U.PORTO
FACULDADE DE LETRAS
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO

Tiago Sousa Garcia

2º Ciclo de Estudos em Estudos Anglo-Americanos, variante de Literaturas e Culturas

I am the servant of two masters
Catholicism as a colonial force in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

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Abstract

Keywords: Catholicism; Religion; Ireland; James Joyce; Narrator; Post-Colonial; Stephen Dedalus; Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

As soon as James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was published (first serialised in 1914, then published in 1916), critical discourse has focused on the relationship between its main character, Stephen Dedalus, and the Catholic Church. This discourse, however, mainly tried to establish Stephen – and Joyce – as a lapsed Catholic. In the past half-century, critical attention has left the subject untouched, a few notable exceptions excluded. In this thesis, the subject of Stephen's Catholicism is once more taken into consideration, making use of post-colonial methodological tools, not to ascertain the degree – if any – of Stephen's Catholicism, but to describe his relationship with the church as akin to that of a colonial subject. This will enable an understanding of the issue not as a dichotomy of adherence, but rather as a far more complex, and far less decisive, relationship than previously suggested.

Resumo

Keywords: Catolicismo; Religião; Irlanda; James Joyce; Narrador; Pós-Colonial; Stephen Dedalus; Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

Desde que *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* veio a público (primeiro serializado em 1914 e, mais tarde, publicado em 1916), que o discurso crítico se tem focado na relação entre o personagem principal, Stephen Dedalus, e a Igreja Católica. Este discurso, porém, procurava sobretudo definir Stephen – e Joyce – como um Católico perdido. A crítica Joyceana, nos últimos cinquenta anos, com a excepção de alguns casos digos de nota, não se tem dedicado a este tema. Nesta dissertação, a questão do Catolicismo de Stephen é novamente considerada através de ferramentas metedológicas da teoria pós-colonial, não para estabelecer o grau de Catolicismo de Stephen – se o existe – mas para descrever a sua relação com a Igreja como semelhante à de um homem colonisado, permitindo assim que a questão seja tratada não como uma dicotomia de aderência ou não à fé, mas como uma relação diferente da sugerida pelo discurso crítico tradicional, bastante mais complexa e bastante menos clara.

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You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is I know how to curse
– *The Tempest*, William Shakespeare

Introduction

«Introibo ad altare Dei»[1], the words uttered by Buck Mulligan at the start of *Ulysses*, as if opening a mock mass celebration, are, in fact – as it is widely known –, part of the Tridentine mass liturgy, the service rites in use by the Roman Catholic Church during James Joyce's lifetime and up until Vatican II. The Tridentine mass was celebrated in Latin and the priest would officiate facing the altar, with his back turned to the flock. To a degree, the Tridentine mass acts as a synthesis of Joyce's work and of his opinion of Catholicism, although with antagonistic value. On one hand, Joyce wrote with little consideration for the public, in a language of his own – and he considered it a good thing; on the other hand, the Catholic church turned its back on the the turmoils of its people and remained proud of its own incommunicability – and Joyce saw this as a bad thing. I do not mean to imply that Joyce's aim was to change the Church – his refusal is too categorical and too definitive for it. I do propose, however, that he saw Catholicism as a large, immovable and impersonal power – a nation – that forced itself on the believers and sieged the minds of its people, colonising them.

In recent years, the nation has been a much debated issue in Joycean studies[2]. Post-colonial critics have found in Joyce a curious case of an author from a colonised nation writing not against the coloniser nor for, but in spite of it, echoing a worldview that could be described as a post-colonial[3] *avant la lettre*. Ireland itself has been the focus of much debate. Its geographical closeness to the metropolis promoted a strange connection between the Irish and British power, with critics exploring its unique

1 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922), ed. Jeri Jonhson, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 3. All further references to *Ulysses* refer to this edition and will be incorporated in the main text, signalled with *U* followed by the page number.

2 Any literature survey about Joyce is inherently outdated, given the sheer amount of studies published about the Irish author each year. The following paragraphs are nothing but a limited view of Joyce's recent and ancient scholarship and should be read as such.

3 Further clarification might be required at this point: much like one uses a word like *modernism* to define different concepts, however interrelated they are, by *post-colonial*, in this particular instance I do not mean to equate Joyce with anti-imperialist writers such as Frantz Fanon, whose work has been thoroughly debated by post-colonial critique. I use *post-colonial* as a defining term for an age – the second half of the 20th century – where writers from former colonised nations are both heard and aware of colonialism as an historical condition. Joyce's stance on imperialism has been the subject of much debate but his personal position remains somewhat contradictory.

condition of being both a colonised country and a coloniser, participating (willingly or not) in the British imperialist program. The synthesis of both Joyce's colonialism and Ireland's relationship with the United Kingdom[4] has produced numerous interesting works over recent years, and the critical consensus so far might best be summarised by Marjorie J. Howes' and Derek Attridge's seminal *Semicolonial Joyce*, a collection of post-colonial readings of Joyce's work:

> The adjective «semicolonial» signals our sense of a partial fit between this set of approaches [post-colonial studies] and Joyce's writing. Rather than claiming that the issues raised and models offered by postcolonial studies can illuminate every element of Joyce's works or supersede other interpretative or theoretical frameworks, we believe that it is precisely from the limited compatibility between them that the most interesting lessons can be drawn – for both readers of Joyce and theorists of colonialism.[5]

Arguably, post-colonial readings of Joyce's work have been the focus of the past decade, almost foreshadowing other approaches, taking the nation and the political, as to be expected, as its main topic. Religion, on the other hand, although never forgotten, has lost the prominence it once had. When one searches for religious topics in recent criticism the results are surprisingly few. In post-colonial critique, Catholicism is often read as part of the Irish nationalist movement, and although often alluded to, it is rarely mentioned free from its political connections[6] or with any degree of systematic research. With very few exceptions, religion has lost its momentum in joycean studies. For the past half-century, critics have discussed the role of Catholicism in Joyce's work deeply. Catholic critics have tried to rescue Joyce back to Catholicism – most notably J. Mitchell Morse, William T. Noon and Robert Boyle – while others have stressed Joyce's militant anti-catholicism. In recent years, Mary Lowe-Evans[7] and Geert Lernout[8] exemplify both critical stances, Catholic and non-Catholic, respectively, although with very different methodologies from those of their predecessors. I'll briefly discuss their work later in this introduction.

What this dissertation aims to achieve is to study the role of religion[9] in Joyce's work

4 Ireland's relationship with the United Kingdom can't be simplified as a simple coloniser-colonised one. From the Act of Union of 1801, the United Kingdom's official name became «The United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland», nominally placing Ireland on the same footing as England, Wales, and Scotland. The fulfilment, or lack of, such promises is a matter worthy of study on its own.

5 Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes, *Semicolonial Joyce*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 3.

6 A clear frontier between religion and politics is obviously impossible, particularly in late nineteenth century Ireland. My argument, however, is that there are few recent thorough studies where religion, rather than the nation, takes centre stage.

7 Mary Lowe-Evans, *Catholic Nostalgia in Joyce and Company*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2008.

8 Geert Lernout, *Help My Unbelief. James Joyce and religion*, London, Continuum, 2010.

9 Considering my study's scope, *religion* almost always refers to Christianity and specifically Catholicism.

without relying on the usual *is he / isn't he* dichotomy, by changing the way in which one reads the religious elements of Joyce's characters, specifically Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. My work will differ from previous studies both on methodology and on subject. Rather than trying to reach conclusions about Joyce's personal views on religion, as most critics have done so far, I'll focus on his fictional creation, Stephen, without trying to extrapolate my conclusions to Joyce himself. This does not mean, however, that I'll abide by any sort of structuralist or post-structuralist theory: I do not consider text as a separate entity from the rest of the world, that is to say, I will not ignore biographical data that directly contradict my interpretation of Joyce's work, nor will I remove *Portrait* from the historical context in which it was written and published. In fact, my argument would be absolutely incoherent if I'd try it. What I will not do is use biographical data from Joyce's personal worldview – controversial and contradictory as it already is – to posit what he might have *meant* by anything Stephen or any other character says or does. By doing this I am not, as I wish to make clear, ignoring the strange semi-biographical nature of *Portrait* and, particularly, of Stephen's. It is widely know and accepted that Stephen was Joyce's alter-ego of sorts, whose education and biography closely follow that of his creator. The separation between creator and creature is a complicated matter, and even more so on Joyce's relationship with his character Stephen Dedalus. Precisely because it is a complicated matter, I choose to stay clear of it, by restraining my exegesis to the fictional narrative.

As I hope I have hinted in the previous pages, my work will try to bring a new perspective to Catholicism as it is represented in the pages of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, particularly on what concerns Stephen Dedalus. In order to do this, I will try to read Stephen's Catholicism through a post-colonial point of view.

Before moving on with the outline of my argument, there is something to be said about the description of post-colonialism itself. The prefix *post-* implies a degree of temporality that may cause an ideological uncertainty. By affixing *post-* to post-colonialism, one might also be claiming that colonialism is something of the past, something that has no grip on the present, something that clearly isn't true, if not for the new forms that colonialism might take – caused by globalised capitalism, for example, not to mention certain instances of cultural hegemony – it also ignores the instances of actual old-fashioned colonialism that still exist today. The term itself has yet another implication: it levels widely different situations under the same group. The United States were once a British colony, yet no one can claim that colonialism worked in the same way as it worked on, for example, India. To the same extent, working on Catholicism through post-colonialism, I am not claiming that its agency and consequences had anything to do with those that affected other post-colonial nations and peoples. Lastly, I must acknowledge that within post-colonial criticism, I am a

member of the dominating class, historically – being Portuguese – and socially – being a white educated male within a white educated male dominated society. This, for some of post-colonialism's most thoughtless detractors, could be used to turn post-colonialism against itself, by claiming that theory was just another form of oppression by the structure of power. Luckily for me, I am neither the first nor the last post-colonial critic to emerge from the coloniser's side. Furthermore, Gayatri Spivak solved any other personal doubts I might have had over the issue by stating, clearly and decisively, that «to say 'I won't criticize' is salving your conscience, and allowing you not to do any homework. On the other hand, if you criticize having earned the right to do so, then you are indeed taking a risk and you will probably be made welcome, and can hope to be judged with respect»[10].

My main thesis is that Catholicism acts in Stephen in the same way as a coloniser would act on a colonised, by restraining his personal freedom, by shackling his thought and by conditioning his social behaviour. Stephen's ultimate refusal of Catholicism can be seen, as I'll try to prove, as akin to an autochthonous rebellion, a war waged against an all powerful force fought on the coloniser's terms. Stephen himself sees religion and imperialism as being and acting on the Irish people in much the same way. In *Portrait*, Stephen says to Cranly: «I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church»[11], clearly putting family, nationalism and religion in the same position. Stephen[12] will be clearer in *Ulysses*, saying to the Englishman Haines: «I am the servant of two masters, Stephen said, an English and an Italian» (*U* 20). It goes without saying that the English master is the King and the Italian one the Pope. What one can gather from this meaningful assertion is, once again, that Stephen sees religion and imperialism as similar restraining forces. As J. Mitchell Morse wrote, «Joyce belongs to the brave though rather tenuous tradition of Catholic thinkers who have stood for the individual as against the authorities»[13], and his character Stephen will follow suit. Furthermore, he sees himself as *subaltern*, to use Gayatri Spivak's concept, to both powers. Whether he actually is or not, is irrelevant to my argument.

Nonetheless, one must use such a concept carefully. *Subalternity*, within Spivak's argument, is defined precisely by one's inability to speak, where speaking implies both having a voice and *being listened to.* And even within subalternity, there is no unique subject: «One must nevertheless insist that the colonized subaltern *subject* is irretrievably heterogenous»[14]. In colonised India, she

10 [Interview with] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, «Questions of multi-culturalism» in *Modern Criticism and Theory. A reader*, David Lodge and Nigel Wood (eds.), Harlow, Pearson, 2008, p. 597.

11 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), ed. Jeri Johnson, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 208. All further references to *Portrait* refer to this edition and will be incorporated in the main text, signalled with *P* followed by the page number.

12 The issue of Stephen's continuity between *Portrait* and *Ulysses* will be addressed below.

13 J. Mitchell Morse, *The Sympathetic Alien. James Joyce and Catholicism*, Vision Press, London, 1959, p. 3.

14 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, «Can the subaltern speak?», in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the*

argues, women are the most subaltern of all, their voice being silenced by the coloniser and the patriarchal Indian social structure:

> both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow.[15]

Spivak gives as example the case of the *sati*, the widows that would self-immolate on their dead husbands' funeral pyre, a tradition with disputed theological groundings in the Hindu scriptures but that was, nonetheless, endorsed by religious hierarchy and condemned by British law. Either attitude, in Spivak's point of view, works in spite of women rather than for or against them, that is to say that women are silent and, therefore, subaltern to both power structures. She would synthesise – and, she admits, simplify – her argument in a rather well know sentence: «White men are saving brown women from brown men»[16]. Ever since the essay was published, Spivak has adopted a very protective position of her argument: she has claimed in numerous interviews and public appearances that the concept of *subaltern* has been misappropriated, taken out of context, de-signified. In an interview with Leon de Cock published in 1992 she says:

> [E]verybody thinks that subaltern is just a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who is not getting a piece of the pie. […]
>
> [The subalternist historians] define it as the people, the foreign elite, the indigenous elite, the upwardly mobile indigenes, in various kinds of situations: everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern – a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern. […] When you say cannot speak, it means that if speaking involves speaking and listening, this possibility of response, responsibility, does not exist in the subaltern's sphere. […]
>
> [M]any people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being in a descriminated-against minority on the university campus, they don't need the word subaltern […]. They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are, and since they can speak, as they tell me – yes, they can speak – I quite agree, they're within the hegemonic discourse

Interpretation of Culture, London, Macmillan, 1988, p. 284.

15 Spivak, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

16 Spivak, *op. cit.*, p. 296

> wanting a piece of the pie and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They shouldn't call themselves subaltern[17]

In all fairness, Stephen didn't call himself a subaltern, and even if he did, he wouldn't have meant it as Spivak defines it. It was my critical interpretation that associated Stephen's *servant* with Spivak's *subaltern*. Even if Spivak's clear-cut definition might threaten my reading[18], I still believe that to look at Stephen as one who considers himself as *subaltern*, one without voice, might prove fruitful. Consider what Stephen says to Davin in *Portrait*: «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» (*P* 171). Just before, he had also said: «This race, this country and this life produced me, [Stephen] said. I shall express myself as I am» (*P* 170). Throughout *Portrait*, particularly towards the end of the narrative, Stephen is adamant in his desire to express himself, apparently without ever being able to do so. He will not think himself capable of expression, I argue, while he is still held back by the nets thrown at him – nationality, language, religion – by accident of birth. His own sense of self is built on the notion that he cannot speak. Accordingly, he sees himself as a subaltern, as per Spivak's definition. However, as I said before, this is his own subjective perception of his own condition. Whether a critic would agree with this self-assessment is a different question altogether and again, to my argument, irrelevant.

