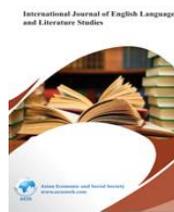




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### “I WILL NOT SERVE”: STEPHEN DEDALUS’ ANGUISHED SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS”

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#### ABSTRACT

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man has distinguished itself since its publication as a novel that traces the growth of a child from childhood through youth to adulthood. This paper investigates the impact of this growth on the character, interrogating why Stephen Dedalus’ refusal to serve his church, family and country is spoken with such papal finality. It equally investigates why the young Dedalus, trained in the best catholic Jesuit institutions of his country, given good family attention categorically rejects church, family and country all these in favour of his own very personal ideological inclinations? The paper locates Stephen’s rebellion to the very social and political sources that shape his vision of life; and his final decision of disobedience result from his inability to manage accumulated self-consciousness. The paper therefore concludes that Dedalus is ideologically motivated and his refusal to serve is the outcome of his overwhelming anguished self-consciousness, the product of a troubled growth.*

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**Keywords:** Youth, Adulthood, Anguish, Anguish, Self-consciousness, Ideology, Troubled growth, Disobedience.

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

James Joyce was born and lived at a time when science and religion wrestled for supremacy. By the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was evident that the foundation on which the morality of the world stood was being shaken by important scientific discoveries and intellectual assertions. The discoveries in natural and physical sciences called into question the very orthodox beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church in particular, but also of the entire Christian faith. These various assaults equally called into questions among other things hitherto held beliefs about the nature and origin of

creation and the very essence and meaning of life after death. The political, economic and social tensions of the times exacerbated the feeling of individualism and the belief in personal destiny.

One of the main consequences of this was the breakdown of the family unit and the brutal quest for both national and personal economic survival. Ultimately, this led at the national levels to alliances between nations, that unwittingly resulted in tensions in Europe that led to the World Wars that left an indelible mark in our collective conscience. The psychological consequences of these wars ate deep into the collective psyche of the world and gave room to all forms of human psychic disintegration. The world was therefore seen as a prison from which escape was necessary, even though to some, it remained the only place where one could define his or her self.

This picture of the world was translated into the kinds of literary personae that were portrayed in literature, beginning as early as with George Eliot (*Silas Marner* for example) in the nineteenth century. It was evident that the persona in literature was undergoing some form of transformation towards self-affirmation since it seems this was the only outlet for individuals to affirm their own personalities and give meaning to their lives. Joyce's personal life and its fictionalization in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (henceforth shortened as *A Portrait*) is a product of the social convulsion of this period. The structure of the novel, but especially its disintegrated ending is the reflection of this sick and wearied society from which Stephen wants to tear himself. The hero's disintegration like that of the text is his direct failure to come to terms with the process of maturation. Stephen develops through the three stages of childhood, young manhood and adulthood in full cognizance of the values of each; only, he fails to develop the skills that will permit him to come to terms with the difficulties of adulthood and the plenitude of ideologies that wrestle to gain space in his mind. The three stages of Dedalus' development correspond to Sigmund Freud's three stages of the human personality, that is, the id, the ego and the superego. But the maturation process at the level of the superego conflates unfortunately with the other two stages creating an orgiastic intellectual shock. Stephen's freedom from this intellectual commotion is very much dependent on the way he negotiates his relationship with family, country and religion. His refusal to serve reflects his failure to cope with the challenges of adult life-the failure to be responsible, to manage the aesthetic and the pragmatic. This is precisely the point of departure of this paper, the portrayal of the struggle to capture the essence and meaning of Stephen's ability to withstand the barrage of ideas that constantly besiege him, but also to free himself from the battle between conscience and responsibility. This is the determinant factor of his growth and eventual affirmation of adulthood and intellectual independence.

