrence's accusation of perversion and immorality. Independently from how they regard sexuality, both writers have this in common: they preserve religion. Even if it exists just to allow heresy, both of them need religion in their world view and artistic conceptions. Another way to say this is to say that both of them are as exposed to the religious mould as all Victorians are.

The fact that Joyce is Irish and Lawrence is English also adds to the controversy. Joyce writes on one of his letters that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is "propaganda in favour of something which, outside of D.H.L.'s country at any rate, makes all the propaganda for itself" (ELLMANN, 1975, p. 359). Perhaps he did not know that Lady Chatterley had been conceived deliberately to be the anti-Molly.

If they disagree so about realism and sexuality, their views about the role of the artist have some similarities. *Sons and Lovers* is about a budding artist, just like *A Portrait*. There, we get to know the story of young Paul Morel, who, like Stephen Dedalus, has autobiographical characteristics. Paul Morel was born in a mining town in Nottinghamshire, a county in the East Midlands of England. His father is a heavy drinking coal miner, and his mother is a more refined woman who aspires to get back to the middle class, for her marriage was below her level and due to her physical passion for the man. Paul has a strong connection with his mother, and a cold and antagonistic relation with his father. When he is a teenager he tries to develop his talent as a painter, and escape from the industrial world represented in the coal mines. His idea of freedom is "to earn his thirty or thirty-five shillings a week somewhere near home, and then, when his father died, have a cottage with his mother, paint and go out as he liked, and live happy ever after". (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 89)

This Oedipal dream is threatened when Paul meets Miriam, a farm girl from his parish, with whom he has intellectual conversations, and to whom he feels attracted; but his mother despises her, which puts him in a serious conflict. The whole story is very Oedipical. Paul has difficulty having sex with Miriam at first, both because of his proximity with his mother and because the two women are very similar to each other. After he finally has sex with her, he feels that she is not fit for him, and loses interest in her, when he meets a second love interest in Clara, a divorced woman with feminist aspirations. He also has sexual relations with her, but the emotional ties with his mother are not harmed in this second relation.

If in *A Portrait* the formation of the artist occupies a central part in the novel, in *Sons and Lovers* it is secondary in relation to the passions involved. However, it has a significant importance, considering that those were the years that mirror what the mature artist D.H. Lawrence would become. The elements that characterise Lawrence's future works are already present: his distaste for the industrial world, represented by the brutality of his father; sexuality as conflict and as liberation, as a way to put people in contact with the "real life" of nature, uncorrupted by modernity; class and gender issues; artistic aspirations.

The novel was his first major success. The mother issues are elaborated in the novel form perhaps for the first time, as young Paul longs for the disappearance of his father and for the monopoly of his mother, living in an idyll with her, and with his painting, in a haven of protection and love. However, his own desires for other women make him somehow understand his father's ways. Somehow, for his mother's interference is too strong to be overcome. He gets the sexual attention from his lovers, but he cannot commit himself wholeheartedly to a relationship.

Both Paul and Stephen have a difficult start with sexuality. Paul gets irritated with Miriam because she is "always fondling things". He thinks she could have some more "restraint or reserve" in her affections. His mother's idea that Miriam absorbed his love in a bad way was assimilated by him. After some time living an idealised relation, Paul convinces Miriam to have sex with him, but the experience is frustrating for both. He dislikes the way she gives in as to a sacrifice only for his sake, and ends up finding consolation in his new friend Clara,

who is older and more experienced, and with whom he can have a more satisfying and a little more mature sexual life.

Stephen has his first relations with prostitutes whom he refuses to kiss. The outcome for both Paul and Stephen is guilt at first, for different reasons. Paul feels guilty for his mother, and Stephen for the remaining ideals of the Church he still had in his mind. Miriam supports Paul's will to be an artist, while the prostitutes Stephen sees have no interest in his ambitions. Emma, on the other hand, serves as a muse to his artistic enterprises, but they do not have any kind of physical relation, at least not explicitly shown in the book.

Stephen is closely connected with his mother, but denies her influence along with his package of denial: religion, fatherland, family. He refuses his mother's love by refusing her religion. Stephen becomes an orphan on both sides, symbolically, as the father figure is connected to the idea of a God, and the maternal image is related to Ireland ("The Old Woman"). Paul Morel is also an orphan, in a way, at the end of the narrative, metaphorically, because he has rejected his father from the start, and because his mother dies (or is arguably killed by him, through euthanasia) as the novel closes. Both Stephen and Paul have mixed feelings about each of his parents, both undergo a personal crisis of identity relating their role as a person and as an artist, and both decide to leave their place and start anew at the end of their journey.