Post-colonial criticism, I believe, will serve as fertile ground to my critical interpretation of *Portrait* and will enable me to move away from previous analysis of religion in Joyce's work. By looking at it as a power relationship between an elite and a subaltern mass, rather than trying to find out if Stephen is inherently Catholic or if his refusal is absolute, I will underline the instances where he wasn't able to free himself completely from his coloniser's influence. It may help my argument if one thinks of it as a language – much like the Irish, even as an independent nation, keep English as one of their official languages, so does Stephen continues to speak in *Catholic*, even if he did renounce it and its politics. As a result, my work will not try to prove if there's any Catholicism in Stephen, but if his mind and worldview have somehow been affected, influenced or informed by his Catholic upbringing. I will not try to prove that Stephen has a *Catholic mind* or whether or not he has abandoned Catholicism for good, as previous critics have explored. What I will do is isolate and

17 Leon De Cock, «Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: New Nation Writers Conference in South Africa», in *Ariel: a review of International English Literature*, 23:3, July 1992, pp. 45-46.

18 On a personal note, I both admire and resent Spivak's fierce defence of her argument. If, on the one hand, she is trying to defend herself against detrimental attacks by clarifying and delimiting her concept, on the other hand she is preventing the critical concept to grow and gather new meanings and usages. Arguably, she is taking the ethically charged mission of not letting *subalternity* be overused and, thus, lose its ability to define what she considers the true subalterns. In doing so, she is also taking advantage of her enormous influence in critical thinking to silence or dismiss different critical opinions. It's as if Joyce came back to life and said that all criticism of his work was a misappropriation of his words.

explain why Stephen's thought can be called Catholic in certain specific instances, by considering such instances within a wider power relationship framework. To which, I believe, post-colonialism offers an interesting and fruitful approach. For instance, consider the famous *non serviam* Stephen utters to his friend Cranly, quoted above: «I will not serve that in which I no longer believe» (*P* 208). Stephen's words are famously taken from Lucifer's rebellion against God. The traditional critic discourse would point out that Stephen's profession of unbelief is made in the same Catholic terms that he is trying to refuse and, consequently, he hasn't really freed himself. A post-colonial reading, on the other hand, will underline that if Stephen's language of unbelief is Catholic, it is because the only way to repel the dominant other is to refuse it in its own terms. Thinking in historical terms, the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922 wouldn't have taken effect if it hadn't been ratified by Westminster. Up until then, *Independence Wars* were fought, but independence wasn't achieved until it was accepted by the Imperial power structure. Or if one wants to fall back to Shakespeare, Caliban's words to his master Prospero make a perfect synthesis of my post-colonial approach: «You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is I know how to curse»[19] – what I will be doing throughout this dissertation is, in a word, to underline Stephen's cursing.

As I've stated before, Stephen Dedalus will be the object of my investigation. Any research dealing with religion in James Joyce's works would find plenty of possibilities of study, but a large scope analysis would be impossible in so little space. By focusing on Stephen, I will limit myself to a specific character in a specific situation and, even though such an approach will be inherently deficient, it will allow for a deeper understanding of Stephen's relationship with Catholicism, rather than a superficial analysis of Joyce's large body of work. In this respect, my self imposed limited corpus will come as an advantage rather than as an impediment. It is better, I believe, to allow myself the space for an extensive analysis of an admittedly restricted subject. Working with religion, choosing Stephen as my main subject was straightforward: his plight with Catholicism and belief is, by far, the most developed in all of Joyce's characters. I'm not claiming, however, to exhaust the theme. In fact, my aim is to reopen what has been a more or less silent critical subject for the past few years, by posing more questions than those that I can possibly answer.

Equally fruitful would be to apply to Joyce himself the same approach that I will be using in this dissertation. Be that as it may, to do so would also mean to change the overall mode of this research. It wouldn't so much be a literary study as a biographic essay. Unfortunately for all Joyce's biographers, Richard Ellmann set the bar too high for all contenders. Even though his work is anything but definitive – particularly since 2012, when Joyce's work was no longer held under the

19 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.364-365, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, ed. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan, London, Arden Shakespeare, 2001, p.1077.

protecting hands of his estate – to work biographically to whatever degree is also to rewrite Ellmann's work, a task too heavy and somewhat impossible for many, including me. After years without a new Joyce biography, Gordon Bowker has recently published his attempt: *James Joyce. A biography*[20]. Critical consensus is yet to be achieved about Bowker's work, however it seems that Ellmann's will remain the standard Joyce biography for a few more years. Adam Mars-Jones, reviewing Bowker's book, said that «Gordon Bowker has missed the chance to say anything new and interesting about the great writer»[21]. Personally, I choose not to take on Joyce himself not out of a fear of failure, but because I rather work within the freedom of fiction. While working on a fictional character, my interpretation will remain true as long as it's coherent and sane, while if working on a real person, I would always have reality – and some fierce reviewers – to disprove me.

Even so, working solely on Stephen Dedalus brings its own set of difficulties. Stephen is a unique character in modernist fiction, whose lifetime, according to traditional criticism, spreads through three books. My approach to the subject, however, makes this traditional view less obvious. The connection between the three Stephen Dedalus (or Daedelus, in *Stephen Hero*'s case), is mainly established biographically, that is to say, we know that it was the same person who wrote the three volumes, and we know that his biography serves as a model for Stephen's. If one doesn't take into account Joyce's life as an element of criticism, as I don't, to assert that there is a continuity between the character Stephen in *Portrait* and the character Stephen in *Ulysses*, one has to rely entirely on internal evidence. For example, in the first chapter of *Ulysses*, and numerous times throughout the book, Stephen will recall his University friend Cranly, with whom he had a crucial conversation about religion and family: «Cranly's arm. His [Buck Mulligan's] arm» (*U* 7). The problem is that internal evidence alone, when it comes to fictional characters, might not be proof enough. It's impossible to prove beyond doubt that the character named Cranly that Stephen refers to in *Ulysses*, much like Stephen himself, has an inherent claim to be the same Cranly whom the young artist befriends in *Portrait*. The same reasoning can also be applied to other references in *Ulysses*. When Stephen thinks about his time at Clongowes for example: «So I carried the boat of incense then at Clongowes. I am another now and yet the same» (*U* 11). Arguably, one could take his cryptic remark about being another and the same to be a conscious statement of continuity between the two books. Yet, there's nothing but interpretation in it. Nonetheless, to completely dismiss the hypothesis of Stephen's continuity would be to ignore a decade's old critical tradition simply to abide by a personal methodological impossibility. To strictly limit myself to *Portrait*'s Stephen

20 Gordon Bowker, *James Joyce. A biography*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2011.

21 Adam Mars-Jones, «*James Joyce* by Gordon Bowker – review» in *The Guardian*, 1st of July 2011 [available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/jul/01/james-joyce-gordon-bowker-review, last accessed 15th of March 2013].

would be missing on a much larger body of critical insight to be gathered from Stephen's contradictions at different stages of his fictional life. Consequently, relying solely on internal evidence and on an established critical tradition, I will assume that there is a continuity in Stephen's character between, at least, *Portrait* and *Ulysses*.

As far as *Stephen Hero* is concerned, proving continuity is more than a simple methodological issue. The book was never published during Joyce's lifetime, which poses further and more difficult questions. Is *Stephen Hero* part of Joyce's work, or should it be discarded as mere literary curiosity? If it is part of his body of work, is it a previous version of *Portrait* or does it hold a position of its own in the joycean canon? And if it is a former version of *Portrait*, should its narrative be considered as explanatory of the novel that followed, or should it be considered as something that was rewritten? Foucault lurks at the back of my mind, questioning my methodology. Whether one chooses to discuss such issues or not, I consider it relevant that a statement of awareness should be made. In order to avoid such questions that would lead me astray to a rather theoretically heavy debate, I will confine my reading to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* On occasion, I will refer to *Ulysses* and *Stephen Hero*, but merely to illustrate an argument already approached in *Portrait*, rather than as further investigation. A more complete study would have to encompass at least both *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, however that would require a much more thorough analysis than mine. Also, by restricting my reading to *Portrait* I will focus on the process of rebellion rather than on its after-effects. An appropriate metaphor would be that I'm writing the history of the revolution rather than studying its aftermath.

The main question that my research will try to answer is, quite simply, if one can consider Stephen to be a subject of Catholicism, and if Catholicism can act as a colonising force on its believers or ex-believers. To do so, I will examine every instance where Stephen's behaviour, language and thought can be, somehow, connected to Catholicism. I am fully aware of the difficulty of the task. For one, to determine if an expression can be called Catholic, as opposed to Protestant, or atheist, is an almost impossible task. It seems quite clear under certain circumstances, like Stephen's confession in the third chapter of *Portrait*, but, for the most part, it remains elusive and ultimately subjective, to consider a specific situation as definitely catholic. An expression that has been used for decades is to claim that Joyce himself had a «Catholic frame of mind». And even though recurring to such a concept would save me a lot of trouble and headache, I find it faulty, erroneous and somehow misleading. Geert Lernout, whose work on Joyce's religiosity tries to prove beyond doubt that Joyce is not in any way Catholic, writes:

> And what can it possibly mean, to say that someone has a mind with a

> catholic structure and what would such a catholic structure look like? […] both Joyce and Baudelaire refer to catholic doctrine and practice in their work, as do other writers who attack religion in general or the catholic church in particular: how could one disagree with religion without referring to its doctrines and practices? But reference to catholic matters cannot be enough and certainly something more must be meant when we claim that these writers' minds had a 'catholic structure'.
>
> For one thing, this catholic structure must be fundamentally different not just from other non religious structures, but even […] from a general christian or protestant structure. If we disregard catholic practices or beliefs, does sin and more specifically original sin not exist for protestants? It seems that the two claims, Maritain's about Baudelaire and Mary Colum's about Joyce, do not tell us much more than the claim that a thorough catholic education leaves such an indelible imprint on the mind that even heretics and atheists cannot escape from it. The dissidents end up expressing their revolt in the very language they are trying to get away from. Since it has been impossible to describe in detail what, exactly, this imprint entails, such a claim should be considered with the greatest hesitation.[22]

Lernout is right: the concept of catholic structure of mind seems too vague to pin down. One cannot define it and isolate it properly without falling into subjective interpretation or ideological bias. It is not sufficient to say that if a certain author writes about Catholic practises he or she undoubtedly has a Catholic point of view of the world. By that reasoning, the mere allusion to Holocaust might make me a Nazi. This is, obviously, an over-simplification of Lernout's argument, but one that synthesises his criticism of the definition of a Catholic frame of mind. Lernout emphasises the underlying fallacy of early Catholic readings of Joyce's work: the argument starts from the conclusion – that Joyce's mind had been informed by Catholicism – to reach its evidence. Lernout argues against such practises by pointing out that, from that perspective, every reference to Catholicism would be understood as symptom rather than allusion, as evidence created to prove guilt. Such technique is, clearly, biased police work and, at best, faulty criticism. To a degree, every critic is guilty of such crime, Lernout and I included. One must always start from a hypothesis, a direction, a reading. There would be no argument otherwise, only a motley inventory of quotations. As with many things in life, the secret is knowing when to stop, or, in this case, to realise when one is bending the evidence to prove an argument[23].

22 Lernout, *op. cit*., 211-212.

23 It should be stated that this is not directed at the critics Lernout is analysing or at any other particular early critic of Joyce. It is merely an explanation of Geert Lernout's reasoning.

Lernout also makes clear that there are too many similarities between Catholicism and other Christian practises, particularly between Catholicism and Anglicanism. However, I must disagree with his thought when he claims that, by dismissing Catholic practises, it's even harder to distinguish a Catholic frame of mind from a Protestant one. On the contrary, I think that through specific Catholic theology, a clearer definition can be achieved. I'm thinking specifically about such issues as transubstantiation and mariolatry, items of faith undoubtedly Catholic in their nature. Furthermore, there is a degree of ambiguity about what is meant by Catholic practises. Does it refer merely to what one might call Catholic rites, such as communion, mass, the liturgy? If so, I agree with his assertion that there are too many similarities between Catholicism and other Christian confessions, particularly with the Anglican High Church, whose disagreements with Roman Catholicism could almost be reduced to an historical accident rather than a clear theological departure:

> high church forms of anglicanism, especially in this period [Joyce's lifetime, particularly his formative years], were extremely close to catholicism in the majority of […] issues. In fact, under the influence of the so-called Tractarians, by the turn of the twentieth century, the 'catholic' faction of the Church of England had adopted not just many of the rituals, but a good part of the doctrines of the Church of Rome.[24]

To understand Catholicism, even Catholic practise, as a mere collection of rites, liturgy and theology, specifically in Ireland and specifically in this period, is not enough. Catholicism should be understood as not simply confined to the religious dimension stated above, but as an all inclusive sphere that influences one's day to day life – a cultural sphere within a larger cultural background. Catholicism, and even more so in Ireland, touches all aspects of life. It's not only religion: politics, identity, social relations, to a greater or lesser degree, are all influenced by Catholicism. Lernout's strict definition of Catholicism as religion is evidence of the current belief – political in itself – that religion should limit itself to its religious role and not control or influence other aspects of one's life. Even if such debate had already started by the end of the 19th century, it was far from being being accepted by everyone. As History proves, and even more so in Ireland's case, Catholicism was still as much cultural as religious.

My understanding is that the very phrasing of «Catholic frame of mind» is misleading and prone to attack. Unlike Geert Lernout, I still don't fully disagree with the concept but rather with the

24 Lernout, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

implications that such phrasing has. What I mean is that there may be an inherent difficulty in trying to isolate and define what has been called «Catholic frame of mind», however such difficulties might not hold true if one looks for the effects of it, rather than attempted definitions. In some ways, it's like a differential diagnosis or to explain wind. In medicine, a differential diagnosis is attempted when a certain issue cannot be proven by a direct exam. Then a doctor, or a team of doctors, proceeds into proving or disproving a specific disease from a shortlist of possibilities by examining isolated aspects of a condition, by watching the symptoms and attempting treatment. At the end, if everything goes well, a diagnosis is achieved by ruling out every other possible disease. The same goes for the wind: we know that wind is nothing but moving air, but there is no way to see air shifting through space, except by analysing its effects – that is to say, by looking at the leaves moving with it. So, by looking at the effects of what has been called the Catholic frame of mind, as in, by noting that Stephen is compelled to look for confession and absolution at the end of the third chapter of *Portrait*, or by looking at his reluctance in indulging his mother's wish to participate in a ritual that he claims not to believe, one can gather more and more useful information than by merely claiming that his reaction is simply based on some sort of an acquired inclination. Also, by using such a concept, one would be jumping to conclusions – anything Stephen says or does even remotely connected to Catholicism would immediately be ascribed to his Catholic frame of mind. If I'd decided to make use of such a concept, I would simply have to equate it with a concept of colonial subject – literally saying that a Catholic frame of mind equals colonial subject of catholicism – and conclude that, therefore, Catholicism acts as a colonial power, a process that would be futile, unnecessary and uninteresting. So, instead of using such formulae, I will use the tools of post-colonial criticism to examine rather than conclude anything about Stephen's mind. If one looks at such examples as those above, instead of ascribing them to his bent will, one should ask if he was free to say or act differently and, if so, why wasn't he, who or what impeded it. In a nutshell, rather than limiting myself to a volatile frame of mind, I will be looking at it socially as well. Another aspect that separates my argument from Geert Lernout's is our different subjects of choice. While Lernout worked on Joyce's personal belief, or lack of, I will look at a fictional creation whose existence is confined to what is written of him. Lernout, besides having to consider what Joyce has been described saying or doing, also has to speculate on what he might have been thinking. On the other hand, since Stephen's whole existence is confined to *Stephen Hero*, *Ulysses* and *Portrait*, I can only consider what is there described. So, contrary to Lernout's, my subject has a clear finite existence and his mind exists only in these three books.