## 2. THE ARGUMENT

Joyce's *Portrait* is structurally weaved in consonant with Stephen's social self-destruction. He is caged in the middle of the narrative which allows him no chance to escape from the stress occasioned by the opening pages and the intensity of the philosophical ideas that he is trying to push forward by the end of the narrative. Joyce opens the novel setting the stage for Stephen's childlike joy and at the same time foreshadowing the difficulty he has to undergo as an adult. Put

differently, the protagonist without knowing is thrown at an early age into the throes of a country burning with political passion and the comfort of home. The story telling that opens the novel and the introduction of Michael Davitt and Parnell through the different colours of the brushes that Stephen's governess has tells of a characteristically tense future. This tension is reflected in his environment. Observant and inquisitive, Stephen is able to recognize that the air around the school playground is both fowl and fair. He recognizes that "The evening air was pale and chilly and after every charge and thud of the footballers the greasy leather orb flew like a heavy bird through the grey light" (4). This justifies the claim that he is a "model of a creative, generative consciousness" and a "master of language", even though he is considered as "a product of heteroglossia" (Kershner, 1986). This is the more evident as the narrative advances and he becomes conscious of his linguistic and political environment. Stephen's problem is that the language he is forced to speak was someone's else before his (Thomas, 1990). This argument is affirmed by another scholar who contends that the essence is that English is used to usurp the place of Gaelic, and the colonizers struggle to avoid Gaelic so that it does not "*resubstitute*" itself for English (McDonald, 1991). The opposition in colour represents the various attitudes of the Irish and the complex nature of the conflict in which Stephen will grow and gain maturity. Stephen is in a complex world that demands toughness of spirit. The education that his parents give him unconsciously trains him to face this challenge. The image of the foggy environment given above foreshadows Stephen's difficulty and his struggle to survive. This is the id stage of his life, characterized by enthusiasm and confusion. The opening of the text portrays Stephen as a child concerned with his struggle to define himself in relation to his world. The realization that he is one element in a multitude of events and people fascinates him. It is at this stage that he poses some of the fundamental questions of life that will constitute his major argument or point of departure from the mainstream philosophical thoughts of his generation. His contemplation of the nature of God, the infinity of the universe, the complexity of trying to understand both reflect his ability to think for himself, and to take far-reaching existential decisions. Stephen comes in contact at this early stage with the annoying questions of Irish life and the inauthenticity of the purity of soul that the Irish but especially the Jesuits clamour for. The purity of his mind and the innocence of his thoughts are reflected in his fingers that are said to tremble as he undresses. However, this is precisely the source of his distress that he is made to see anything God with awe. He is in unity with home, family and church and the desire to go home tells itself out in the ruminations of his imagination. The synergy between home, church, and family is characterized by the fact of the way he interacts with Uncle Casey, his father, his governess and his mother. The culmination of this is the Christmas dinner, expected to be a moment of union where the toil of the year gives way to the joy that comes with the celebration of the memories of the birth of Christ. Incidentally, the feast of the birth of Christ is the culminating point of the birth of a new person in Stephen, even though at its elementary stage. Without knowing it, what happens in the Stephen's household on this day has far more reaching repercussion on the young Stephen as it opens his critical mind to the truth about the possible tensions that exist amongst adults but also about the underlying differences that undermine