Lawrence was an exile, like Joyce. He left England after the end of World War I because his wife Frieda (a divorced German woman who had been sister-in-law to the Red Baron) was *persona non grata* in his country, and spent the rest of his life travelling through different countries like Italy, Ceylon (present Sri Lanka), Mexico and The United States. They only returned to England for brief visits. But Lawrence's philosophy and his style differ significantly from Joyce's. Lawrence had some proximity with the extreme right wing of the political spectrum. He was hostile to democracy or any kind of egalitarianism, like socialism or even liberalism. Dictatorship for him was not something bad, in fact it was something that would suit the lower classes very well.

While Joyce's work has a clear influence of music, Lawrence was more influenced by painting. He was a painter like Paul Morel, and held an exhibition in London which was very controversial, with accusations of indecency. Many artists supported him, but the police had to interfere and remove some of the "indecent" paintings. Lawrence could only recover his paintings after promising not to display them in England anymore.

4.3 The Theory

Stephen Dedalus is highly influenced by Aquinas' theories on aesthetics. When at college, he tells his friend Lynch about them. Just like young Joyce, Stephen pursues his own ideas based on the achievements of a thinker and a Saint from the canonical tradition of the Catholic Church. In *Stephen Hero,* Stephen's ideas appear in the form of the essay he writes and presents at college. Remaining chapter 12 shows a summary of the essay called "Art and Life", as well as Stephen's efforts to convince the president of the college to let it be read to the public.

There is a tone of self-irony when the narrator admits that "His Aesthetic was in the main 'applied Aquinas' and he set it forth plainly with a naïf air of discovering novelties" (*Stephen Hero*, p. 77). Having established his possible immaturity and naiveté, he goes on to classify the arts into lyrical, epical and dramatic and to prove that the literary form is "the most excellent" of all because the other forms of art do not show that division clearly. He defines the artist as "the mediator between the world of his experience and the world of his dreams – a mediator, consequently gifted with twin faculties, a selective faculty and a reproductive faculty" (*Stephen Hero* pp. 77-8). The supreme artist would be the one who could equate those faculties, the one who could transform his artistic views, selected from his experiences, and give it an adequate shape or, in his word, "re-embody" it using the artistic forms available.

The perfect coincidence of the artistic faculties is called poetry. He defends that the classical concept is not a historical accident, determined by the circumstances of a definite time or

country. Classicism for him is a "constant state of the artistic mind". Such a concept is scandalously distant from modernity and the 20th century, a very interesting paradox for a writer who is considered an icon of the modern novel. He has his reasons to advocate a classical concept, though: to attack the romantic idea of art as an "insecure, unsatisfied, impatient temper" (*Stephen Hero* p. 78), one who is alienated from the present reality and lacks solid bodies in its compositions. Also, one which he identified as belonging to some of his political opponents in Ireland.

Between those conflicting positions, he says that the critic is the one who is able to "approach the temper which has made the work", (*Stephen Hero*, p. 79) which is a very 19th century fashion idea, with all its biographical and personal assumptions. Most literary theories in the 20th century refused the idea of approaching the mind of the artist to concentrate on the work of art itself, its construction, symbols, and discursive nature, as we cannot "enter" the mind of anyone.

Stephen follows his essay criticising the idea that art has any purpose such as instructing, elevating or amusing, which he considered too puritan. Of course here he has in mind the nationalists who only admit art if it conveys some kind of political message in favour of their ideals. Proselytism is something that could make a work of art sterile. The artist does not need to compromise to authority, censorship or ideological impositions because he is above all those. He is a creator of beauty, and the poet is "the intense centre of the life of his age" (*Stephen Hero*, p.80), and through him the spirit of man makes a continual affirmation.

Aquinas' influence on Stephen is more explicit in the dialogues of *A Portrait*. There, Stephen explains to Lynch that Aquinas' definition of Beauty is the apprehension of what pleases, or *Pulcra sunt quae visa placent* (beautiful is what pleases the sight). Sight here is understood as the artistic view, not only the perception of the senses. Real art is static and not kinetic. Improper art excites kinetic emotions like desire and loathing, but real art is static, because in contact with it the mind is arrested above desire and loathing. Artistic sight then is a static characteristic.