On the complete opposite side of the spectrum in recent criticism of Catholicism and James Joyce is Mary Lowe-Evans. In the introduction to her book *Catholic Nostalgia in Joyce and*

Company, while talking about the short story «The Sisters», she writes:

> [The Sisters] incorporates elements of the Catholic nostalgia – the obsessive urge to return to a, paradoxically, dead but mysteriously vital and intellectually challenging body of Catholic dogma and ritual – pervading Joyce's works. That nostalgia, I contend, derives from the «faith in the soul» Joyce owns early in his career in [a] letter to Lady Gregory […] and accounts for his decision to make «the gestation of a soul» the principle of order for *Portrait.*[25]

At a first glance, Lowe-Evans concept of *Catholic Nostalgia* might seem similar to the earlier *Catholic frame of mind*, although with a slightly different terminology. If that were the case, a Catholic frame of mind would be defined as one who desires to return to Catholicism, even if just out of curiosity. And to a point, Lowe-Evans argument can be simplified to such an understanding without much loss. Another issue that I find faulty, or, at least, doubtful, with Mary Lowe-Evan's argument, are her use of such charged words as soul, whose many definitions within and outside religion can be problematic. Just in the two Joyce quotes mentioned in the fragment above, soul can mean extremely different things in their respective context. The first one, «faith in the soul», might not have anything to do with the Christian definition of soul but rather as a synonym of self. The second one clearly plays on both the Christian soul and on a concept of personal essence – Stephen moves from a preoccupation with his Catholic soul to define himself as an artist, or someone with an artist's soul. To make such distinctions flat, particularly when one discusses religion, can be dangerous and oversimplified.

My major disagreement, however, is with the methodology in use to define the concept of *Catholic nostalgia*, which is radically different from that of Joyce's early criticism: Lowe-Evans makes use of psychoanalysis to prove her argument. In her definition of *Catholic nostalgia* it's the ideologically charged «obsessive urge» that strengthens the argument, if one is to accept a psychoanalytic reading, or weakens it, if one is to refuse it. The argument throughout the book is perfectly sound within a psychoanalytic framework, even insightful at times. However, looking at it from the outside of that school of thought, some claims border on the ridiculousness. In the second chapter, «Dogsbody 'Marys' his mother», as the title already hints, Lowe-Evans goes to great lengths to suggest that most, if not all, of the female characters in the joycean cannon, and even some male ones such as «The Sisters»' Father Flynn, are actually representations of Joyce's mother who, in turn, is idealised as a mixture of the real, historical, May Joyce and the Virgin Mary. As the

25 Mary Lowe-Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

old saying goes, if it's not one thing, it's your mother.

All crude simplifications aside, probably the major reason why I believe Lowe-Evans argument is unhelpful outside a strictly psychoanalytic reading is that making a claim such as *Joyce's writing displays signs of Catholic nostalgia* is irrefutable by the very nature of psychoanalysis itself. Even if Joyce, foreseeing future criticism, had written a line that read *I do not have any sort of Catholic nostalgia*, a psychoanalytic reading would just take that statement not at its face value but as a conscious denial of a subconscious reality. In other words, you can never disprove a psychoanalytic reading by simply denying it. So, when Mary Lowe-Evans makes claims such as the ones summarised above, the mere assertion is its own argument. Geert Lernout shares a similar view of my main concern with Mary Lowe-Evans work, even though he doesn't quote directly or mentions her in his study:

> The problem of claiming the existence of a mind with a catholic structure in the case of somebody who does not consider himself catholic and who, according to the rules of that church cannot even be accepted as catholic, is ultimately ethical. It reminds me very much of the classic psychoanalytical idea according to which the degree of insistence with which the patient rejects a psychoanalytical diagnosis becomes a measure of the fundamental correctness of the diagnosis and of psychoanalysis itself. The fact that I insist that I do not want to have sex with my mother is proof that that is precisely what I unconsciously crave to do. In both cases the superiority of the religious or psychological frame of reference goes unquestioned, in fact it cannot even be questioned, because it is never made explicit or, to use Karl Popper's phrase, is is never made falsifiable: no circumstances are given in which the opposite might be shown to be the case.[26]

Even with all the objections I may have to Lernout's clear cut, black and white-*ish* view of Catholicism in Joyce[27], I'm inclined to agree with his argument when it comes to psychoanalysis. However, even if we can't prove that such a person is or isn't part of Catholicism in any way, the vehement refusal shows, to my understanding, a degree of abnormal interest in such matters. While Lernout claims that Joyce never returned to Catholicism – and his argument is sound – and Lowe-Evans implies that he never left catholicism, neither seem to take into account the why of his continued interest, Lernout dismissing the possibility that Joyce's attitude is anything more than

26 Geert Lernout, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

27 Lernout is clearly at the opposite side of Lowe-Evans, however his argument is, in essence, *Joyce is not in any way Catholic because he says so*, and so, to a degree, as much definitive and irrefutable as Mary Lowe-Evan's psychoanalysis of Catholic nostalgia.

assertiveness and Lowe-Evan's claiming it as a sign of a Catholic nostalgia. My argument, on the other hand, as I have repeatedly said before, will try to understand the why and how come of such obsession in Joyce's fictional character, without muting it as simple truths or meaningful denials.

While the concept of Catholic behaviour that I tried to outline above can be hard to define and harder to defend, it doesn't seem to be hard to understand and even accept. Simply, what I will be looking for is evidence that Catholicism influenced Stephen's acts and words. However, the second major question that my work will tackle is, admittedly, a riskier one, that is, to take Catholicism to be a colonial force. Risky not only because to argue for it will require a certain degree of abstraction but also because I will be tackling a basic concept within post-colonial theory, that of the *nation*. Nation is a central concept to post-colonial theory because, at its very foundation, lies a war between peoples, one, the coloniser who oppresses the other, the colonised – and both sides defend themselves as a nation. Interestingly enough, the coloniser's relationship tries to include the colonised in its concept of nation, however the coloniser finds it nothing more than imperialist rhetoric built to hide the real superiority with which the people from the metropolis regard them. In fact, as Benedict Anderson has shown[28], social climbing within the Imperial sphere becomes impossible to a colonised subject. The best they can aspire to is to a metropolitan education that will get them, if all goes well, close to the top of the colonial structure where they were born, and even then there would probably be an imperial envoy at a higher rank. This sense of social frontier is one of the major factors to the creation of imagined communities that, in modern times, took the form of nations. A community of people that cannot get to the higher ranks of society defines itself against a community of people that can. From that point of view, Catholicism might fail to compare itself with a nation. If anything, Catholicism is very inclusive of its members in hierarchy (although for centuries a non-Italian pope would be unthinkable, but then again, the concept of Italian didn't come into existence until the nineteenth century), bishops and cardinals from all over the (Western) world had a say in Roman affairs. However, I still believe that, even if one cannot call the Catholic church a nation, one can still look at its power and influence as colonial. Within Joyce's work one finds ample evidence of it, as I hope to show in the following chapters.

The concept of nation that I tried to outline above is one of binary oppositions, that is to say, that one group of people define themselves as different from another group of people. Such an understanding of nation is indebted to Edward Said's groundbreaking work *Orientalism* (1978) and its roots go back to the Hegelian master-slave relationship. In the Introduction to *Orientalism*, Said clearly states that «the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its constrasting image,

28 Benedict Anderson, *Immagined Communities*, London, Verso, 1991.

idea, personality, experience»[29] and later that «Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than ir does with 'our' world»[30]. Said's theory can be ascribed to a structuralist phase in post-colonial criticism, depending, as it does, on Saussure's conception of signal and semiotics. Much like in Saussure's theory, Said defines nation *negatively*, something that cannot be defined by a positive value but only as *not everything else* within a certain context or code. If Said can be argued to represent a structuralist wave of post-colonialism, then Homi K. Bhabha most definitely embodies the post-structuralist – and specifically deconstructionist – post-colonial theoretician. Bhabha disestablishes the oppositions between coloniser and colonised by advocating a third space of ambivalent relationships between both sides, the in-between space of *hybridity*, where the exchanges between them become much more complicated than in the traditional binary system. Most significantly for my present argument, Bhabha also challenges the concept of *nation* outlined above. According to Bhabha, our (Eurocentric, Western) understanding of nation is a totalising, «many-as-one», homogenising *narrative*. In other words, it is an essentialist concept of nation that Bhabha argues against, a nineteenth century creation with little to no relation with the reality of the individuals it claims to represent:

> My emphasis on the temporal dimension in the inscription of these political entities – that are also potent symbolic and affective sources of cultural identity – serves to displace the historicism that has dominated discussions of the nation as a cultural force. The linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes, most commonly signifies a people, a nation, or a national culture as an empirical sociological category or a holistic cultural entity. However, the narrative and psychological force that nationess brings to bear on cultural production and political projection is the effect of the ambivalence of the 'nation' as a narrative strategy[31]

In a nutshell, and simplifying Bhabha's argument, he sees the modern concept of nation as one that shades the individuals – the people – by foregrounding a (somewhat) coherent narrative that stands as their common thread and artificial representative. Consequently, the nation is not Benedict Anderson's imagined community but an imagined narrative whose main purpose is to efface the differences between the people that it claims to represent in order to be, at the same time,

29 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978), London, Penguin, 2003, pp. 1-2.
30 Edward Said, *op.* cit., p. 12.
31 Homi K. Bhabha, «DissemiNation. Time, narrative and the margins of the modern nation» in *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 140.

all inclusive and all exclusive: we're all Portuguese and yet none of us can be entirely defined by the Portuguese nation-narrative. Thus, the narrative of the nation produces an empty category – the *people* – whose margins are more populated than its centre:

> It is pricesely in reading between these borderlines of the nation-space that we can see how the concept of the 'people' emerges within a range of discourses as a double narrative movement. The people are not simply historical events or parts of a patriotic body politic. They are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference: their claim to be representative provokes a crisis within the process of signification and discursive address. We then have a contested conceptual territory where the nation's people must be thought in double-time; the people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin *in the past*; the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principles of the people as contemporaneity: as the sign of the *present* through which national life is redeemed and iterated as a reproductive process.
>
> The scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into signs of a coherent national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects. In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation*.[32]

This lenghty quote from Bhabha's «DissemiNation» synthesises, as clearly as possible, how the subject of the nation narrative is, at the same time, its object, how its day to day life is imbued with significance, and how futile such process is. While doing so, Bhabha unearths the concept of nation as a construction in lieu of the people. Within post-colonial criticism, such construction cannot stand – it's built to ignore the differences, not to stress them, it reinforces the hegemonic power rather than undermining it. The narrative of the nation fails to take into consideration the nation's margins, «[f]or the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of the anxiety of its irredeemably plural modern space»[33]. Its corollary is that the margins turn the nation narrative inside out to create a narrative of dissidence, «[speaking] both of, and as, the minority, the

32 Bhabha, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146.
33 Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

exilic, the marginal and the emergent»[34]. Having proved the narrative of the nation as futile, erroneous and harmful, Bhabha ultimately argues for a complete dissolution of the modern concept of nation, proposing in its stead that we «translate the differences between [history and language, race and gender] into a kind of solidarity»[35], or, in simpler terms, that we substitute the nation narrative for a site of cultural exchange «more hybrid in the articulation of the cultural differences and identifications than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism»[36].

Bhabha's criticism of the modern concept of nation might be hard to grasp at first, but once understood, its implications become obvious. In its simplest terms, a nation is a narrative – a construction, a creation, and, consequently, *not in any way essentialist* – that defines itself and its members in the lowest common denominator possible – and for Catholicism that would be baptism. In other words, one can look at Catholicism as a narrative, much in the same way Bhabha looks at the modern nation. The Catholic Church looks at itself as a transnational community, whose power derives directly from God and is, as such, supranational; with common history, common language – latin[37] –, common habits, common law. It provides no space for dissidence, no space for difference, its members have a clear ritual of affiliation – the baptism, equivalent to being born into the church[38]. It provides no space for performativity – you are a Catholic and cannot decide to define yourself as a Catholic with a twist. It even has a common future, a common teleological destiny of life after death, the kingdom of heavens. The Catholic narrative is also, quite literally, text – inscribed in the volumes of Catholic rites and catechisms, histories and hagiographies. Not only can Catholicism be likened to Bhabha's understanding of the modern nation, it sees itself as such, and their members see themselves as such. Perhaps most important of all, Stephen, writing from the margins against it, sees Catholicism as a nation as well.

I've previously alluded to two instances of it, when Stephen expressly regards Catholicism in equal footing with the British Empire. Particularly when Stephen claims to Haines that he is the servant of two masters, a quotation that doubles as the title of this work, he is expressly stating that King and Pope have the same hold in Ireland, that Britain and Catholicism act in the same way. So much so that he admits being a servant of both – unwillingly and perhaps ironically, given that he is

34 Ibidem.
35 Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
36 Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
37 More often than not, as I hope it will become clear, whenever I refer to the Catholic Church, I'm referring to the nineteenth century, pre-Vatican II, Catholic Church.
38 The popular tradition – endorsed by the hierarchy, although not mandatory – of baptising children as soon as they are born has contributed decisively for this. There are, of course, adult converts who will go through the same ritual. However, the ritual of baptism is profusely imbued with images of rebirth, thus replicating in its rites the concept of being born into the religion.

talking to a coloniser –, putting himself into a subservient position. There are, however, numerous other instances in both *Portrait* and *Ulysses*. Consider the following fragment. Stephen is being asked by the director of the jesuit Belvedere College if he has felt the call to become a priest:

> – I sent for you today, Stephen, because I wished to speak to you on a very important subject.
>
> – Yes, sir.
>
> – Have you ever felt that you had a vocation?
>
> Stephen parted his lips to answer yes and then withheld the word suddenly. The priest waited for the answer and added:
>
> – I mean have you ever felt within yourself, in your soul, a desire to join the order. Think.
>
> – I have sometimes thought of it, said Stephen.
>
> The priest let the blindcord fall to one side and, uniting his hands, leaned his chin gravely upon them, communing with himself.
>
> – In a college like this, he said at length, there is one boy or perhaps two or three boys whom God calls to the religious life. Such a boy is marked off from his companions by his piety, by the good example he shows to others. He is looked up to by them; he is chosen perhaps as a prefect by his fellow sodalists. And you, Stephen, have been such a boy in this college, prefect of Our Blessed Lady's sodality. Perhaps you are the boy in this college whom God designs to Himself.
>
> A strong note of pride reinforcing the gravity of the priest's voice made Stephen's heart quicken in response.
>
> – To receive the call, Stephen, said the priest, is the greatest honour that the Almighty God can bestow upon a man. No king or emperor on this earth has the power of the priest of God. No angel or archangel in heaven, no saint, not even the Blessed Virgin herself has the power of a priest of God: the power of the keys, the power to bind and to loose from sin, the power of exorcism, the power to cast out from the creatures of God the evil spirits that have power over them, the power, the authority, to make the great God of Heaven come down upon the altar and take the form of bread and wine. What an awful power, Stephen! (*P* 132-133)

I find this excerpt particularly remarkable and helpful to my argument. For one thing, there is an evident sense of hierarchy and a clear division between that of the colonised and the coloniser. Stephen has come to the top of the colonised hierarchy, that is to say, in Catholic terms, that Stephen has come to the top of the laity for a boy of his age. He is praised for his virtue and

example, for all his Christian virtues, for his obedience, that is to say, for his willing subjugation. One of the particular characteristics of Catholicism within this post-colonial context is that, since one is not born into a particular group, migration from the colonised to the coloniser is not only possible, but encouraged. Although I do not plan to find an item by item equivalence between traditional colonialism and the perspective I'm arguing for, I find this particular instance revealing: Stephen gets to choose whether he will remain a colonial subject or cross to the coloniser's side – and one cannot help but notice how constricting this either/or choice really is.