the peace that is supposed to reign amongst the Irish people. The Christmas dinner is a theatrical display of the brutal and uncompromising differences that exist among Irish people. The intense and violent quarrel involving Stephen's father, governess, and uncle on questions of religion, morality and God undoubtedly spark off a silent rebellion in Stephen's mind. He is marveled in childlike astonishment by the brutality of the argument and the violence with which the rejection of God, the despicable betrayal of Parnell, but above all, the fact of seeing his father cry. Joyce talks of Stephen having a "terrorstricken face" (39) and ends that part of the narrative abruptly probably an emphasis on the impact that this had had on the young Stephen. Stephen is terror stricken by both the blatant rejection of the usefulness of God in a society that is so priest-ridden and where nationalists are betrayed by the very faith that they die for. There is probably no doubt that Joyce uses the Christmas dinner scene to show the daunting effect on the mind of this inquisitive mind who is "thrilled" (38) by the words used. The paradox embedded in Joyce's language hides the imminent revelation of the hero's real self, that is, the simple but complicated person that he is and will be. This opposition is equally a revelation of the tensions that characterize the setting, the issues and the people. Stephen is going to be a product of all of these but especially as Kershner argues, he is a "product of his listening and reading, an irrational sum of the texts, written and spoken, to which he has been exposed" (890). Put differently, to Kershner the structure of Stephen's consciousness follows that of the text. The Christmas party sets the stage for Stephen's rebellion in a much more profound way. In exposing the bitterness and division in the family, it lays bare the wounds of discord that have eaten deep into the fabric of the Irish society. Stephen's family like Ireland is divided on questions of religion, politics, nationalism and British colonisation. Stephen gets an opportunity to hear the debates on all these issues raised; the passion with which they are raised both embarrass and frighten him to the point of being terror stricken. Perhaps one of the greatest and shocking things he hears in his house is Uncle Casey's violent effusion "-No God for Ireland...We have had too much God in Ireland. Away with God!" (39). For a sensitive ear like Stephen's, there can be no terrible thing than this; he who is brought up in a purely Christian tradition suddenly comes face to face with the cruel reality that the idea he has been worshipping could be responsible for his country's lack of freedom. By the time Joyce takes us into the thoughts of Stephen at the next stage of his life, he is no longer the same person. His sense of criticism is sharpened by those events which have awoken him to the reality of some probable basic truths. One aspect of his life that seems touched for ever is his sense of justice. The bitterness of this failing is compounded the more in the injustice he suffers from the prefect of studies' refusal to accept that he truly lost his eyeglasses. The prefect of studies' attitude to Stephen's inability to write his lesson is strange and enigmatic. From a Christian perspective, the prefect of studies is a bully of humanity. His mere presence in the class and the reaction from students that comes with it even from Father Dolan tells of the inquisition. We are told that: "The door opened quietly and closed. A quick whisper ran through the class: the prefect of studies. There was an instant of dead silence and then the loud crack of a pandybat on the last desk. Stephen's heart leapt up in fear." (49). This is one of the pillars of Christian good behavior but whose presence

elicits terror and fear. Stephen is astounded by the prefect of studies nonchalant cruelty. Father Arnall does not make any distinction between him who is beaten for an unjust reason and Fleming who is beaten for a real crime, reason why Stephen thinks that "...it was unfair and cruel" (53). The thought that "The prefect of studies was a priest but that was cruel and unfair" (53) speaks of his early disillusionment at the attitudes of the clergy. Stephen's recollection about the errors of history and the need to correct this injustice are built on the great fact that someone, arguably Jesus Christ, has suffered this before. The courage to move forward, to report Father Dolan is the courage to take responsibilities for one's destiny. In reporting Father Dolan to the rector of the school, Stephen does a duty to memory and to justice. His victory strengthens him but also gives the way for individual action, for him to believe in himself and to consider taking bolder actions. Recollective as he is, "He was happy and free: but he would not be anyway proud with father Dolan" (60). The quintessence of Stephen's struggle is even achieved before he actually rebels against the system that has brought him up. He has found freedom in speaking out against injustice, he has held his own position against the multitude, he has been baptized into the truth that holiness is not synonymous to goodness. He has charted his own course to correct wrongdoing and he meditated on: "The hour when he too would take part in the life of that world seemed drawing near and in secret he began to make ready for the great part which he felt awaited him, the nature of which he only dimly apprehended" (64). He will not be beaten down by the abject poverty of his family, nor drowned by an overbearing religious zealotry. His is to follow the beatings of his heart and in that way determine a direction of life for himself. The formative years at home and in school, the devastating and humiliating poverty of his family give him more stamina to gauge the avenues of life on which he can tread safely. Whether at Clongowes or Belvedere, Stephen knows what he wants and is building his mind to utter the ultimate *non serviam* that is a liberation cry for him and the generations after him. His voice gets stronger in Belvedere where the education that he is given gives him the opportunity to vindicate hitherto voices of truth that seem submerged in the asphyxiating imperial environment created by British involvement in Ireland. *A Portrait* is structured in such a way that it progresses with the hero's thought. The more we get into the text, the more we meet a mature Stephen who moves from a young man struggling to come to grips with his thought to one at the threshold of enunciating his views. Stephen's trial moment is at Belvedere. It is the first time, where his feeling of frustration is intense because his school mates cannot distinguish the real poets of their land. The English teacher's essay is a test for Stephen's ability to give valid judgments on key issues of both Irish and English importance. Mr Tate's classification of Stephen's essay as heretic is in itself a non-conformist judgment on the desire to think differently from the rest of his class. The objection on Stephen's thoughts as amounting to heresy paradoxically leaves Stephen with the kind of profane joy that he will get later on when he sees the beautiful girl in the stream. The "vague general malignant joy" (84), that he feels is that of protest, but also of self-affirmation that he is being recognized as someone with his own ideas. The ensuing battle as to who is the best prose writer or poet is simply a matter to sharpen his sensibility. Stephen's choice of Cardinal Newman as the best prose writer and Lord Byron as the best poet