In order to reach Beauty, three things are needed: wholeness (*integritas*), harmony (*consonantia*) and radiance (*claritas*). A work of art is a unique and indivisible object apprehended by the mind, and there are boundaries between what the work of art is, and what it is not. Whether in space or time, the work of art can be differentiated from what is not it, which is the idea of *integritas*, or wholeness. Of course such an idea comes from the Aristotelian concept of identity, and it had already been criticised at least one century before Joyce, with the dialectics of Hegel and Marx, and by Joyce's contemporaries with the conceptions of art as something as fragmented as modernity itself.

After the synthesis of its identification, Stephen continues to explain, the next step is the careful analysis of the object, with its details, elaboration and complexity, which form its *consonantia* or harmony. The artist is under control of the process, and their skill helps in the careful elaboration of the work. Harmony is not about being cute, it is about being powerful and well-constructed, with the elements arranged in a way that suits the whole of the artistic object. When reading *Finnegans Wake*, many people have difficulties finding *consonantia* there, but in Joyce's mind surely it is absolutely full of harmony.

Aquinas´s concept of *claritas* at first baffles and confuses Stephen, because it could lead to the idea of some sort of symbolism or idealism, a shadow of some reality which was not that of the artistic object. After giving it more thought he realises that Aquinas means *claritas* as a revelation of the object itself, with what it has of unique: its "whatness", its exclusive qualities, which are perceived by the artist. So, in the lyrical form of art, the artist presents that vision in "immediate relation to himself" (Stephen's words, even though it might imply that the artist has to be necessarily a man). In the epical from, he presents his image in mediate relation to himself and to others, and in the dramatic form he presents his relation in immediate relation to others. Those forms would be a necessary division, and there is progression from one to another, starting with the lyrical form.

To Stephen, those forms are often confused, even in the "highest and most spiritual art" of all, Literature. The conscience of a moment of emotion of the lyrical artist evolves to the conscience of the others in the epical form. He mentions the English (anonymous) ballad *Turpin Hero* about the legendary English highwayman Dick Turpin, as an example in which

the artist begins lyrical, in the first person, and then shifts to the epical and the third person towards the end:

On Hounslow Heath as I rode on
I spied a lawyer riding before
"Kind sir," said I, "Aren't you afraid
Of Turpin that mischievous blade?"
Oh rare Turpin hero
Oh rare Turpin oh

Said Turpin, "He'll ne'er find me out
I've hid my money in my boot"
The lawyer said, "There's none can find
I hid my gold in my cape behind"
Oh rare Turpin hero
Oh rare Turpin oh

As they were riding past the mill
Turpin commands him to stand still
Says, "Here your coat I must get off
My mare needs a saddle cloth"
Oh rare Turpin hero
Oh rare Turpin oh

This caused the lawyer much to fret
To see how simply he'd been took
But Turpin robbed him of his store
Because he knew he'd lie for more
Oh rare Turpin hero
Oh rare Turpin oh. ("Turpin Hero", c. 1790)

The immediate relation to others in the dramatic form is reached when the artist has accomplished a level of domain of the creation which makes him be like a God. In a famous sentence of the book, Stephen says that the artist "like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails" (*Stephen Hero*, p. 245). He has abandoned his adolescent lyrical attempts, and has also overcome his union with the others in the epical form, to impersonalise himself as a God, above human trivial matters. Such abandonment may sound arrogant and foolish, but it also represents Stephen's and Joyce's firm decision to leave Ireland. Lynch, after Stephen's explanation, asks: "What do you mean by prating about beauty and the imagination in this miserable and Godforsaken island? (*Stephen Hero*, p. 245).

However isolated he might be, Stephen Dedalus found good company in the man he considered the greatest dramatist of all, the God who dominated the art to perfection: Henrik Ibsen. He says that "the minds of the old Norse poet and the perturbed young Celt met in a moment of radiant simultaneity" (*Stephen Hero,* p. 40). To Stephen, Ibsen's spirit moves behind the impersonal manner of the artist. The Greek poets, the Chinese theatre, the Hindu traditions, even Dante and Shakespeare, whom Stephens considers great in their ways, do not reach the greatness Ibsen does.

4.4 Ibsen in Ireland

Ibsen is listed in the (in)famous *Index* of forbidden authors, and so should be despised by both the common people and the members of the Church. In fact, most people in Ireland did not even know who he was. In *A Portrait*, the character of Stephen's mother practically does not appear, but in *Stephen Hero* we can have a better idea of her. There, among other things, she gets curious and wants to read one of Ibsen's plays. Stephen is surprised at her interest, and she tells him that when she was younger she was quite a reader. That situation changed completely after the marriage, and books became strange elements in her life. When she tells Stephen she wants to read Ibsen because she wants to "leave this actual life and enter another – for a time" (*Stephen Hero,* p. 86), Stephen does not understand her and criticises her, arguing that "Art is not an escape from life". Actually, to him Art with a capital A means just the opposite, the very centre of life.