On this constricting choice one must pause for a moment. In the fragment above, the figure of authority, the priest, seems to give Stephen a choice: either you join us, or remain forever a serf. As I explained above, according to Anderson, such invitation could be regarded as a crossing between the frontier of coloniser and colonised. However, once again, Bhabha comes to make clear lines less clear. In his essay «Of mimicry and man. The ambivalence of colonial discourse»[39] he introduces the concept of *mimicry*[40], a device by which the colonised can become like the coloniser, *but not quite*. Mimicry is the perfect example of the post-colonial ambivalence of Bhabha's theory. It is, at the same time, an attempt at inclusion and a shout of difference: «mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge»[41]. In its simplest terms, mimicry is the process by which the coloniser offers an opportunity for the colonised to become one with the power structure, a process of incorporation and assimilation of the Other. Of course, there is nothing innocent about this, mimicry quickly shows that it is double-edged as soon as one looks closely at it. Consider this: if one has to learn to be like the coloniser, such process can only highlight one's different status, or as Bhabha puts it, «[the mimic man] is the effect of a flawed colonial mimesis, in which to be Anglicized is *emphatically* not to be English»[42]. Consequently, the process of mimicry displaces the colonial subject from his subject position without incorporating him into the power structure. Thus, when a native comes to the top of the colonial power structure and cannot move any higher, as Benedict Anderson has shown, he is fixed in a state of what Bhabha calls *partial presence*: «By 'partial' I mean both 'incomplete' and 'virtual'. It is as if the very emergence of the 'colonial' is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition *within* the authoritative discourse itself»[43]. The mimic man is neither here nor there, almost as the coloniser, but not really. Although mimicry is a device «generously» provided by the coloniser, there is an inherent duplicity at its centre, a menace to both coloniser and colonised,

39 Homi K. Bhabha, «Of mimicry and man. The ambivalence of colonial discourse» in *op. cit.*, pp. 85-92.

40 Bhabha's definition of mimicry is greatly indebted to Lacan's: «The effect of mimicry is camouflage […] It is not a question of harmonizing with the background but agaisnt a mottled background, of becoming mottled», Jacques Lacan *apud* Homi K. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

41 Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

42 Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

43 Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

perhaps more dangerous to the former than to the latter: «The *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority»[44]. One is, after all, offering a degree of power to a subject of oppression and yet, according to Bhabha, there is little risk of creating a revolution from within. The true danger that derives from mimicry is the weakening of the coloniser's hold over its dominions. By creating the hybrid position of the mimic man, the power structure has made clear the ambivalent nature of its power:

> [the mimic men] are the appropriate objects of a colonialist chain of command, authorized versions of otherness. But they are also, as I have shown, the figures of a doubling, the part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of these dominant discourses in which they emerge as 'inappropriate' colonial subjects. A desire that, through the repetition of *partial presence*, which is the basis of mimicry, articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial and historical difference that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority. It is a desire that reverses 'in part' the colonial appropriation by now producing a partial vision of the colonizer's presence; a gaze of otherness that shares the acuity of the genealogical gaze which, as Foucault describes it, liberates marginal elements and shatters the unity of man's being through which he extends his sovereignity.[45]

Therefore, mimicry acts as a defuser of colonial authority by shattering the very basis of subjugation: the ones in power can no longer claim to be kept there by their strength or imagined superiority if their subjects are built to be almost equals (*but not quite*). Colonial mimicry destroys the Western Enlightenment values of freedom – because the colonised must shed their culture to be like us, without being like us – and punctures a hole in the tissue of colonial authority by exposing its foundations: «Its threat […] comes from the prodigious and strategic production of conflictual, fantastic, discriminatory 'identity effects' in the play of power that is elusive because it hides no essence, no 'itself'»[46].

With Bhabha's mimicry in mind, let us return to the excerpt from *Portrait* quoted above. What is the priest really offering Stephen? Catholicism has at least one advantage over temporal forms of colonialism: its power over man is unquestionable because it derives directly from God. As the priest tells Stephen, no other person on earth has the same extent of power over their fellow humans, no king, no emperor has the power to free from sin or cast out the sinner from God for all

44 Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
45 *Idem*.
46 Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

eternity. It is an immense power indeed. The question remains: what is he actually offering Stephen? If Stephen were to pursue priesthood, would he really have crossed to the other side, would he really become the coloniser, or simply a camouflaged subject within the power structure? I will return to these questions later in this work but, for now, let me indulge in speculation. The reader knows that Stephen will not become a priest. Within Catholicism, there is a certain mystical event that could, possibly (but not surely), be equated with being born on the coloniser's side: the vocation, the call. Those who hear the call are the church's true princes. Stephen, who has thought of priesthood but who does not have the vocation, could never become a true coloniser. He would have been, quite literally, a mimic man, resembling other priests without actually *being* one. He, like so many others before and after him, would have shown the thinness of the Church's power by his mere ordination. This is, as I have said before, simple speculation. Its only value is to create a possible equivalence between a secular and a religious power, without any textual evidence to do so. Nonetheless, it does provide an illustration of Catholicism's power structure as akin to that of a colonial power.

Let us consider the same fragment of *Portrait* one last time, particularly in what concerns the priest's obsession with power. He mentions it no less than nine times in such a short speech. Power, authority, the priest is obsessed with it and tries to reel Stephen in with this prospect. Equally as revealing is the fact that so much stress is put into temporal power rather than divine one. The priests' power over their fellow man is, if not as great, almost next to God's, and that in a community where all men should bow to the almighty. A priest has more power than the saints, the angels, the Virgin Mary. And that is, I contend, because a priest has the power to control other men, something that no divinity has.

In fact, this particular point of view is backed up by historical data. The Roman Catholic Church had not only political power over Catholic nations but holdings of its own, where the Pope was the actual ruler of the people, besides being also their spiritual guide. Such *de jure* temporal power, however, declined with the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, in particular with the unification of Italy which displaced much of the papacy's territories into the newly formed state. The Pope's loss of direct temporal dominion over his people had to be replaced by a different kind of hold that would, at the same time, fight the modernist[47] crisis in Catholicism. A perfect example of this occurred at the 1870 First Vatican Council, when the dogma of Papal Infallibility was approved. Up until then a doctrinal decision had to be approved by a council of bishops,

47 The modernist crisis of Roman Catholicism is a general label for various widely different lines of thought that developed within the Church in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Modernism claimed for a revision of certain theological and liturgical aspects of Catholicism, proposing in some cases an approximation with Protestantism. Although condemned at first, modernist ideas eventually led to the Vatican Council II which changed the face of Catholicism to what we know today.

reducing the influence of the papacy and decentralising power. According to Geert Lernout, the ratification of the dogma of Papal Infallibility contributed to «redifine the nature of the church, its authority and its relationship with the temporal powers»[48]. The end result was a reinforcement of the Pope's power over the church and its people. While the Pope could no longer send an army to enslave the people, he could, for example, issue a doctrinal proclamation forbidding the believers to vote for the elections of the newly created Italian state, threatening with excommunion anyone who defied it. Catholic theology became stricter and stricter towards the end of the nineteenth century as an attempt to secure temporal power over a community – the Catholics – through divinely sanctioned doctrine.

I use here the word *community* quite deliberatively. I've shown that one can find grounds to consider Catholicism a colonial force both within Joyce's work and history; but I also find that a theoretical approach to it might be fruitful. Even if one cannot simply state that the Roman Catholic Church is the same as a nation – though, as I've explored before, it has the same narrative strategy as the modern nation defined by Bhabha –, one can see at least one similarity: the concept of *community*. Benedict Anderson defined a nation as an imagined political community, and imagined as limited and sovereign. Limited because it acknowledges that, no matter how large a community, it will never consider itself to encompass the whole of the human race; and sovereign because it refuses the reign of divinely ordained dynastic realms. Even if during the middle ages it fancied itself as a nation, Catholicism fails quite clearly at both dimensions posited by Anderson: its messianism dreamed of a universal all-encompassing membership and the papacy claimed divine power. Even if it is true that, during the middle ages, such divine power could be a reality for most if not all believers, Anderson claims that, during the Enlightenment and Revolution period, when the concept of nation was born, it would be impossible for even its most devout believers not to confront themselves with «the living *pluralism* of […] religions, and the allomorphism between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch»[49] – or, in other words, if so many faiths claim the same unique divine power, it undermines the very concept of a divinely ordained realm. However, one aspect that Catholicism always held true, was that of community. Anderson defines a community as something where «regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail […] [it] is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship»[50]. While *nation* can be defined to exclude Catholic, the concept of *imagined community* that Anderson uses to define nation can be applied to Catholicism quite clearly. Imagined because, according to Anderson, a real community would require each member to know each other. Since this is impossible to all but the

48 Lernout, *op. cit.*, 34.
49 Anderson, *op. cit.*, 7.
50 Idem.

smallest of groups, any sense of community is always imagined and developed by, as he argues, such elements as a common language. Catholicism's adherence to Latin and it's resistance to vernacular was, at first, an attempt to secure their messianic vision of a Universal faith and later, as I shall demonstrate in the chapters that follow, as a means of subjugation.

While such an approach to Catholicism might appear unorthodox at first sight, I believe it can greatly contribute to a fresh understanding of religion in James Joyce's work. In the next chapters I will look closely at Stephen's behaviour in *Portrait*, examining it to conclude if he has been somehow conditioned by his catholic upbringing. I will refer to post-colonial theory whenever fit but I will not, however, simply give another post-colonial reading with a slightly different twist. What I will do is provide post-colonialism with new and compelling questions and, hopefully, contribute to the opening of new paths in both post-colonial and joycean critique.

God's name, my name, my story

«Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo...» (*P* 5). These are the opening lines of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. They are Stephen's opening lines (or his father's, or his father's through Stephen).

It is a common discussion amongst readers and book lovers: which are the greatest opening lines in literature? This piece of literary pop culture, shallow as it sounds, has the ability to generate the most inflamed attacks and the most passionate defences. Hundreds, maybe thousands of top ten (or top one hundred, or top random number) opening lines in literature have been compiled throughout history, all of them capable of gathering a huge upheaval of commentaries criticising the exclusion or inclusion of a number of inevitably randomly selected quotations. Any newspaper culture editor worthy of the name knows that a selection of literature's finest openings is a sure way of gathering attention to the book section of the paper when news is scarce. A quick internet search will return countless lists, each one unique. A recent *The Observer* top ten[51] collects a number of classics – Joyce, Austen, Twain – and still the comment section of its website adds and subtracts names to the list. Some of the most usual contenders in lists such as this include Lev Tolstoy, Vladimir Nabokov, Jane Austen, Mark Twain, George Orwell and, occasionally, James Joyce. The criteria for the selection are always fuzzy at best, and non-existent most of the times. In the aforementioned *The Observer* top ten, for example, the first line of *Ulysses* is given as one of the ten best lines, yet the justification for its inclusion seems pale in comparison to the possibility of including the opening lines of *Finnegans Wake*: «This is the classic third-person opening to the 20th-century novel that has shaped modern fiction, pro and anti, for almost a hundred years. As a sentence, it is possibly outdone by the strange and lyrical beginning of Joyce's final and even more experimental novel, *Finnegans Wake*»[52]. The motives for including *Ulysses*'s first line are undermined by their own justification, making clear the ultimate futility of such an exercise – it is not the line itself that matters, but the book where the line comes from. That is the reasoning backing up the choice of *Ulysses*' admittedly conventional opening line over more experimental ones. Yet, there is something to be said for convention. If I were to select my top ten opening lines

51 Robert McCrum, «The 10 best first lines in fiction», in *The Observer*, Sunday 29th April 2012 [http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/gallery/2012/apr/29/ten-best-first-lines-fiction].

52 McCrum, *ibidem*.

in literature, personal as it sounds – for personal all such lists are – *Portrait*'s fairy tale opening would be at the top of the list, above Nabokov's *Lolita*'s enchanting rhythm, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*'s iconic synthesis, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*'s wit, George Orwell's *1984*'s abnormal normality, and even above *Finnegans Wake*'s mid-sentence experience.

There is nothing more conventional in fiction than starting a tale with *once upon a time*, and with reason. Most languages will have a similar formula with which to start their own folklore tales[53]. Consequently, little attention is given to the formula itself. However, on a closer look, one realises how rich with meaning it can be: the time of the action is set from the very beginning as something that happened in the past, yet the uncertainty of when it actually happened gives an immediate aura of fantasy to the narrative. Four common words hint at verisimilitude while clearly stating that what follows is fiction. For *once upon a time* is a formula too charged to mean anything else. To start a narrative with it is to put a giant screaming neon sign reading *this is fiction*.

This is, in part, what the opening lines of *Portrait* do. Yet, the convention is immediately subverted by the follow up *and a very good time it was*, adding a degree of subjectivity and personal experience to what is about to be told, as if the narrator was present during the narrative and was looking back fondly to that time past. To the screaming neon sign, a small *or is it?* had been added. One of the reasons why the first lines of *Portrait* are so relevant lies precisely in this defrauding of expectations, a small turn of phrase that commands the reader to go back to the beginning, to read anew and in a different light those four words that he has read or heard hundreds if not thousands of times before. In so few words, the reader has been made to reconsider a whole literary tradition and his own preconceptions about it. Furthermore, the musicality and rhythm of the sentence, taking the reader back to the early childhood of fairy tales, develops throughout the first paragraph in an almost melodic prosody, only to be broken by the three short, simple sentences that, once again, come unexpected to the reader: «His father told him that story: his father looked at him through the glass: he had a hairy face» (*P idem*). This sudden break will set the tone for the rest of the narrative, a narrative that must be fought against, full of silences, leaps, half truths and deficient understandings. Rather than the fairy tale cruise promised by the first lines, the narrative of *Portrait* is a tremendous puzzle missing key pieces. It is up to the reader to put the puzzle together as best as he can. The break from the first paragraph to the second is an example of this: it is a tale within a tale, told by someone to someone else, with no authoritative judgement or description mediating experience, almost incomprehensible – or at least meaningless – without prior

53 «Era uma vez», in Portuguese, «Il était une fois» in French, «C'era una volta» in Italian, for example.

knowledge of Irish mythology[54] or Joyce's biography[55]. It is only when one reads the second paragraph that one understands that the first was written not in the voice of the narrator nor in the voice of Stephen's, maybe not even in the voice of his father – instead, in the voice of his father as heard by Stephen and retold by the narrator. There is nothing simple or conventional about *Portrait*'s opening lines.