betrays the direction of his sensibility, contrary to his mates who more conservative, will chose Captain Marryat and Alfred Lord Tennyson as both the best prose writer and poet respectively. His tenacity in asserting that Newman and Byron are the writers one has to look up to in terms of the issues raised emphasizes his empathy with the moribund system of thought and action dependent on British view of things. His choice of the writers condemned by the British gentry and royalty as heretic is an insistence on his own philosophical bent-to wit, that any piece of writing should take into consideration the hopes of a people. His success at the part he plays in the school play intensifies Stephen's believe in himself and justifies his ardent desire to move ahead. The confidence in his actions and being are betrayed when he leaves the theatre:

Without waiting for his father's questions he ran across the road and began to walk at breakneck speed down the hill. He hardly knew where he was walking. Pride and hope and desire like crushed herbs in his heart sent up vapours of maddening incense before the eyes of his mind. He strode down the hill amid the tumult of sudden risen vapours of wounded pride and fallen hope and baffled desire. They streamed upwards before his anguished eyes in dense and maddening fumes and passed away above him till at last the air was clear and cold again. (91)

Stephen has swum to the other side of life, all he needs is the forum for self-expression. He already understands that friends, family and church are both not reliable and adequate. His attempts to redress the family's accounts fail him, his vision of what or who a good writer is not is commensurate to the average thought of his fellow comrades and his vision of who a Christian is seems to vaporize into disquieting anonymity. The world seems to move around him in abject indifference and he can only make meaning in it by defining himself against the values that he holds so dear to his own personality as an independent individual. Stephen seems crushed by the weight of this indifference, the only thing giving meaning to his life is self-confidence, and Joyce's structure carries him into a test of his pre-mature adulthood within the frame of adolescence in search of quick independence. The test of his adolescence is the sexual encounter he has. This event is the threshold of his life and strangely enough the defining moment of his ultimate refusal to conform to the ethics of self-denial. Perhaps the most defining instance of Stephen's graduation in thought and sensibility is the rector's sermon on Christian ethics and the nature of hell. That this sermon, which features in the third chapter, is coincidentally the middle of the book and is of great importance to our understanding of Stephen's refusal later on to believe and to serve. The sermon is a great mistake in the upbringing of Stephen because it rather incenses him against than bring him close to the church. The sermon however creates in Stephen a strong feeling of guilt even though at the same time it alienates him from the religious sympathy that the rector thought it would draw. The retreat gives Stephen the possibility to consider in detail his ability to relate his critical attitude to the dogmatic preaching of Christian Catholicity. The rector's sermon chokes Stephen through and through, bringing out his most hidden sense of sorrow for wrong doing. He is overwhelmed by his acts that only true confession can free him from the chains of death described by the rector. The rector's sermon tantalizing as it is is simply a storm in a teacup with the desired