In spite of their theoretical disagreement, Stephen's mother reads some of Ibsen's plays and enjoys the character Nora Helmer, from *A Doll's House,* for being a feminist. Among all plays, her favourite was *Wild Duck*, the tragic tale of a family who keeps many lies in the closet. The play moves her deeply, but Stephen is not ready to deal with her feelings, and does not encourage her to talk about them. She ends up acknowledging that Ibsen is indeed a great writer, much to Stephen's surprise. She says the plays are not immoral, as the Church wants them to be thought, and even adds that "Ibsen has an extraordinary knowledge of human nature". (*Stephen Hero,* p. 87) She has more sensitivity and capacity to understand great

works of literature than Stephen gives her credit for. Stephen's father, seeing his wife's interest in literature, does not want to be left behind, and starts reading Ibsen too. He chooses the play *League of Youth* for its name, but finds it tedious and cannot keep the reading. It is not the immorality or scandal or the Church's censorship that stop him, it is only his own lack of interest, possibly for not being a reader for many years.

The reaction of the priests is a different one. When Stephen presents his essay to be read, he meets the censorship of the president of the college, who does not want to allow the public reading of the paper. The accusation is that he quotes atheistic writers like Ibsen. The president says that based only on what he has heard, because he admits not having read Ibsen's work. Stephen manages to convince him that Ibsen is not the monster people suppose, and that his work could be at least curious, even to a priest. The president is baffled that Stephen uses Aquinas to support Ibsen, considering this paradoxical and juvenile.

The president's tone is condescending and superior, but Stephen's ideas interest him. He admits they are well constructed, even if he does not agree with them. Finally, he lets Stephen read it to the public. The response he gets is, not surprisingly, a negative one. After Stephen's reading, his interlocutors attack him with hostility, because they think his paper was conceived in an anti-religious spirit.

None of the attackers read Ibsen, but they are all positive about his being a sinner not worth being read. For them, only pervert and immoral people would read Ibsen. Also, they are tired of the "foreign filth", and suggest Stephen Daedalus should read national authors instead. Mr Daedalus, as they call him, is accused of this terrible thing: cosmopolitism. They say "You must first have a nation, before you have art" (*Stephen Hero,* p.193).

To Stephen's surprise, it if Father Butt who stands for him, saying his paper was of value, even for the ones who did not agree with him, because it brought about good discussion. He sustains that Stephen had misinterpreted Aquinas, though, and the chairman concludes the session by promoting a vote of thanks to Stephen for his instructive, if controversial, paper. The vote is passed unanimously, but with no enthusiasm. Art with a capital letter, Aquinas as

an authority on aesthetic philosophy, the Artist above the nationalities, those ideas were too outrageous to the common sensibility of the audience.

Exile as a way of life is also something that Joyce borrows from Ibsen, in the acts and in the form. Just like him, Ibsen in exile used to read the Norwegian newspapers daily, from the headlines to the printer's trademark at the end. His literary work never ceased to portray his native land, in the same Italy that would some years later receive Joyce and Nora.

It was there that Ibsen wrote his most famous and controversial plays, like *Ghosts*, which not only mentions, but also deals with the dissolution of a family because of syphilis. That happened one year before Joyce was born, in 1881, and that kind of fact helped to create his image of blasphemous and immoral. The very mention of a venereal disease would be a shock, but going deeply into it and its effects was too much for the 19th century mentality.

In *An Enemy of the People* Ibsen gets more radical. The controversial elements, which were just details of background in the previous plays, become the central point. By opposing one person to an entire community, and implying that the individual who stands alone against the mass is more often right than wrong, he gained the fury of many around Europe, and obviously the applause of young Joyce and young Mr Dedalus, who was elaborating a theory of rejection of social values and isolation of the artist. Stephen, the martyr, and Dedalus, the artificer, would join in the applauses.