The reason why I started this section of my work discussing the pop culture obsession with literature's opening lines and with a defence of *Portrait*'s virtues in this domain is precisely because I wanted to briefly discuss the role of the narrator and its implications for my reading of the novel. *Portrait*'s narrative virtuosity is something of a calling card to the novel. On her introduction to the Oxford edition of *Portrait*, Jeri Johnson notes that «[Joyce] moved the narrative centre of consciousness from a wholly independent third-person narrator to one which exists between Stephen and the third-person narrator»[56]. This type of discursivity is sometimes classified as *free indirect speech*, defined by Gérard Genette as when «the narrator takes on the speech of the character, or, if one prefers, the character speaks through the voice of the narrator, and the two voices are then *merged*»[57]. Genette's, and most common definitions of free indirect speech, however, fall short of describing what exactly happens within *Portrait*. Actually, free indirect speech refers to every instance of narration that can be ascribed to be the character's words without presenting it as such, as it happens when a character speaks without being preceded by «then he said». What happens in *Portrait* is something slightly different, slightly more complex than this. It is not that Stephen's words are given within narration without any indication, instead, the narration itself is given as if Stephen was the narrator, without shifting to a first-person perspective[58]:

> While there is still a third-person narrator, that narrator presents *Stephen's* perceptions: the attitudes towards others and events are his; they are 'seen' by or 'focalized' by him. And because they are viewed by him, they reflect something about him. All go to the ends of characterizing the young artist-in-the-making.[59]

54 The «moocow» is a version of an Irish myth about a cow that took little children away from home to a fairy world from whence they would eventually return. Cf. Jeri Johnson in *P*, p. 224, n. 5.1-3.

55 In a letter to his son James, John Joyce wonders if he «recollect[s] the old days in Brighton Square, when you were Babie Tuckoo, and I used to take you out in the Square and tell you all about the moo-cow that used to come down from the mountain and take little boys across?», John Stanislaus Joyce, letter to James Joyce, 31st January 1931, in Stuart Gilbert and Richard Ellmann (eds.), *Letters of James Joyce*, vol. III, Faber and Faber, London, 1966, p. 212.

56 Johnson, «Introduction», in *P*, p. xiii.

57 Gérard Genette, «Discours du récit», in *Narrative Discourse. An essay on method*, transl. Jane E. Lewin, New York, Cornell University Press, 1980, p. 174.

58 The perspective will eventually shift to a first-person one in the final pages of the book, when the reader is given a glimpse of Stephen's diary.

59 Johnson, *idem*.

This has been a much discussed feature of *Portrait* and one of Joyce's most brilliant narrative innovations in this book. Hugh Kenner is responsible for establishing a tradition in this regard. When arguing against Wyndham Lewis' fierce criticism of Joyce's work, he established the famous «Uncle Charles Principle». The specific passage under attack is one at the beginning of chapter II: «Every morning, therefore, uncle Charles repaired to his outhouse but not before he had creased and brushed scrupulously his black hair and brushed and put on his tall hat» (*P* 50). Lewis objected to the use of the verb *repair*, for that would be the verb which lesser narratives would use to describe the action. Kenner, on the other hand, claimed that uncle Charles *repairs* to the outhouse precisely because that would be the type of vocabulary the character himself would use:

> 'repaired' wears invisible quotation marks. It would be Uncle Charle's own word should he chance to say what he was doing. Uncle Charles has notions of semantic elegance, akin to his ritual brushing of his hat; we hear him employing the word 'salubrious,' also the word 'mollifying.' If Uncle Charles spoke at all of his excursions to what he calls the outhouse, he would speak of 'repairing' there.
>
> Not that he does so speak, in our hearing. Rather, a speck of his characterizing vocabulary attends our sense of him. A word he need not even utter is there like a gnat in the air beside him, for us to perceive in the same field of attention in which we note how 'scrupulously' he brushes his hat. This is apparently something new in fiction, the normally neutral narrative vocabulary pervaded by a little cloud of idioms which a character might use if he were managing the narrative. […] Uncle Charles, puffing away at his pipe in the outhouse he calls 'his harbour' is a Namer, and deserves to have something named after him. So let us designate the Uncle Charles Principle: *the narrative idiom need not be the narrator's*.[60]

While Kenner speaks of *idiom*, Johnson prefers to use *idiolect*, «the *form of language* used by a particular individual, an idiosyncratic 'style', one characteristic of this person and not that»[61]. Common to both commentators – given, perhaps, the huge influence Kenner holds over every subsequent generation of Joyce critics – is the fact that even if they acknowledge *Portrait*'s peculiar narrator, it's to a third-person narrator that such peculiarities are ascribed. Johnson clearly states that «the narrative stays insistently third person. Stephen does not narrate this novel; he is narrated by

60 Hugh Kenner, «The Uncle Charles Principle», in *Joyce's Voices*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1978, 17-18.

61 Johnson, *idem*, p. xx.

it»[62] and that «[t]his may be Stephen's idiolect but the narrator has appropriated it to his own ends»[63].

What I would like to consider here for a moment is the possibility that the third-person narrator be Stephen himself, narrating his own story. No commentator dared to venture such possibility for good reason: there is no textual evidence to prove this supposition. Consequently, I am moving within the realm of speculation and aware of it. In my hypothetical scenario, Stephen thus becomes the complete antithesis of Tristram Shandy: while one positions himself as an eye witness to events he couldn't possibly have witnessed, such as his own conception, the narrator in *Portrait* positions himself outside the narrative while describing things no one but Stephen could have testified to, and doing so in a way that no one but Stephen could do. If my hypothesis were to be taken, Stephen would thus be narrating himself while trying, at the same time, to create a gap between Stephen-the-story-teller and Stephen-the-character. While such a theory of depersonalization could be convoluted, it wouldn't be uncharacteristic of him. Towards the end of the novel, when asked about his past by his friend Cranly, he looks back to realise that «[he] was *someone else* then» (*P* 202, emphasis added). If such depersonalization can happen in time, arguably it could happen in discourse as well.

If one is to consider momentarily that Stephen is the narrator disguising himself under a thir-person, one must ask who he is narrating the story to. A first impetus might be to ascribe the narration to the act of writing, that is to say, that Stephen would be the author of his own book. Taking a step back from the text itself, and given *Portrait*'s semi-autobiographical nature, it isn't hard to consider this a rather accurate hypothesis: one need only change Stephen's name to James. However, I brought this different perspective about the novel's narrator to the equation not because I want to venture yet another biographic reading of it, but because I would like to raise the question of Stephen's subalternity[64]. Allow me to ask again: who is he narrating this story to? Because every communication act presupposes a sender and a receiver, if the fictional Stephen is talking about himself through narrative, who is he talking to? He might be, in fact, writing his own book. Or he might be simply narrating to himself, as a lonely, isolated child might do. If that were the case, the whole narrative would be a document to Stephen's inability to speak, or rather, to make himself heard. He would become the ultimate subaltern, whose own life narrative would be unheard by anyone but himself. Throughout the narrative, as I shall demonstrate further on, Stephen will always try to make himself heard, and more often than not, he will fail. Narrating his own story to himself could thus be his admission of defeat, an acknowledgement of the impossibility of communication

62 Jonhson, *ibidem*.
63 Johnson, *idem*, p. xi.
64 Subalternity as defined by Spivak and explored in the introduction.

to the world outside the subject, a quasi solipsism.

Although tempting, my hypothesis of Stephen as the narrator in disguise clashes with two fundamental aspects of the narration: first, there is no formal proof that Stephen is the one setting the words to paper, that is to say, grammatically, the narrator of *Portrait* remains firmly attached to the third-person; second, the narrative remains in the present at all times. If *Portrait* had been narrated by Stephen himself, it would have implied that Stephen would be writing at some point in time after the closure of the novel, thus placing the whole narrative in the past; yet, other than in the various flashbacks, the narrative keeps itself strictly in the present; the flashbacks themselves are often a remembering of events already narrated in the story, as it happens whenever Stephen looks back at his time at Clongowes later in the novel. Such temporal displacement might be one of the single most crucial differences between a first-person and a third-person narrator: because the relationship between a first-person narrator and his story imitates the temporal continuity of one's life, it means that the narrator would be hampered by his own memory, reconstructing rather than retelling, what he felt, thought and did at the time of the action. As Dorrit Cohn writes, in her *Transparent Minds*, the relationship between a first-person narrator and his past self «imitates the temporal continuity of real beings […] therefore, the first-person narrator has less free access to his own past psyche than the omniscient narrator of third person fiction has to the psyches of his characters»[65]. *Portrait*'s narrator, for all his insight into Stephen's mind, shows none of these traits.

While this temporal continuity between the self that experienced the events and the self now retelling the story could be argued away with various hypothetical scenarios, when allied to the lack of grammatical proof, that is, in the absence of an I in the narrative voice, the possibility of Stephen being both the narrator and the protagonist becomes implausible – even impossible. As Cohn argues, «the continued employment of third-person references indicates, no matter how unobtrusively, the continued presence of a narrator»[66].

The question remains: what to make of *Portrait*'s narrator? Cohn proposes a possible classification for narratives of consciousness. The major division is between first- and third-person narrators; within third-person narrators one finds three separate possibilities: psycho-narration, «the narrator's discourse about a character's consciousness»[67]; quoted monologue, «a character's mental discourse»[68]; and narrated monologue, «a character's mental discourse in the guise of the narrator's discourse»[69]. The first point one must bear in mind when using Cohn's classification is that these

65 Dorrit Cohn, *Tranparent Minds. Narrative modes for presenting consciousness in fiction*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 144.
66 Dorrit Cohn, *op. cit*., p. 112.
67 Dorrit Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
68 *Ibidem*.
69 *Ibidem*.

categories do not define the narrator as a unified identity, but only the different techniques used throughout the narrative. As such, the techniques employed by *Portrait*'s narrator are not enough to define him as anything else than a third-person narrator, however they are quite revealing of his ambiguous relationship with Stephen. As Cohn notes, «[*Portrait*] contain[s] hardly any quoted monologues, but instead long stretches of narrated monologues combined with psycho-narration»[70], which adds up to the added difficulty that «[*Portrait*'s narrator] cannot be grasped as a separate entity within the text. His most striking characteristic is, in fact, that he is ungraspably chameleonic»[71]. The effect of these techniques, particularly of the narrated monologue, is of creating «a kind of mask, from behind which sounds the voice of a figural mind»[72]. While Cohn's structural definition of narrative techniques for conveying consciousness in fiction are of undisputable utility, because her argument relies so heavily on grammatical elements, her definition falls short of actually illuminating the reason why *Portrait*'s narrator pries so much into Stephen's mind. Weldon Thornton gives a step forward in that direction by questioning how much of what one reads is Stephen conscious, and how much is the narrator's vocalising of Stephen's unconscious mind. His argument is that it doesn't really matter the degree to which the narrator's words are an accurate depiction of Stephen's mind, for all of it goes to establish not only Stephen's individual psyche but the various external factors contributing to the definition of Stephen's character:

> while much of what Joyce presents to us through the print on the page lies beyond Stephen's conscious awareness and control, all of it should be regarded as forming part of his psyche – either of his individual psyche, or of the cultural or social psyche that underlies it[73].

Consequently, although Stephen and the narrator are definitely separate identities within the book, the narrator's discourse can still be regarded as an expression not only of Stephen's individual stance, but of his social and cultural surroundings as well. If Cohn's proposed structural definition of narratives of consciousness relied solely, or mostly, in grammatical categories and differentiation, Thornton adds to this an exegetic dimension, understanding the narrator's problematic stance not only by its enunciative person but by his function within the narrative. Thornton goes further than Cohn without, however, claiming that the narrator can be an accurate depiction of one's consciousness – that is, one does not think merely in words let alone sentences. As such, while a

70 Dorrit Cohn, *op. cit*., p. 71.
71 Dorrit Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
72 Dorrit Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
73 Weldon Thornton, *The Antimodernism of Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1994, p. 120-121.

narrator must be, by the very nature of thought allied to the grammatical impositions of narrative, an artificial depiction of a word-only world, *Portrait*'s narrator will try to bypass this limitation by using every word to replicate the environment's possible effects on the character's mind. That is, every narrative word is, at the same time, traditional narrative depicting what is happening, Stephen's conscious perception of the action, and Stephen's unconscious understanding of, and reaction to, the world. The narrator thus becomes a kind of synthesis between the whole social psyche, Stephen's psyche and the narrative function of discourse.

That is to say that the narrative discourse itself can be seen as a crucial element to establish Catholicism, not only in control over Stephen personally, but as powerful force within the social and cultural background in which Stephen defines himself and by which Stephen is defined. Consequently, every word counts, every slip of language into that of Catholicism can be seen as evidence. If so, when, for instance, the narrator describes Dublin's red light district where «yellow gasflames arose before his troubled vision against the vapoury sky, *burning as if before an altar*» (*P* 84, emphasis added), the comparison between the dark alleys of prostitution and the darkness of a church becomes a sign of Stephen's own church infested mind – he could not find another frame of reference to describe the scene before his eyes.