goal of winning souls to the course of evangelization completely downplayed. Stephen's confession of his sins is not connected to his wish to work for the church but to be united with his maker, and perhaps most essentially to reconcile with his inner self. He knows that he can make the difference between loyalty to God and loyalty to the church both not being the same things. God is absolute, but doctrine is not, reason why he expresses joy after confession because he thinks that he has reconciled himself to God and exalts during corpus christi "...Could it be? He knelt there sinless and timid: and he would hold upon his tongue the host and God would enter his purified body"(158). The communion gives him another life and that feeling is simply great "Another life! A life of grace and virtue and happiness! It was true. It was not a dream from which he would wake. The past was past" (158). Chapter three ends on a note of Stephen's spiritual purity. He has communed with the lord; has freed himself from traumatising sin and above all this purity is his passport to truth. He can obliterate the past and look forward to an eternity of grace. Joyce closes the third chapter with an indication that Stephen has earned his freedom, having torn himself from the cloak of a blind and insipid presentation of God's world. The sermon produces quite the contrary effect because blown out of proportion; it has the texture of untruth and a myth and by implication does not excite belief. By its character, it is repulsive and psychologically asphyxiating. In its canvas, it is contemplative, thought- provoking. It attempts to impress, to pull away from God, rather than to bring the sinner closer to God. It portrays God as a wicked entity, not ready to pardon, not the almighty father. Even though the sermon is described as having a strong "rhetorical power" and reveals a strong "terrific psychological efficiency" (Reid, 1984), it will rather culminate in Stephen's strong disbelief in the doctrines of the church and thereby alienate himself from the profession. The fourth chapter of *A Portrait* is a purificatory chapter where Stephen mortifies himself so as to be free from the sins of which he is guilty. Stephen surrenders himself to "rigorous discipline" (162) in order to be united with God, but also to free himself from the burden of sin that hold him sway to the condemnation by the church. At the end of this exercise, he is apparently free and feels fortified. His prayers have won him back to "his old consciousness of his state of grace" (165). The certainty of this feeling is confirmed in his affirmation of his ability to withstand difficulties "The very frequency and violence of temptations showed him at last the truth of what he had heard about the trials of the saints. Frequent and violent temptations were a proof that the citadel raged to make it fall."(165). It is against the background of this understanding that he assumes that "- I have amended my life, have I not?" (166). The ending of this part of the chapter is a threshold for Stephen, because the author prepares him for big responsibilities. Stephen is ready to face the director of the school to respond to a great challenge-that of entering the order. Stephen's greatest test of his faith is in making a statement on the "greatest honour that the Almighty God" (171) will bestow on him. This is the God that he has to serve, that he has punished himself to come closer, but the voice of the director and his numerous solicitations do not have an impact on him. His voice and that of the director do not at any one moment relate to each other because their views of life are at variance, that is why it is easy for him to note that "the exhortation he had listened to had already fallen into an idle formal tale"(175). Stephen's greatest desire is self-

affirmation. The priesthood is good in as far as it is self-effacing, to Stephen, it is not because the director's presentation of the offer of a vocation is haughty.

The narrative does not waver in its attempts to follow Stephen's mind, it grows in intensity as it closes in to the end. The more Stephen is exposed to all types of arguments on the merit of the priesthood and the need to be very faithful to the principles of the church, the more he is alienated from those principles.

He would never swing the thurible before the tabernacle as priest. His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders. The wisdom of the priest's appeal did not touch him to the quick. He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world.(175)

More than simply wandering in his mind, Dedalus wants absolute freedom of choice and action. Propelled by the destiny embedded in his name, but also by the conclusion of his accumulated education, he is stunned by any attempts to unify him with any collective thought. He tears himself away in a bit to express this freedom as much as possible and as freely as it can be. The culminating point of his artistic proclamation is the exaltation of mundane beauty seen in his overwhelming expression of lustful praise at the vision of the girl at sea.

Stephen is carried away by the freedom that characterizes the artist. He has shed his boyhood and his imagination can begin to wonder into the abyss of life. In the depths of his psyche, he comes into contact with this irresistible angelic beauty which is in essence Stephen's own outward portrayal of his desire for the magnificent. His outpouring of joy in the exclamation "-Heavenly God!" (186), takes Stephen further from any thought and possibility of serving the Lord at the altar. In his vision he confesses his own weakness in front of this earthly beauty when he talks of "His cheeks were aflame; his body was aglow; his limbs were trembling" (186). Stephen has found a new source of worship, a new altar in the body of the woman, a new place of meditation, but perhaps and above all, a new religion.