Ibsen also rejected the folkloric tendencies of the Norwegian national revival, and went on to create his own art. Joyce's conflicts with the Irish nationalists seemed to him a repetition of all that Ibsen had lived in Norway. In Joyce's pamphlet "The Day of the Rabblement", written in 1901 when he was only 19, he has the conscience that history is repeating itself. In the pamphlet he complains about the proposed national theatre for Ireland, saying that "Half a century ago the note of protest was uttered in Norway and since then in several countries long and disheartening battles have been fought against the hosts of prejudice and misinterpretation and ridicule" (JOYCE, 1901).

Another similarity between Joyce and his master is the difficult relation they had with their parents. The question of identity and unity, which was crucial to Ibsen, had a complication in the idea of being someone's son. In Joyce's novels we follow Stephen struggling against his mother's religion, and we see him feeling guilty for not kneeling on her deathbed. Ibsen in the play *Brand* shows a priest who conceives all things in black or white, and hates to compromise. He is an idealist who wants to save the souls of everyone, following rigid schemes. He also refuses to go and see his dying mother, but he has a strong reason: she had robbed her husband's money and offered it to Brand, who obviously refused it and did not go to her for considering she was not a dignified woman.

The unity of character is for him the most important thing in a person's life, as a famous quote of the play says: "What you are, be fully, not in parts and pieces" (IBSEN, 1988, p. 357). Compromising means letting oneself become split into pieces, even if the consequences of one's choices are extremely difficult. Ibsen derived such an imperative from Kierkegaard's philosophy, and he puts the hero's ideals in conflict against the demeaning influence of society, with its claims for sexual love, respect for the parents and other allegiances which would deflect him from the right path.

The estrangement with the mother is part of being integral and unified, both in *Brand* and in Joyce's portrayal of Stephen Dedalus. Stephen's mother could never be accused of robbing, of course, but she is closely associated with the religion Stephen has to deny in order to become an artist. Brand's mother, on the contrary, is denied for not being in accordance with the principles of the religion which Brand professes. In both cases what matters is the principle behind the action, the ideal that has to be kept and which is above human conventions and even above human relations, no matter how close they are.

4.5 Eliot and Tradition

Another contemporary of James Joyce who is an artist and has a significant and influential theoretical production is T. S. Eliot. Admired as one of the greatest poets in the

20th century, he is also a controversial critic, and he also changed his life drastically, becoming a British citizen and joining the Anglican Church. An expatriate like Joyce, and a man constantly fighting for money, Eliot also had another thing in common with Joyce: their common friend Ezra Pound was always trying to help them in many ways.

Eliot and Joyce met in Paris, and the anecdote says that Eliot took Joyce a parcel sent by Ezra Pound, which contained a pair of shoes. Displeased, Joyce kept his Irish dignity paying the bill of the dinner, and treating Eliot as politely as he could. Joyce even helped Eliot when the latter separated from his wife.

However, Eliot's ideas in terms of art were somehow distinct from those of Joyce. Eliot proposed a fertile and dynamic dialogue with the whole of the tradition of Western thought and literature in order to find one's own poetic voice. When some new element appeared to break the tradition, it was actually only accommodating some tensions and rebuilding the past, which is perceived differently at each generation. Tradition then is renewed, and incorporates the apparently breaching element, and by doing so, transforms itself.

Joyce also made large use of the Western tradition of thought, literature and myth, but in his own way. While Eliot, an American who reinvented himself as Englishman, intentionally joined the Anglican Church to be a part of a great tradition, Joyce, an Irishman who abandoned his country to embrace continental Europe, viewed tradition as something useful, but never ceased to mock it and treat it irreverently. Both created works of art which are complex and full of references, but the tone each one uses is very peculiar.

Eliot, in his seminal text "Tradition and the Individual Talent", compares the artistic creation to a chamber containing two gases and a filament of platinum. When the two gases are mixed in the presence of the platinum they form sulphurous acid, but this only happens if the platinum is present. The platinum in the analogy is the mind of the artist, and the two gases are the emotions and feelings that are part of the human experience. The mind, like the platinum, is unaffected by the experience, and the more perfect the artist the more he is able to separate the mind that suffers from the mind that creates.

Joyce, through Stephen Dedalus, had said that the mind of the artist had to separate the kinetic emotions from the static ones, which form the real material of art. Eliot's analogy is similar, and he adds that 'the poet has, not a "personality" to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality' (ELIOT, 1921). If Stephen wants the Artist to be like a God pairing his fingernails above ordinary life, Eliot sustains that the artist also should not simply express his personality, but dominate a medium, be the master of his craft by knowing and working hard on the tradition.