Curiously enough, throughout *Portrait* Stephen will try to define himself by separating himself from his surroundings. From the first pages Stephen will try to come to terms with his environment – «His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face. / He was baby tuckoo» (*P* 5) – and with his own position amidst the world around him. Immediately after the introductory paragraph, Stephen – or the narrator appropriating Stephen's point-of-view, to fall back to the most commonly accepted reading – will turn to consider where the fairy tale is coming from, to describe his father – as best as he can – and to identify himself. Perhaps the clearest instance of this self-describing, self-definition comes a few pages later, and a couple of years after in narrative time. I'm referring, of course, to Stephen's *ex-libris* in his geography book. The young school boy wrote:

> He turned to the flyleaf of the geography and read what he had written there: *himself*, his name and where he was.
>
> *Stephen Dedalus*
> *Class of Elements*
> *Clongowes Wood College*
> *Sallins*
> *County Kildare*

Ireland

Europe

The World

The Universe

(*P* 12, emphasis added on the second line)

It hardly seems worth mentioning how the fact that he is writing *himself* into his geography book is relevant to my argument. Stephen is not simply marking the book as his, not simply writing his name, nor even his address (there's no street or street number). What he is doing, as the narration tells us, is writing himself, that is, defining himself: textually and geographically. To do this, he clearly needs more than simply write his name, which in spite of its uniqueness is no guarantee to identity. He needs to place himself within a community – he is part of the Class of Elements –, that community within a larger community Clongowes Wood College –, that community part of a larger one, and so on an so forth. Eventually, Stephen's preciseness will lead to the realisation that he is nothing but a speck in human history, and even infinitely less than that within the whole Universe. One should also take a close look at the communities within which Stephen chooses to place himself. Most tellingly, of course, is the absence of any reference to the United Kingdom. Stephen's narrative of self jumps from Ireland to Europe, thus making a statement of the young boy's nationalist education, both within his household, as we shall see when looking at the famous Christmas dinner scene, and within his academic environment, for a Catholic college such as Clongowes will sympathise with Irish nationalism. Also to be noted is the lack of an explicit reference to a Catholic community. However, Catholicism is still part of Stephen's geography. He places himself within the community of Clongowes students, whose necessary religious affiliation must be Catholic. Consequently, even if Stephen is defining himself geographically, the ambiguities on two of the list's items – Class of Elements and Clongowes Wood College – tell the reader, and Stephen himself, something more about who he is, rather than simply where he is. Class of Elements could not only refer to a specific classroom within Clongowes building[74], but also give information about his age and, more significantly to my argument, his place within Clongowes hierarchy. Being part of the Class of Elements is, effectively, to be at the bottom of the food chain:

> the schoolboys were divided into three major groups by age. In descending order they were the higher (aged 15-18), lower (aged 15-13) and third (under 13) lines; each 'line' was further divided: the higher into poetry and rhetoric, the lower

74 Unfortunately, it proved impossible for me to have access to any documentation that would confirm this interpretation, though it is certainly a possibility.

into second and first grammar, the third into elements and third grammar.[75]

As such, Stephen is part of the lowest class of a Catholic community, for Clongowes Wood College is, again, both the building and the institution. And even though Stephen is often the first of his class in academic achievement – «Some weeks Jack Lawton got the card for first [of the class] and some weeks [Stephen] got the card for first»[76] (*P* 9) – his stance amongst his peers is a lot less dignified. Stephen has been bullied, mocked, literally thrown into a ditch by his school mates. The motives for his ostracisation remain somewhat unclear, however Stephen's exclusion provides us with a glimpse at his inability – and later unwillingness – to fit into groups. Perhaps the clearest – if not the most violent – example of his exclusion from the boy's social community lies in the famous episode when Stephen is asked whether or not he kisses his mother at night:

> – Tell us, Dedalus, do you kiss your mother before you go to bed?
>
> Stephen answered:
>
> – I do.
>
> Wells turned to the other fellows and said:
>
> – O, I say, here's a fellow says he kisses his mother every night before he goes to bed.
>
> The other fellows stopped their game and turned round, laughing. Stephen blushed under their eyes and said:
>
> – I do not.
>
> Wells said:
>
> – O, I say, here's a fellow says he doesn't kiss his mother before he goes to bed.
>
> They all laughed again. Stephen tried to laugh with them. He felt his whole body hot and confused in a moment. *What was the right answer to the question?* He had given two and still Wells laughed. *But Wells must know the right answer for he was in third of grammar*. He tried to think of Well's mother but *he did not dare to raise his eyes to Well's face*. (*P* 11, emphasis added)

The right answer is that there was no right answer, whatever Stephen said would be cause

75 Johnson in *P*, p. 225-226, n. 6.18.

76 The class of elements was further divided into two teams, Lancaster and York, as if reenacting English History on the War of the Roses, the succession crisis that opposed the two aristocratic lines to the throne of England. While Jack Lawton wears the red rose of Lancaster, Stephen wears the white of York. The two boys are then unwittingly reenacting the succession crisis, each claiming the distinction of first in class in turn. Significantly, according to Jonhson's note (cf. Johnson in *P*, p. 227, n. 9.13), Ireland supported the house of York. Thus, Stephen is once again being recruited as a soldier to the Irish cause.

for laughs. As Vicki Mahaffey acknowledges, «[the] questioner retains his authority and reaffirms his superiority as long as the respondent accepts the terms of the question»[77]. The reason why is that within the question and the boys mockery were two concurring value systems: the social code by which one should honour and love one's parents, be gentle, kind and obedient to them; and the Catholic mistrust of sexuality, for which the act of kissing has been maliciously sexualised in the boys' mocking question[78]. Clearly Stephen was not privy to the sexual innuendos of kissing one's mother, and for his first answer he was mocked for his innocence. Even if Stephen would've said no the first time, he would still be teased. How dare he not kiss the person who gave birth to him? The only possible answer that would save Stephen from embarrassment would be to face Wells' mocking and confront him in his own game: *do you kiss your mother at night? No? How dare you! Yes? Have you no shame?* By changing his answer according to laughs, Stephen only made it clearer that he was neither one of the boys nor one to face the boys; he was simply the whipping boy, a subject of the other boys' authority expressed through mocking. Stephen, characteristically for his early years, will acknowledge such authority. He assumed that Wells knew the correct answer, for he was older and in a higher class than him, and he dared not raise his eyes to Wells, as one will often shy away from intimidating authoritative figures. Stephen acquiesced by the other's unfounded claim to authority. Although they are probably unaware of this, the form by which the older boys subdue Stephen is none other than a simple withholding of knowledge, as Jessica Berman has noted: «[the older boys] exert power by withholding this level of meaning [the discourse of sexuality] from him»[79]. Stephen could not know the answer because he was not part of the dominant class, and the older boys kept their power by denying him of such. Also interesting to highlight is the way the boys' discourse is informed by the languages of politics and religion, as Berman has noted through her reading of Trevor Williams' *Reading Joyce Politically*[80]: «For Williams, this episode revolves around Stephen's becoming socialized into the male values of the school, which, in turn are imbued with the language of church and state»[81]. Wells had first established his dominion over Stephen when he asked «Is [your father] a magistrate?» (*P* 6), a question that should read *are we social equals*? A question of double interest because, as Tracey Teets Schwarze notes, «Catholic Wells and the other magistrates' sons appropriate an English class

77 Vicki Mahaffei, «Framing, being framed, and the Janus faces of authority» in Philip Brady and James F. Carens *Critical Essays on James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, New York, G. K. Hall & Co., 1998, p. 293.

78 Catholic hagiography famously holds that Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, one of the patron saints of youth (also patron saint of James Aloysius Joyce), would not kiss his mother in order to keep his body pure. Cf. Johnson in *P*, p. 227-228, n. 11.6.

79 Jessica Berman, «Comparative colonialisms: Joyce, Anand and the question of Engagement», in *Modernism/Modernity*, vol. 13, n. 3, John Hopkins University Press, 2006, p. 471.

80 Trevor Williams, *Reading Joyce Politically*, Gaineville, University Press of Florida, 1997.

81 Berman, *ibidem*.

structure[82] in order to subdue Stephen»[83]. It becomes clear then that Wells' aggressive questioning – is your father a magistrate? do you kiss your mother before going to bed? – is a form of exerting power over his fellow student Stephen. The second question in particular seems designed not only to establish superiority but to humiliate the young boy as well. The codes of state and religion, in Williams' reading – or society and religion, in my slightly less politicised view[84] – are at play in the question and with surprising antagonistic views. Society says it is wrong for a young boy not to show his mother respect by kissing her at night, religion frowns upon any sort of open display of affection, as inferred by the older boys. Stephen's inability to navigate between the Scylla and Charybdis of Church and Society will mark him from the very start as an outsider on his way to exile.

Withholding knowledge as a way of exerting power over another is not a device unique to the school boy society. In fact, they seem to have learnt directly from their own masters that the best way to fuel fear is to keep everyone guessing what really happened. I'm alluding to the boys accused of *smugging*, in chapter I. The narrative starts when Stephen approaches a group of boys who are discussing the latest gossip in the college:

> The fellows talked together in little groups.
>
> One fellow said:
>
> – They were caught near the Hill of Lyons.
>
> – Who caught them?
>
> – Mr Gleeson and the minister. They were on a car.
>
> The same fellow added:
>
> – A fellow in the higher line told me.
>
> Fleming asked:
>
> – But why did they run away, tell us?
>
> – I know why, Cecil Thunder said. Because they had fecked cash out of the rector's room.
>
> – Who fecked it?
>
> – Kickham's brother. And they all went shares in it.
>
> But that was stealing. How could they have done that? (*P* 33)

82 Magistrates were colonial appointed officials, a position more often occupied by protestants but open to Catholics by the late nineteenth century. Cf. Johnson in *P*, p. 226, n. 6.33.

83 Tracey Teets Schwarze, «Silencing Stephen: Colonial pathologies in Victorian Dublin», in *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 43, n. 3, Hofstra University Press, 1997, p. 254.

84 State, of course, would encompass and inform social behaviour. Nonetheless, I do not wish to overly connect the concept of state, too charged with nationalist issues, with that of society.

A group of boys had been caught doing something against the rules, that seems to be general knowledge to everyone in the college. What they did exactly, and how they were to be punished, is a different story. The first fellow to speak in the excerpt above seems to have privy information to what really went on, for he was told by a «fellow in a higher line», that is to say to someone who is higher in hierarchy than he is. This is not, however, an issue to be dealt with by the boys. There is a different type of community here, one which encompasses both boys and masters, and the masters are the ones in power. The boys will each have a different explanation for what happened: Cecil Thunder claims they stole money from the rector's office, Wells said they drank the altar wine in the sacristy and were found by the smell on their breath, Athy claims they were caught «smugging»[85], and each will point to an older boy as the source of the information. No one will claim to have learnt anything from the priests, the class who will, most likely, know what actually happened[86]. The priests themselves will not let on to the boys what they know. This unspecified crime creates both a sense of fear and outrage. «And are we all to be punished for what other fellows did?», said Fleming. While the boys are kept in the dark about what the actually crime was, it would be lawful to punish everyone – when no one knows what they have been accused of, no one can contest. If only a group of boys committed a crime, only they could be punished. Clongwoes hierarchy, however, seems to treat the boys more like a unit, much like one hears about the army: when one fall, they all fall. More than the general punishment, it's the atmosphere of fear that is most powerful in conditioning the boys: «The fellows laughed: but [Stephen] felt that they were a little afraid» (*P* 37). According to one of them, Cecil Thunder, all of the boys in the college are being sent up «for six and eight[87] every minute» (*P* 36) for minor offences – or none at all, as it will happen to Stephen. The atmosphere of fear is so effective that even outraged by the injustice of being randomly punished, the boys dare not take a stand:

> – Let us get up a rebellion, Fleming said. Will we?
>
> All the fellows were silent. The air was very silent and you could hear the cricketbats but more slowly than before: pick, pock.
>
> Wells asked:
>
> – What is going to be done to them? (*ibidem*)

85 According to Johnson in *P*, p. 234, n. 35.18: «'to smug': 'To toy amourously in secret' (Joseph Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary* (London: Henry Frowde, 1898-1905)); here, clearly, 'homosexual amorous toying'.»

86 Athy's hypothesis, however, seems to be the one closer to the truth: he claims to have heard it from Simon Moonan who was, apparently, involved in the crime. Furthermore, an offence of homosexual undertones would justify the secrecy kept by the clergy, although it wouldn't be a necessary reason for it.

87 «shorthand for a particular punishment: number of strokes that the palms of the hands are struck: three on each followed by four on each», Johnson in *P*, p. 234, n. 36.29-30.

Fleming is clearly the most outraged of all. He was the one questioning the reason behind the punishment to be administrated to the whole college and he is now inciting a rebellion. Yet, in this he is alone. The silence that fell after his rebellious cry couldn't be more deafening and Wells quickly changes subject. The boys may feel the injustice, but fear has taken control of their actions. The withholding of knowledge is effective to create the fearful atmosphere, and fear is a powerful weapon. If Simon Moonan, Tusker, Corrigan and the other boys who were caught are to be flogged or expelled, according to their personal choice – is it really a choice? –, who can imagine what would happen to any boy who joined a rebellion?

Throughout the boys' speculative discussion, Stephen's mind will begin to drift away in his own considerations about what happened. He may be shocked to learn that the boys have stolen money – «How could they have done that?» – but he is even more so when the event turns from simple crime to sacrilege. It was bad enough to steal, but to drink altar wine was more than a crime, it was a crime against the sacred:

> The fellows were all silent. Stephen stood among them, afraid to speak, listening. A faint sickness of awe made him feel weak. How could they have done that? He though ot the *dark silent sacristy*. There were *dark wooden presses* were the crimped surplices lay quietly folded. It was not a chapel but still you had to speak under your breath. *It was a holy place*. […] *A strange and holy place*. (*P* 34, emphasis added)

The way in which Stephen thinks of the sacristy characterises the way he sees the crime committed by his school mates is good evidence of the moral standpoint from which Stephen judges their action. It was not the stealing itself, it was that they had perpetrated a crime against the sacred. The sacristy was a strange and holy place, where silence and darkness dwelt. When the hypothesis of sacrilege was discarded for a more worldly one – and, as it was too worldly, a greater sin – Stephen is left to his own devices to try and figure out what smugging meant. He did not know, he dare not ask, and the boys would not explain any further, resting the discussion on the somewhat obscure term. One might even suppose that Athy himself who had told everyone that they were being punished for smugging, or any of the other boys, was not clear on what the word really meant:

> – Smugging.
>
> All the fellows were silent: and Athy said:

> – And that's why.
>
> Stephen looked at the faces of the fellows but they were all looking across the playground. He wanted to ask somebody about it. What did that mean about the smugging in the square? Why did the five fellows out of the higher line run away for that? It was a joke, he thought. (*P* 37)

Athy offers no other explanation and the boys ask no further questions. We know that Stephen is unsure about what it might mean and that he is afraid to ask what it could be – he now knows that by admitting lack of knowledge to the other boys he is putting himself into a subservient position, as he had learnt from the *do you kiss your mother* incident. The other boys themselves might be experiencing similar thoughts. Whatever it is, smugging is a crime – or a sin – grave enough to prevent further discussion. Stephen, left to himself, can only think of crimes sinful in their nature. While the other boys have closed the case on what the perpetrators have done and have moved on to punishment, even when they are all back in class, writing their latin themes, Stephen, sitting quietly, unable to write after breaking his glasses, will go back once more, mixing the crime of stealing with the sacrilege of drinking altar wine. The boys, he thought, must have stolen something sacred:

> But why were they to suffer for what fellows in the higher line did? Wells had said that they had drunk some of the altar wine out of the press in the sacristy and that it had been found out who had done it by the smell. Perhaps they had stolen a monstrance to run away with it and sell it somewhere. *That must have been a terrible sin*, to go in there quietly at night, to open the dark press and steal *the flashing gold thing into which God was put on the altar* in the middle of flowers and candles at benediction while the incense went up in clouds at both sides as the fellow swung the censer and Dominic Kelly sang the first part by himself in the choir. But *God was not in it of course* when they stole it. But still *it was a strange and a great sin even to touch it*. He thought of it with deep awe; a *terrible and strange sin*: it thrilled him to think of it in the silence when the pens scraped lightly. But to drink the altar wine out of the press and be found out by the smell *was a sin too*: but *it was not terrible and strange*. (*P* 39, emphasis added)