Her image had passed into his soul forever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on! (186)

In his vision of this girl, Stephen has crossed the rubicon. He has elevated himself to the apogee of his individualism, where nothing but his counts. He inevitably enters into the mystery of the creator trying to compare with God in his presumptuous quest for creating life out of life. The vision of the girl summons him from the doldrums of sloth to which an overarching Christianity has swallowed his imagination. His earlier claims to happiness are compounded in his braveness in ascertaining the godliness of the figure he has seen precisely because "Stephen's vision of the bird-girl at the close of this section illustrates both the continuing power of the regressive force of

silence and impalpability, and the power of the epiphanic mode to undermine this regression”(Jacobs, 2000)

Stephen's boldness is Joyce's. Like the mythical character from which he draws his name, Stephen soars to inestimable heights in a bid to attain the summits of truth and to attain the kind of happiness that comes with complete self-effacement and a selfless dedication to a humanitarianism that frees the individual being from enchantment. It is easy to locate Stephen's quest in the artist's quest to give meaning to a depersonalized thought. In crying out on the beauty of the girl, Stephen frees himself from the moribund enslavement to religious or rather Christian ideal, that associates humankind's freedom to his slavery to a religious teleology that is both self-denying and self-effacing. Stephen's mind cries out to a long awaited joy as we are told that "He was unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life. He was alone and young and willful and wildhearted..." (185). He is overwhelmed by the strain of society, the uncanny pride of church and pastors and the tedious poverty of the family. At the sight of the girl, Stephen gets up from sleep both symbolically and literally. He has entered into manhood, has developed a voice of his own with which to utter the truth of his mind because as it stands he is going to swim in "some new world"(187). Dedalus's soul is already "swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings" (187). The vision is complete, Stephen can go ahead and formulate whatever theory he deems necessary. The merit of Stephen's mind is in its ability to swim through the tide, occasioning its own values and trying to insist on them. He succeeds through the muddle of ideas and attitudes to fashion a mindset for himself.

*Portrait* closes, that is, in the fifth chapter with the hero's attempts to read out his mind to the rest of us or rather to the reader. The artist has been trained, through an objective vision of the world around him to assume responsibilities for his own thoughts and actions. His debates on the major crisis of his time-intellectual, religious, national and family are the direct result of a famished consciousness in need of withdrawing itself from the moral enslavement it suffers. In the fifth chapter, Stephen bursts out completely rejecting the things which he does not like. His objection is the result of his inability to come to terms with the myriad of things that assail him. He is tortured by the inadequacy of the philosophical thoughts that existed before now, anguished by the fact of a country that destroys her own heroes, unable to connect with his family and skeptical of a religion whose practices remain to him fundamentally immoral and haughty.

Stephen is torn apart between the inert desire to be faithful to his views and the demands of his political, social and cultural environment. Even though Stephen argues that he cannot serve that for which he does not believe in, his fundamental reason still lies in the physical environment of the Ireland that he grew up in. Joyce creates a product of an age that wants to believe only in its own views of life and assert that view in all its fundamental modes. His anti-imperialism, anti-clericalism and intellectual non-conformity betray his inner desire for absolute freedom of thought and being. His belief that his "soul frets in the shadow" of the dean of studies language (205) represent to Stephen an insult to his own language. In other words when Stephen speaks of this, he is expressing his utmost anguish at being forced to think and speak in another person's language

and this definitely affects his consciousness. The sublime silence that exists between the dean and Stephen equally reflects the conflict between Stephen's mind and the overwhelming physical pressures. This is why I agree with the argument that "*A Portrait* is arguably more concerned with tracing the formation of Stephen's overall subjectivity than in following the narrow development of his artistic sensibility" (McDonald, 1991). Stephen's search for an alternate philosophy of beauty is simply his search for an understanding of who he really is and how he can make maximum use of this self-assertion. His struggles to find a way out for himself, is his struggle to find internal peace because he is torn by the turmoil of forces opposed to his ideology of life. Even though Stephen does not succeed in creating an affirmative philosophy of his own, yet he succeeds in trying to. But perhaps more than his attempts at defying Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas or rather calling into question their philosophies, he succeeds in rebelling against the norms of his society especially since he considers that "Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow" (220). He is concerned with fleeing from the nets thrown against him; "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" (220). The whole essence of Stephen's struggle for freedom is the struggle to run away from the imposition of belief systems and thoughts that are counter to his fundamental thoughts about life. Stephen is not afraid of ridicule from friends or ostracization from family or fellow Irish people. He is anguished by the innumerable forces from which he cannot extricate himself. The summation of Stephen's thoughts and anguish is in his declaration of rebellion when in response to Cranly's questions he states that:

I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning. (269)

This famous statement of rebellion is an expression of Stephen's exasperation with the world in which he finds himself and from which he must sever his ties if he intends to be free. The statement of rebellion comes towards the end of the novel, an indication that he has been able to pass judgment on his own struggles and has the courage to steer clear of the will of his nation, family and religion. Stephen's statement is a preparation of his solitary life, his decision to find his way away from the popular circle of thought that has characterized his people and his nation. Unlike the courageous and imaginative Icarus who sought wings to fly to new realms of life and the resolute faith of St Stephen, Stephen Dedalus seems to lack the mettle of both, having taken the decision of giving up on important issues on the life of his country and religion. Even though Stephen has the imagination of the mythological Icarus and the resoluteness of decision of those whose names he carries, he lacks the ability to withstand the vagaries of the community, the steadfastness to resolve the centuries old Irish problems.

The protagonist protest against the social proclivities of his society is a source of freedom for him. The structure of the novel squares in well with the internal and external conflict that shapes the protagonist's thoughts. The novel develops from an expression of the simple thoughts of a

young man trying to understand the thoughts and worries of his parents, and later his teachers' and religious authorities to the moment when he begins to fashion his own grammar of life. Stephen's complete refusal to adhere to any political, cultural or social position is the final expression of his inability to contain the psychic turmoil that destabilizes his ability to come to terms with the life presented to him by his society. His outburst is the physical exposition of the fusion of the Christian and pagan. Whether or not Stephen succeeds in creating a philosophy of his own is a different matter, but at least he has the merit of having understood the inhibiting forces surrounding him, which understanding enables him to disagree with the imposed values of British imperialism.

Joyce like Stephen ends his novel and story cunningly; it ends with a diary, a complete reflection of depersonalization. Stephen flows into his diary, reflecting himself only in the thoughts that we read. He seems at this moment completely cut off from the disabling reality of Irish life. The diary is a reflection of both Stephen's childlike emotions and his adult sensibilities. His wish to stand firm on the ideals of individualism and to dissimulate them in diary notes is another expression of his desire for solitude, but also what (Esty, 1999) Joshua D Esty describes as "the wish to escape history" (Esty, 1999) even though it is believed that "The high-flying images of the final diary entry show that Stephen, although he has taken the first steps, is not yet ready" (O'Neill, 1994). But perhaps and more genuinely, is the argument that Stephen's whole task is "to poetically interpret the world of his experiences and his dreams, using the twin faculties of selection and production to produce a new world of richness and of personal meaning. Art thus becomes a means of self-knowledge and self-liberation, and by dint of the sheer necessity to create, the artist rejects the world of his environment with a violent *"Non Serviam"* (Block, 1950).

### 3. CONCLUSION

*Portrait* as a narrative does not in any way betray the internal and external differences that tear the protagonist, his family and church apart. The narrative develops like all bildungsroman from simplicity to complexity as it shows the child developing from a simple human being in quest of education to an adult struggling to come to terms with his environment. The future man, a child in the opening pages of the text struggling to comprehend the world of adulthood with all its complication will be born at the last pages of the text when he successfully affirms his own individuality by rejecting the institutions that have given him life and shaped his thoughts. It is in this regard that one can understand the conclusion that "Joyce's view of the psychology of the artist as a young man is that the artist is born with an acute-sometimes painfully acute-sensuous receptivity" which is developed in many stages (Schiralli, 1989). The young Dedalus is a product of a convoluted environment, steep in the miasma of political myopias where the distinction between church and state is blurred, and from which the protagonist has to make a difficult choice. The formative years of the young Stephen are marred by the irreconcilable attitudes of the adults at home and the politicians in the country. The fact of Stephen seeing his father crying, of course in a patriarchal society where the tears of men are rare to be seen in public shows to the young Stephen the ingratitude of both church and state to those who fight for their survival. Without any one's