Eliot praises Joyce's use of myth in *Ulysses*, and states that other modern writers should do the same: "In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him" (ELIOT, 1921). Both writers have been accused of trying to escape from history by taking refuge in myth, a representation of human actions which is static and closed in itself, far from historical contingences. Of course, they would not deny the accusation, but they would question the form in which the criticism is executed, as if there were some kind of hierarchy in the matter used by the artist, with History with a capital H being more important than myth. If fragmentation and despair are recurrent characteristics of the artistic production of the twentieth century, using a mythological structure as a scaffold to give the illusion of respectability to a novel would be a terrible mistake committed by Joyce and Eliot.

Joyce's irreverence when dealing with myths, though, puts him in a position which is at the same time similar and distinct from that of Eliot. According to M. Keith Booker, "Joyce's comparison between the world of modern Dublin and that of Greek myth may well be more in the spirit of Marx's contention that modern technology had rendered myth irrelevant to the real world than of Eliot's belief that modernity had rendered the real world irrelevant to myth" (BOOKER, 1995, p. 20). Eliot's reverence to the myth and the past cannot find a parallel in Joyce. One of the causes of paralysis in Joyce's Dublin was exactly the *Dubliners*' inability to question authority and escape from the past. Eliot searched for order and stability as a source of security in an uncertain world, and found those at the church, the same institution which for Joyce was the source of paralysis.

The problem of the modern world for Joyce would not be a lack of order, but an excess of it, especially the order embodied in the British coloniser and the Catholic oppressor. Thus, he does not use myth to recreate order in a fragmented world, as it sometimes appears to be the case in Eliot. Joyce uses myth to reinvigorate the present, and by associating a mythological hero like *Ulysses* to an ordinary man like Leopold Bloom, he is bringing the mythical reality closer to the life of common people. In fact, far from escaping from the nightmare of history, Joyce is filling his texts with it, but in a subversive way. Irony, mockery, cunning and exile are always his favourite weapons.

Booker compares Joyce's attitude towards religion to those of the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, but advises that we should not be innocent enough to read Joyce's works as mere exemplifications of some socialist or anarchist theory, as well as we should not read them as an example of oasis of order in the chaotic world, as Eliot would prefer.

4.6 What was Built

To the excess of order, submission and passiveness of his countrymen, as well as to their failed reactions in the forms of blind nationalism and provincialism, Joyce's solution in the shape of exile to more cosmopolitan places was not the only one, and it was not a simple escape like that of a coward: he used his skills as an artist to challenge conventions, to laugh at the puzzlement of his interlocutors, to deconstruct thought, language, morality and to relativize the relations of power. There was something heroic at his exile and his work as a writer, as well as something quixotic or simply stubborn.

Because of the nature of his enterprise, Joyce could not have done it without preparation. He needed the theory to be ready for the criticism of the enemies and to strengthen his own work. He also needed a great deal of knowledge of literature, history and myth. When Lawrence criticised him, his answers were never foolish or naïve, but the product of careful thought. Even living in the condition of constant struggle with financial needs in and out of Ireland, Joyce needed to have time for his own preparation and production.

The character Stephen Dedalus is the result of that elaboration. In the exile, Joyce had the time and the perspective of the distance to refine the raw material he had produced in *Stephen Hero* and create a young man who had many things in common with the author himself, with his tentative theories and his failed experiences with love and sensuality, as well as with his friends and family. *A Portrait* is so full of those personal experiences that many times it becomes difficult to differentiate the narrator, the author and the character. Some accounts of people who knew Joyce give a clue to some of those differences. In the book *The Joyce We Knew: Memoirs of Joyce*, (O´CONNOR, 2004) we hear from his contemporaries what a prankster Joyce was, and how he turned everything into a joke, especially his own poverty. If Stephen Dedalus many times sounds arrogant or aloof, James Joyce is usually portrayed as a joker, the man with a good mood who sings, magnetises the audience and makes everyone laugh.

Joyce, the author, used a lot of biographical material, as well as exact descriptions of places and names. But he was also a master of manipulation of the language, so all the seemingly realistic material is in service of his purposes, and many times they are there to confuse more than to illustrate. There are many possible layers of significance in a small detail, so the question of authorship here is always a delicate one. It has to do with language.

If English is a foreign language imposed on the Irish people, then the only way to make it a little more theirs is to stretch the language to its limits, fuse it with others, arrange it and distort it in a way that it will be something else, but not something created by a collective conscience: it is the work of an individual artist. Joyce forged his own English, and then gave it back to England, to Europe and to the rest of the world as the product of an exiled Irishman. And by doing so, he ended up changing not only the language, but the image of his country. The Dublin in the stories and novels became for many foreign readers the only Dublin they know.