Because Stephen is unable to comprehend what smugging meant, he seems to have put it out of his mind. He moved on to what *he* thinks could have happened. What Stephen thinks is, undoubtedly, informed by his Catholic environment. He cannot even consider that the boy's crime

was anything as mundane as a simple theft: if they stole anything, it had to be a sacred item. That would be cause enough for the general punishment and the atmosphere of fear that took the Clongowes' boys by their flogged hands. Stephen's mind will speed through the irreverence of drinking wine – it was a sin too, but it was not a serious one, he thinks – to the full out blasphemy of stealing God[88]. Precisely because he had to explicitly think it impossible to steal God is evidence enough that his mind is working symbolically with that assumption, or that it has at least considered it. The words Stephen uses to characterise all things sacred – dark, silence, strange – are an indication of the boy's fascination with religious imagery. His mind will quickly drift away from the hypothesis of stealing a religious object, to the function of this object, to the rite surrounding the object, and to all its corresponding pageantry: the incense, the candles, the flowers, the music and the choir chants. Consequently, the boys who stole the monstrance would have been guilty of destroying the sacred ritual as well. More than the theft of a golden object it's the disruption of the ceremony that troubles Stephen. Even if the monstrance had been empty, it was still a strange and terrible sin to touch it, not because it was valuable, but because this particular object was sacred and associated with a sacred rite. The word Stephen chooses to qualify the gravity of the sin is also meaningful: strange. The same strangeness he used to describe the sacristy – a strange and holy place. The sacred and the religious are strange to Stephen, not because they are out of the ordinary – he must have experienced enough masses by this point in life to have grown accustomed to this sort of strangeness – but because they are mysterious, something which his mind cannot quite apprehend, a type of knowledge that has been kept away from him. The way Catholicism exerts power over the young boy is, much like the priests over their students, and the students on one another, by keeping things mysterious, secret, and strange – that is to say, by withholding knowledge. One cannot fight what one cannot understand. There is at least one further example of someone putting Stephen into a subservient position by withholding knowledge, perhaps the clearest example of all, albeit probably the one with the least consequences. When Stephen is committed to the infirmary with a fever, another boy shares the space with him, Athy. Athy seems friendly at first, and tries Stephen with a riddle:

> – Can you answer me this one? Why is the county of Kildare like the leg of

88 Catholic theology holds that God is present in both bread and wine in the Eucharist. This is the dogma of *transubstantiation*. Stephen may not have thought in the same terms about the drinking of wine because there was no object associated with transubstantiated wine in the story told by Wells. The monstrance, on the other hand, has only one function: to display God. The transubstantiation occurred long before the object's appearance in the ceremony, consequently Stephen cannot think of it without thinking of God, as he does with the wine. There is, nonetheless, a degree of sacredness associated with drinking the wine in the sacristy that operates as an undertone for both the boys discussion and Stephen's *reverie*, making it a sin, rather than a simple theft, albeit not a «strange and terrible one».

a fellow's breeches?

Stephen thought what could be the answer and then said:

– I give up.

– Because there's a thigh in it, he said. Do you see the joke? Athy is a town in the county Kildare and a thigh is the other thigh (*P* 20)

Stephen, either by his inability to solve riddles, as he had explained before, or affected by the fever, could not provide his school mate with any worthy answer. Perhaps he didn't try hard enough, for Athy's mood will quickly change from playful to accusative. «That's an old riddle, he said» (*ibidem*), as if demanding an explanation. *How can you not know this?* Of course there is yet another undertone to Athy's sudden change of humour: nationalism. A fellow who does not know his own nation cannot be a good fellow. The playfulness will change to accusation, and the accusation to punishment and subjection:

– You know, he said, you can ask the riddle another way?

– Can you? said Stephen.

– The same riddle, he said. Do you know the other way to ask it?

– No, said Stephen.

– Can you not think of the other way? he said.

He looked at Stephen over the bedclothes as he spoke. Then he lay back on the pillow and said:

– There is another way but I won't tell you what it is.

Why did he not tell it? His father, who kept the racehorses, must be a magistrate too like Saurin's father and Nasty Roche's father. He thought of his own father […] and he felt sorry for him that he was not a magistrate like the other boys' fathers. (*P* 21)

Athy, having tested Stephen on his adeptness at solving riddles, or, in other words, on his ability to get along with his fellow school mates, decided he was neither a good fellow nor a good nationalist, perhaps not even very clever, for he could not give a fair try at the riddle nor at the different way to ask the riddle. He immediately turns to superiority – I'm not going to tell you the answer – and to silence. Perhaps I'm reading too much into it, perhaps, like Stephen, I feel outraged about not understanding why I can't, as a reader, know what the different way of asking the riddle is – and that is one of the wonders of *Portrait*'s narrator. The fact is that Stephen himself will place this event along the same lines as the ones I've explored above: why could he not know? The link

between the withholding of knowledge is his, not mine. His mind will try to cope with it by reasoning that Athy's father must be a magistrate, while his is not. Knowledge is something that is only privy to magistrates' sons, and he felt sorry for his father for not being a magistrate, or more likely, for himself, being deprived of his answer and feeling as an outsider in the community. His father had told him that he would fit right in, «he would be no stranger [at Clongowes]» (*ibidem*), but Stephen has trouble finding it so. The connection that Stephen makes between being denied information and not being a magistrate's son is revealing: he has already internalised the idea that he is at the bottom of the school's society, perhaps that he shouldn't even be there.

Yet there he is. Let us turn once more to Stephen's geography book. Stephen reads the list from top to bottom, to place himself, and from bottom to top to define himself: «he read the flyleaf from the bottom to the top till he came to his own name. *That was he*» (*P* 12). There are at least two possible readings to this definitive *that was he*: that he defined himself as an Irish, Clongowes student in the Class of Elements, or, on the other hand, that he was, first and foremost, Stephen Dedalus, that is to say, that Stephen defined himself not exactly as part of the community but as above and in spite of it. If that is so, Stephen's efforts at an individualist self-definition could not go unsanctioned by his immediate community:

> [The list] was in his writing: and Fleming one night for a cod had written on the opposite page:
>
> *Stephen Dedalus is my name,*
> *Ireland is my nation.*
> *Clongowes is my dwellingplace*
> *And heaven my expectation.*
> (*P idem*)

Fleming took it upon himself to restrain Stephen's hint of individualism. Yes, it was all for a cod, a joke, yet, the old saying goes, many a truth is said in jest. Stephen cannot define himself as Stephen, that is just his name. He is, most of all, an Irishman; a Clongownian and a Catholic. Fleming has condensed, erased, clarified and censured Stephen's self-definition. He cannot escape community, whether it calls itself his nation, his dwellingplace or his religion. The boy's effort at self-narration has been overwritten by the larger narratives, for they, as Bhabha has shown and as I have previously explored, will always overwrite the individual narrative. Stephen was literally trying to write himself into the margin (of his book and of his communities), and even so the larger narrative of nation and, most significantly, religion overwrote him. There is no space for self-

definition within the larger narrative, for the individual can only be allowed to exist on what complies with it. He is not Stephen Dedalus, that is just his name, and it really doesn't matter where he is – Clongowes is, after all, just the current dwellingplace[89]. The only sanctioned elements of definition he is allowed to have are his nation and his religion. He is an Irishman and a Catholic. That is all.

Stephen's efforts at self-definition through naming are not without precedent. In fact, just after reading the flyleaf of his geography book, the young boy's mind will jump to the reasoning on which he based his own attempted identity. Stephen is fascinated with words and his boyish thought shifts from one word to the other, trying to grasp its essence: «That was a belt round his pocket. And belt was also to give a fellow a belt» (*P* 7) or «Suck was a queer word. […] And when [the dirty water] had all gone down slowly the hole in the basin had made a sound like that: suck. Only louder» (*P* 8-9). Another such queer word is God. What does it mean? God's name was God, and God is God, as simple as that. In a futile attempt to grasp the concept of everything, Stephen tried to understand God as the one who would be able to think of the Universe:

> It was very big to think about everything and everywhere. Only God could do that. He tried to think what a big thought that must be *but he could only think of God*. God was God's name *just as his name was Stephen*. *Dieu* was the French for God and that was God's name too; and when anyone prayed to god and said *Dieu* then God knew at once that it was a French person that was praying. But though there were different names for God in all the different languages in the world and God understood what all the people who prayed said in their different languages still God remained always the same God and *God's real name was God*. (*P* 13, emphasis added)

Stephen's ruminations on God's name derive from both his relationship with words and with his struggle to understand identity. If God's name is God, just as his name is Stephen, why can't he just be Stephen? Working in the background of Stephen's mind is, of course, the Christian notion that God's name is also the mark of his identity, for there are no other gods. Consequently, God has no name but God. Of course, the actual theological debate in which Stephen has unwittingly thrown himself into is much more complicated than his young mind can apprehend. The significant passage where God tells Moses how He should be called is the subject of much controversy. The Douay Bible[90] has it like this:

89 As it happens with most religions, Catholicism sees earthly life merely as a transitory stage to eternal life, where the soul will be next to God.

90 The Douay Bible, or the Douay-Rheims Bible, is the Catholic translation of the bible, the first into English, written

> Moses said to God: Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel, and say to them: The God of your fathers hath sent me to you. If they should say to me: What is his name? what shall I say to them? God said to Moses: I AM WHO AM. He said: Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: HE WHO IS, hath sent me to you. (DRB *Exodus* 3, 13-14)

While the King James' Version is slightly different:

> And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (KJB *Exodus* 3, 13-14)

The difference between the Catholic and the Anglican versions are small, but significant. The Catholic version flexes the name of God – *I am who am* becomes *he who is* when Moses retells it – while the Anglican version will take God's name more literally – *I am that I am* remains *I am* when Moses is to retell it to the children of Israel. Consequently, while Anglicanism has the name of God as its self-definition, Catholicism will define God not by the name but by *being*:

> Finite beings are defined by their essence: God can be defined only be being, pure and simple, nothing less and nothing more; not be abstract being common to everything, and characteristic of nothing in particular, but by concrete being, absolute being, the ocean of all substantial being, independent of any cause, incapable of change, exceeding all duration, because He is infinite[91]

The question of God's name becomes even more complicated when one looks at the different

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as an effort of Counter-Reformation, in order to repel the influence of the Anglican version of the sacred texts. The Douay Bible, as well as King James' Authorised Version, is available on-line at http://www.drbo.org/ (King James' at http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/). I will quote from both on-line versions using the acronyms DRB and KJB for the Douay and King James' versions respectively, unless expressly noted otherwise. When doubt arises from the correction of a certain passage, I will recur to printed editions, namely the Douay edition of 1837, printed by Richard Coyne in Maynooth and the King James' edition of 1841, printed in London by Longman, Orme, Brown, Longmans and Barrit and Co.

91 Anthony Maas, «Jehovah (Yahweh)» in *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 8. New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08329a.htm]. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* is a work contemporary with Joyce that gathers all of Catholic theology at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is invaluable for anyone wishing to understand the official Catholic position at the time, the same Joyce would have been taught. It is freely available on-line at http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/. I will quote from this source. Scanned volumes are also available.

representations of the sacred tetragrammaton, supposed to be God's true name, YHWH. On one such instance, in the same *Exodus*, the Douay bible has it «That appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; and my name ADONAI I did not shew them» while the King James' prefers «And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them» (DRB and KJB *Exodus* 6, 3). The immediate difference between the two bibles can be easily explained. According to Jewish law, it was forbidden to pronounce God's name, as inferred from the second[92] commandment, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*. Consequently, whenever the sacred tetragrammaton occurred in the Bible – and it did appear a lot, up to six thousand times in the Old Testament[93] – it was to be substituted in reading by the hebrew word *Adonai*, meaning Lord (*Kyrios* in Greek, *Dominus* in latin). As such, and even though there is no impediment to pronounce the tetragrammaton in Catholicism, the Douay Bible kept the jewish intent on not translating YHWH, using *adonai* whenever it came up. This translation is in line with the Catholic theological position mentioned above that God cannot be defined by a name but by his own being – eternal, absolute, all powerful, and, consequently, God's *real* name would be of little importance. The Anglican version, however, will use a version of the tetragrammaton, Jehovah. The history of such translation, in Catholic historiography, is quite interesting in itself. Ancient Hebrew had no graphic sign for vowels. The non-utterance of the name of God, forbidden by law, meant that the actual pronunciation of YHWH was lost in time. When the vowels' graphic signs were developed, the vowels of *adonai* were attributed to YHWH, hence Jehovah[94]. What I would like to underline here is the fact that Anglicanism has a slightly stronger hold to God's name than Catholicism, though its practical effects in everyday religiousness are similar. While Catholicism dismisses the tetragrammaton, or God's *real* name as unimportant, Anglicanism will keep it in its scriptures (though more recent editions will usually opt to translate it as LORD, in all caps or small caps so as to distinguish it from other occurrences of the word 'Lord') which indicates that the naming of God goes beyond the Catholic definition of who he is. In simpler terms, Catholicism is uninterested in

92 In Catholicism and Lutheranism; third commandment in Judaism, Greek Orthodoxism and several Protestant denominations.

93 *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, *idem*.

94 Cf. A. R. Buckland and A. Lukyn Williams (eds.), *The Universal Bible Dictionary*, Lutterworth Press, London, 1956 (1st ed. 1914), «Jehovah», p. 234: «When, however (in the eight and ninth centuries A. D.), the vowel-points were added to the Hebrew consonants, those of Adonai were given to YHWH instead of its own. Hence, if the first 'a' were slightly slurred it was possible to read Y*e*H*o*W*a*H, which actually happened.» Although *The Universal Bible Dictionary* has no clear sectarian affiliation, it is reasonable to assume that its origins are protestant, for the preface will note that biblical quotations come from the Authorised Version. However, this historical reading is also that of Catholicism, cf. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, *idem*, and *Christos. Enciclopédia do Cristianismo*, Verbo, Lisboa, 2004, «JHWH», p. 487: «A pronúncua exacta de JHWH não é conhecida. A sua leitura vocalizada com 'a' e 'e' (Jahweh) é desaconselhada porque irreverente e, por isso, ofensiva para a fé judaica. Completamente infundada é a vocalização com 'e', 'o', 'a', donde Jehowa ou Jeová.»

God's *real* name – he is simply defined as God – while Anglicanism will acknowledge that God has a name, be it YHWH or *I am that I am*.

At this point in the narrative, Stephen might not know the theological issues at play behind the concept of God's name, much less the historiography of the tetragrammaton, but he is certainly aware of the importance of it. In his small digression he will fight and try to resolve his boyish doubts about the nature of God's name. For one, if God's name is God, how can it be that in French it is *Dieu*? And how can it be that in all languages there's a different word for God? (Would he consider *Allah* to be God's name as well?) Stephen will fall back to Catholic theology to explain this conundrum. For God's name is not a word, or to put it another way, God's name is all words that refer to God, so God's name is not one word but God itself. Stephen demonstrates a remarkable ability to deal with difficult concepts and overcome them with relative ease. Nonetheless, this is not so much proof of his powerful intellect as it is the effect of a strong Catholic hold on the young boy mixed with his understanding of languages: he knows different words in different languages can mean the same thing in the real world, and he knows that God is not defined by his name but by what he is. So God and Dieu are both God's name because they refer to the same being, and they are both God's name because God's name is its own definition. Consequently, God's *real* name is God, much like ivory's and *ivoire*'s *real* name is the thing itself, the matter of which an elephant's tusk is made.