knowledge, Stephen is embittered by the selfishness of the Irish, but also by their lack of value judgment for those who have fought like Parnell to save the country from cultural and political enslavement. His later rejection to serve the nation and his comparison of it to the old sow that eats its farrow can be seen as a projection of suppressed anger. He reads from the Christmas dinner party the deep division amongst Christians represented by his father, uncle and governess on the interpretation of the bible and the value of doctrine and orthodoxy. Parnell, Stephen comes to understand is the victim of the conflation of personal selfish religious interests and an inert and inactive popular desire for freedom. By the time the author ends that chapter, Stephen has already internalized the fact of the uselessness of selflessness in Ireland.

Whether at home or in school Stephen's environment is inhibiting. The torturous punishment he unjustly receives from father Dolan continues to inform the young Stephen's beliefs and vision of society and life. It follows that Father Dolan's punishment is a reflection of the argument at the Christmas dinner. Dolan reflects a religious creed that does not seem to heed the cry of truth or that is negligent of the community's wellbeing. The imagination of the young Stephen is once more jostled by his imagination at the inability of the priest supposedly a well trained man to distinguish between lies telling and truth. This sense of injustice leaves an indelible mark in Stephen accentuating an already biased conception of the order. It is this same conception that continues to work Stephen up when he fails to please his mates about his choice for the best poet and prose writer. As he struggles to write an essay that reflects his thoughts, Stephen begins to find the words and ideas that reflect his own mind, and as early as this period, he understands that his ideas will always not find favour with those of others. But Stephen graduates from this environment stronger in his conception of his personal values and with a greater determination to be himself rather than what others want him to be. The climax of Stephen's existential anguish is the moment when he has to face the rector and make a statement on whether or not he will accept to enter the order and serve the lord. His rejection is tantamount to disowning the religious values on which even his own very ideas will be founded. No amount of preaching or exposition on the punishment of sin will take Stephen out of his views of Irish society and self-development. This refusal is compounded the more with his vision of what artistic beauty and love should be. Stephen is very anguished but also excited by his vision of this beautiful woman. This confirms his dream of becoming the artist that he has so desired to be. At the sight of the woman, he is overwhelmed and feels justified in what he really wants to become. And at this moment, the echoes of his name resound far into the depths of his conscience, and his dreamy onward movement is simply not an expression of physical flight but the exhilaration of the feeling of success. The vision of the beautiful young woman confirms his determination to follow his conscience and persist in his refusal to serve the course for which his friends and mentors think he is fit for. The ornamental picture of the girl tears his mind apart, solidifies his wild hopes for extreme freedom of thought and clears the way for the enunciation of his own philosophy of life and his systems of thought, reason why Stephen has been described as "a figure of great internal complexity" (Wilde, 1989). Stephen does not succeed in making any strong statement on the philosophies he is trying to dislodge, but succeeds however in refuting in

the most strong terms the necessity of disregarding some Christian doctrines and denying his country and family. Stephen's reaction to family, friends and state is the direct result of his being overwhelmed by a society that has refused to align to the realities of the time or that has even failed to recognize that there is such a reality. His polemical views of Christ and his seeming lack of patriotism are traceable to a problematic growth, a hostile political and intellectual environment and a family torn apart by acute poverty and ideological divisions. This is seen more clearly in the reading of Joyce's critical theory and its impact on Stephen's creative ability that "Joyce's critical system is essentially the work of a youth, seeking a liberation that would enable him to create, and if this aesthetic remains incomplete, it is only because Joyce himself considered his theory as device, a means, toward the creative realization of aesthetic perfection" (Block, 1950). Stephen is an amalgamation of a thoughtful implosion contextually contrived.

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