CONCLUSION

Society builds an artist, and the artist builds himself. Then the artist builds the society he has in mind, and by doing so the society where he lives becomes different. That is what happened to James Joyce and Ireland. Joyce was so deeply affected by the historical forces of his time that he had to flee to other lands in order to organize himself. There, he created the body of literary work that in many ways defined how Ireland would be seen by the world, and by herself. From an outcast, an inconvenient adolescent-like rebel, Joyce became a national symbol, a hero in many ways greater than his own idealisation of Parnell, a source of pride and celebration in Ireland and for Ireland. His statue is on North Earl Street near the Spire. The pavement of all ends of the city centre in Dublin displays hundreds of bronze plaques with quotations from *Ulysses* that refer to actions that take place at those spots. *Bloomsday* has become the greatest national date, and also the city's greatest source of tourism. Joyce's name is always present when one has to discuss Irish literature.

In the remaining pages of this thesis I will refer to Dublin as it is today, a very different place from the city we meet in Joyce's work. It is now a prosperous place, with happy citizens. This improvement, as all Irishmen recognize, owes much to the strife of the great artist and patriot that James Joyce proved to be. If he walked through the streets of Dublin today, James Joyce might have laughed to know that the people call his statue "The prick with the stick" because he appears with his cane, the same way people call the statue of Molly Malone "The Tart with the Cart" because of her cleavage. He also would have been pleased to know that the paralysis and provinciality that he attacked so much did not remain as an unmovable part of Irish life. Some lessons have been learned from his well-polished looking-glass. Many generations after him, the Irish have not abandoned the Catholic faith, but the influence of the Church in the life of the people is very different: much looser and more restricted. Especially among young

people, as it happens in many other Catholic nations like Spain or Brazil, the attraction of the Church managed to mingle gradually with other mundane affairs: malls, technology, sex, liquor, sports, music…Ireland nowadays is much more of a lay country than it was in Joyce's time.

The politics also changed considerably. An independent country since 1922 (except for Ulster, which is still part of the United Kingdom), Ireland still had decades of violent clashes against the English throughout the 20th century, only achieving peace in the final decade of the century, as a result of difficult and long negotiations. Much blood has been shed from both sides, and it might take some generations to fully erase the rivalry and suspicion between the Irish and the English, but things are changing.

After the prosperity in the 1990's and the first decade of the new millennium, Ireland now faces the economic crisis in Europe still proud of its achievements as a country, a culture and as a people. Boasting the admirable quantity of four Nobel Prizes in literature (William Butler Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett and Séamus Heaney), the country has established itself as a centre of cultural production, especially in literature, theatre and music. Dublin receives many tourists from all over the world, and its streets are full of life and movement. Buskers, school groups, businessmen, common people, bikers, joggers…the pulse of life in the city that has been there for more than a thousand years is vibrant and strong. The memory of the past is alive, as well as the confidence in the present and the hopes for the future.

Joyce's memory is preserved in two official institutions: The James Joyce Centre and The James Joyce Museum in Martello Tower. The first one is a house previously owned by Denis J. Maginni, who appears in *Ulysses* in the "Wandering Rocks" episode. There we can find exhibitions, videos, the reconstructed bedroom of Joyce, a shop to buy books and interesting objects, as well as the door of Leopold Bloom's house. When I visited it, the attendant at the shop was betraying the memory of Joyce: he was reading a book by Proust, the traitor.

The Martello Tower and Museum is the same of the famous first chapter of *Ulysses*. It also has exhibitions connected with Joyce's life and work, but as it was winter when I went there, it was closed. What was open to the public was Sweny, the pharmacy where Leopold Bloom bought his lemon soap. By coincidence, I found out that the hotel I had booked was the hotel where Joyce and Nora stayed when they visited Dublin, and it was just around the corner of the pharmacy. Arriving there, instead of a regular pharmacy, we found a second hand bookstore and a group of people sitting and reading out loud…*Dubliners*, more precisely the story "Ivy Day in The Committee Room". Each person read one page, and we ended up participating in the reading and posterior discussion of the story. They were very friendly people, and invited us to go back other times for other sessions of reading, which we did. The sessions usually ended with everybody continuing the discussion in some pub nearby.

In these discussions I had the opportunity to ask many things about Joyce, his books, Ireland nowadays and in the past, among other things. They were surprised and happy that a Brazilian knew and cared about their country and culture, and they also wanted to know about us: our lifestyle, opinions, present situation, what we think of Portugal, the coloniser. An important thing we could observe is that Joyce in Ireland is not only a matter for academy speculation. Joyce is alive and well, being read and commented by the people, being laughed at, quoted, appropriated, distorted, analysed with surgical precision or cheerful carelessness. The people from Sweny have no official sponsoring, and they get money by selling the famous soap and used books. Differently from the James Joyce Centre, which has support and a better structure, and which is responsible for events like the Bloomsday, guided tours, workshops, etc.

The people who read Joyce's books in Dublin have no problem listening to and playing Irish folk songs, or cheering for the national team in rugby or football. Nationalism is no longer an issue as it was in Joyce's time, but one can still feel some resentment towards the English in the air, especially after a couple of pints.

Ireland has also had to deal with other factors, like the immigration. Traditionally a country of emigrants, the economic prosperity brought along waves of immigrants from Eastern Europe, Asian countries and even from Brazil. It is very easy to hear foreign languages on the streets,

especially spoken by people who attend you in snack bars, shops and in the hotels. The people are getting used to the idea of a multinational and multicultural Ireland.

The book *Dubliners* nowadays has a lot of academic criticism. No longer considered a minor work, it has been submitted to a great deal of scrutiny and analysis in the past decades. The stories' rich symbolism and careful elaboration have been pointed out, and their critical attitude towards the real *Dubliners* has been assimilated with humour and dignity. In chapter 2 I showed some of the reasons for that: the gnomons, simony and paralysis which are present in the book, the influence of the Catholic Church and the British colonisation, the lack of opportunities and the provincial mind of the people, as well as their lack of colour and opportunities, all of that filtered and elaborated by a writer who had an acute conscience of himself as an artist, of his role as the devil's advocate of his society, and of the careful use of language to achieve his goals.

In chapter 3, I dealt specifically with *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and its earlier version *Stephen Hero*. Stephen Dedalus' growth and his attempts to understand and find his position in the world, as well as his efforts towards a theory of art, and his difficulty to cope with his feelings for his family and for the girl he loves.

An artist like Stephen Dedalus nowadays maybe would not suffer as much as he did, or at least not for the same reasons. Nowadays other set of factors is building other artists, and the challenges they have to face maybe have little in common with the ones Mr Dedalus did. Still, they are Irish artists, and some connection with our young hero is possible. Every artist has to make their choices, and to be able to say that they will not serve something in order to affirm themselves. The nature of the denial is a personal one, and also how intense or radical that denial is.

Chapter 4 focused on the roots of that denial: James Joyce's call to be an artist, and the implications of that. I went a little deeper on the aesthetic theory Stephen Dedalus advocates, and discussed the concepts of Bildungsroman and Künstlerroman. Also, I compared the work and the ideas of James Joyce with other important contemporary artists: D.H. Lawrence, who

tried to create the “anti-Molly” in the character Lady Chatterley, and T.S. Eliot who had some ideas in common with Joyce, but who had a completely different relation with tradition, and especially with England and with the Church.

I also pointed out how important Ibsen was for Joyce, and the huge influence the Nordic writer had on him. not only the plays and poems, but his thoughts and attitudes were of great importance to Joyce, who considered him the greatest artist in centuries, comparable to Dante or Shakespeare.

Society builds an artist, and the artist builds himself. To build oneself, one has to destroy some things in order to achieve the higher goals set. There is a price to be paid. Joyce paid that price, and learned how to fly through the nets of his society, not like an immature and impressionable Icarus, but as Dedalus, the maze builder, the craftsman.

By flying too high one can feel that the air is too rare, or have the eyes hurt. Those things happened to Joyce, but once the flight has started, stopping is not a simple thing to do. Besides being Dedalus, he was Icarus as well, especially in the youthful Stephen: the man who wore the crown of the martyr, and who was stoned by the mob for preaching his beliefs. The censorship Joyce received in Ireland, and the reactions to his books after they were published indicate that romantic tendency to martyrdom.

Joyce’s first portraits of Dublin were written with some resentment, but with honesty and bravery. The painter who painted them was a very skilled one, even if his techniques looked confusing at a first glance, and the hues of his paint a little too dark sometimes. The books are there, as part of Ireland’s legacy to literature, even if being the work of such a unique person. They have a lot to say not only to Irish readers, but to anyone who likes a good book, and likes to re-read searching for details, no matter where we are from.

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