What I deem most interesting in all of this, for my argument, is the fact that Stephen's attempt at self-definition will operate the same devices that Catholic theology uses to define God. God's name is God, just like his name is Stephen. That is precisely what the young boy attempts when he tries to write *himself* into his geography book: he wrote his name because his mind had been informed to understand God's name as God's definition. As such, and because he *could only think of God*, his self-narrative will appropriate Catholic theology to achieve its definition. I should make clear, however, that I am not suggesting that Stephen thinks himself akin to God, nor that he does it consciously, not even subconsciously. It is simply how his mind operates within a Catholic power structure: his mind has been constricted to work in such a way, his understanding of the world and of himself at this point in the narrative is Catholic.

Stephen cannot help but to think of God in all he does, so much so that when he develops a fever and is sent to the Clongowes' infirmary, he will start immediately to muse upon his death and his funeral. The fever began when he was thrown into a ditch, the day before, by his personal tormentor, Wells:

> He shivered as if he had cold slimy water next to his skin. That was mean

> of Wells to shoulder him into the square ditch[95] because he would not swop his little snuff box for Wells's seasoned hacking chestnut, the conqueror of forty[96]. How cold and slimy the water had been! A fellow had once seen a big rat jump into the scum. (*P* 8)

Clearly Stephen has trouble fitting with his fellow schoolmates, and Wells in particular has taken a shine to humiliating the young boy. The aggression couldn't be clearer: he is literally thrown into a sewer, likened to human waste, physically abused for not complying with Wells' demands. He is not the son of a magistrate, he will not understand the threat in his school mate's proposed deal, and he will not be able to answer correctly – nor could he, as I have explored before – to the trap question of whether or not he kisses his mother before going to bed. All this may contribute decisively to his obsession with his own death while he lies in the infirmary bed. Even if it is natural for a young child to fear death – once one has learnt about it – and deem himself ill enough to be near death, that seems a weak explanation for his escapist thoughts, most clearly seen, perhaps, in the letter he mentally composes to his parents:

> Dear Mother
>
> I am sick. I want to go home. Please come and take me home. I am in the infirmary.
>
> Your fond son,
>
> Stephen.
>
> (*P* 19)

Interestingly enough, the emphasis Stephen puts in the letter is not so much of how sick he is, how he feels terribly ill and approaching death. Stephen prefers to emphasise where he wants to be instead – I want to go home, please take me home – and where he is now and doesn't want to be – I am in the infirmary, one might add at Clongowes – a piece of information that even a child would know it was implied and unnecessary. Where would one be when one is ill enough to ask for one's parents if not in a medical care facility? Stephen doesn't want to go home to get better quickly, he wants to go home to escape Clongowes and its question-asking, ditch-throwing school mates

95 «'square' refers not to the shape of the ditch, but to its location. The 'square' was the boys nickname for the outside lavatory behind the dormitory; the 'ditch' either the slate through running across it or the cesspool for it», Johnson in *P*, p. 227, n. 8.10.

96 «as in the childhood game of 'conkers', a horse chestnut with a hole drilled in it through which a string is passed; held by the string, one chestnut is hit against another in an attempt to best the opponent by breaking his chestnut. This one has beaten forty others (either directly or by beating others which had themselves beaten others, so totalling forty)», Johnson in *P*, p. 227, n.8.11.

with whom he has trouble connecting. Stephen has failed to learn or adapt to any of the rules of his school boy society, except one, one who was explicitly told by his father: «And his father had told him if he wanted anything to write home to him and, *whatever he did, never to peach on a fellow*» (*P* 7). This might be the golden rule of all school boys, perhaps even the only universal rule in the history of mankind – don't betray your fellow students, don't tell on them, don't sell them out. Clearly, there's something more at play behind this golden rule, it opposes the school boys to their masters, the teachers are the enemy in a fight between childish play and growing responsibilities. The masters are the keepers of order, but they are also the ones repressing the boys' behaviour: sit straight, don't chew with your mouth open, do your homework. The masters might be trying to teach the children how to be a proper man, but they are also the brutal repressive police force – the enemy. The golden rule of *never peaching on a fellow*, as Stephen's father puts it, thus carries this inherent opposition between two groups: school children and their masters, as if the school was a microcosm of colonial oppression. For all his faults, Stephen has already learnt that, somehow, he owes more loyalty to his fellow students who humiliate him at every chance, than to his masters:

> A voice at his bed said:
>
> – Dedalus, don't spy on us, sure you won't?
>
> Wells's face was there. He looked at it and saw that Wells was afraid.
>
> – I didn't mean to. Sure you won't?
>
> His father had told him, whatever he did, never to peach on a fellow. He shook his head and answered no and felt glad. Wells said:
>
> – I didn't mean to, honour bright. It was only for a cod. I'm sorry.
>
> The face and the voice went away. Sorry because he was afraid. (*P* 17)

Wells still doesn't know if he can trust Stephen to uphold the golden-rule, after all he is still an outcast who has failed every other trial he was given. Wells fears Stephen might want to take revenge of him and of his other fellows by crossing to the other side. Stephen, on the other hand, promised not to do so, but not due to his loyalty to the golden rule. As it soon becomes clear, Stephen kept quite out of spite, to show to his school mates, Wells in particular, how magnanimous he can be. Not by chance the narrator will make clear that Stephen thinks that Wells is only sorry because he was afraid of being punished by the priests, rather than out of his own heart – Stephen is not proud of himself for having kept by the golden rule, he relishes punishing his school mate by making him feel afraid. Stephen finally has the upper hand on someone: he could tell on Wells, but that wouldn't be enough. Even if he was believed by the priests, the worst Wells would have to

endure would be a flogging and, as Cecil Thunder will say later in the narrative, «a flogging wears off after a bit» (*P* 37). The proper punishment for Wells, Stephen thinks, has to be something much greater than that, true regret, the kind only death could bring. If I died, Stephen reasons, then he would be truly sorry for what he did to me, and for not being nice to me:

> All the fellows would be at the mass, dressed in black, all with sad faces. Wells too would be there but no fellow would look at him. […] And Wells would be sorry then for what he had done. (*P* 18)

Stephen's vendetta through death might be a bit too drastic and overdramatic, but the vendetta isn't the main focus of his death-thoughts, it is simply a welcomed side-effect. Stephen's obsession with death might be best explained as a sum of his desire to escape Clongowes, of his revenge against Wells and his cronies, but also as an expression of his deeply Catholic fascinated mind. Much like when he considers the stealing of God, his mind will drift away rather quickly from the mundane business of dying to the rich rituals of burying the dead:

> He might die before his mother came. Then he would have a dead mass in the chapel like the way fellows had told him it was when Little had died. […] The rector would be there in a cope of black and gold and there would be tall yellow candles on the altar and round the catafalque. And they would carry the coffin out of the chapel slowly and he would be buried in the little graveyard of the community off the main avenue of limes […] And the bell would toll slowly.
>
> He could hear the tolling. He said over to himself the song that Brigid had taught him.
>
> *Dingdong! The castle bell!*
> *Farewell, my mother!*
> *Bury me in the old churchyard*
> *Beside my eldest brother.*
> *My coffin shall be black,*
> *Six angels at my back,*
> *Two to sing and two to pray*
> *And two to carry my soul away.*
>
> How beautiful and sad that was! How beautiful the words were where they said *Bury me in the old churchyard!* A tremor passed over his body. How sad and how beautiful! He wanted to cry quietly but not for himself: for the words, so beautiful and sad, like music. The bell! The bell! Farewell! O farewell! (*P* 19-20)

It seems relevant to notice that Stephen wastes not one single thought on the afterlife. He doesn't dream about being in heaven, next to God, in eternal happiness. His thoughts are not ones of a believer, but ones of someone who has been raised within a certain tradition, where a number of things happen to a dead body: namely a funeral. His mind focuses not on the possibilities of salvation offered by Catholic theology, but on the pageantry offered by Catholic rite. He dreams of the bells, the candles, the boys all together in a mass for him, the rector solemnly praying for his soul, his nemesis regretting his harmful actions. One could argue Stephen has a childish desire for achieving after death the glory and the acceptance that he felt denied in life. When the world literally throws him into a ditch, such vindication is to be expected. The Catholic funeral rites also provide the young boy with a shot at inclusion. Finally his position amongst his peers would be acknowledged, the whole college would be present, his fellows would cry for him and, perhaps, even tell stories of his death much like they did of their other fallen comrade, Little, and he would be buried at Clongwoes, at the community's cemetery. Death is, after all, the great leveller.

There's yet another dimension to Stephen's thoughts on death. He willingly, although not necessarily wittingly, puts himself into a Christ-like position. His death would save the ones who ignored him in life and punish those who ill-treated him. He considers himself to have been wronged in life and death is a necessary step to correct such wrongdoing. Stephen's death would be the sign that would show to all his school mates that it was time to repent, to stop harassing each other, to unite and punish the Wells amongst them. Stephen would be the redeemer to the Clongowes community. Although there is no direct reference to Stephen comparing himself to Christ in his death musing, it seems clear that this is the arquitext for his considerations on what would happen when he died. Before he had already connected himself directly to Christ – «Holly and ivy for him and for Christmas» (*P* 16) – and on at least two occasions which we shall read at length later, he will be depicted as Christ-like: when he is told to hold out his arms so as to be flogged by the prefect of studies in chapter I, and when he is pushed into the barbed wire, much like into a crown of thorns, by Heron and his friends in chapter II.

The connection Stephen makes between the funeral rites, poetry, music and beauty are also meaningful. As we have seen before, Stephen is not so much concerned with theological issues as he is with the ceremony that enshrines death. The rite itself, alongside the tolling of the bells, and the poem on a young boy's death are all described as beautiful and sad. Stephen's aesthetic predisposition shows from the very first pages. At this point, the boy mixes two dimensions of his life that, later in the narrative, he will strive to separate: religion and beauty.

Composition of place

So far we've seen how Stephen's narrative of identity has been informed by Catholic theology, how his young mind has been stocked with Catholic rite imagery and how the power structures immediately around him – his school mates, his masters, his church – contributed to the young boy's inadequate social integration. Later, I would like to turn to his everyday life, to his rise to, and fall from, heaven – that is to say, to the way in which Stephen welcomed Catholicism only to reject it later. Before that, however, I would like to take a closer look at one last episode from the first chapter in order to, as Loyola advises in his spiritual exercises, make a composition of place[97] – or argument, in this case. I would like to read in some detail the scene in which Stephen has been unjustly punished and seeks the rector for justice, for, as Richard Bizot writes, «The Irish schoolroom […] is obviously a paradigm for imperialist enterprise, in which the teacher or another authority figure is the colonizer, the student is the colonized»[98]. In Father Arnall's Latin class, Stephen is the only boy not copying his themes – he had broken his glasses the day before and was excused from writing –, alongside Fleming who has been made to kneel in the middle of the class for having presented his homework in a disrespectful manner – «an insult to any master» (*P* 39), as Father Arnall had put it – and for having answered a question wrong: «Kneel out there in the middle of the class. You are one of the idlest boys I ever met.» (*P* 40). In this moment, when all the boys, except those two, are writing, the class gets a frightening visit:

> 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 the loud crack of a pandybat on the last desk. Stephen's heart leapt up in fear.
>
> – Any boys want flogging here, Father Arnall? cried the prefect of studies. Any lazy idle loafers that want flogging in this class? (*ibidem*)

The prefect of studies' visit didn't come exactly as a surprise. This scene is set during the *smugging* incident, and the atmosphere of fear weighs heavily on the boys' heads. The minimum step out of line will be met with repression. Fleming, of course, having been made to kneel in the

97 Cf. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. W. H. Longridge, London, Robert Scott, 1930, p. 66.

98 Richard Bizot, «Mastering the colonizer's tongue: Yeats, Joyce, and their successors in the Irish schoolroom» in *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, vol. 30, n. 2, 1997, p. 63.

middle of the class is a sitting duck for punishment. Father Dolan, the prefect of studies, will immediately deal with him. Significantly, Fleming is also the boy who, before, wanted to start a revolution in school. He got his comeuppance in the form of a merciless flogging. Father Dolan takes relish on spreading terror:

> – At your work, all of you! shouted the prefect of studies. We want no lazy idle loafers here, lazy idle little schemers. At your work, I tell you. Father Dolan will be in to see you every day. Father Dolan will be in tomorrow.
>
> He poked one of the boys in the side with the pandy bat, saying:
>
> – You, boy! When will Father Dolan be in again?
>
> – Tomorrow, sir, said Tom Furlong's voice.
>
> – Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, said the prefect of studies. Make up your minds for that. Every day Father Dolan. Write away. (*P* 41)

The incessant hitting of the pandybat, the shouting and the insults thrown by this terrifying figure alone would be enough to dissuade any idle little schemers, and if that isn't enough, corporal punishment will take care of what little resistance may subsist. The boys write, but not out of a sense of responsibility or academic duty, they write out of fear. Stephen is paralysed with fear. He did nothing wrong, but he knows Father Dolan won't see it that way. Father Dolan's behaviour is more like a slave driver than a priest. Eventually, he notices Stephen is not writing:

> – Why are you not writing like the others?
>
> – I... my...
>
> *He could not speak with fright*.
>
> – Why is he not writing, Father Arnall?
>
> – He broke his glasses, said Father Arnall, and I exempted him from work.
>
> – Broke? What is this I hear? What is this your name is? said the prefect of studies.
>
> – Dedalus, sir.
>
> – Out here, Dedalus. Lazy little schemer. I see schemer in your face. Where did you break your glasses?
>
> Stephen stumbled into the middle of the class, blinded by fear and haste.
>
> – Where did you break your glasses? repeated the prefect of studies.
>
> – The cinderpath, sir.
>
> – Hoho! The cinderpath! cried the prefect of studies. I know that trick.
>
> Stephen lifted his eyes in wonder and saw for a moment Father Nolan's

> whitegrey not young face, his baldy withegrey head with fluff at the sides of it, the steel rims of his spectacles and his nocoloured eyes looking through the glasses. Why did he say he knew that trick?
>
> – Lazy idle little loafer! cried the prefect of studies. Broke my glasses! An old schoolboy trick! Out with your hand this moment! (*P* 42, emphasis added)

Mary Lowe-Evans, in a short article, looks at this scene as a sort of childhood trauma that will forever skew Stephen's perception of Catholicism. Father Dolan, she argues, has put Stephen through «a travesty of true ordination into the jesuit priesthood»[99], comparing the rite of the imposition of the hands during the ordination mass of a Catholic priest, with Dolan's «imposing on Stephen's hands»[100] with the pandybat. Although I do not disagree with Lowe-Evans insofar as the flogging becomes a scarring event in the young boy's life, perhaps leaving permanent «marks on Stephen as ordination permanently marks a priest»[101], her reading of an inverted ordination fails to convince. Nonetheless, I think this episode is a milestone in Stephen's development and in his relationship with the Catholic power-structure. As I've hinted in the previous chapter, Clongowes becomes a microcosm of a colonial environment. This episode in particular encapsulates a number of traits characteristic of an oppressive regime. Furthermore, not only does it recreate oppression, repression through fear, random punishment, but it deliberately associates the figures of power with members of Catholic hierarchy. Even if the priests are only associated with power because they are part of an educational facility's hierarchy, and one should keep in mind that that's the source of their power: the truth is that Stephen isn't able to make such a distinction. For him, as for the other boys, being a jesuit equals being in power. Before being punished, Stephen is quite clear in stating that he is unable to think of a priest in any other role other than priesthood:

> And he wondered what Father Arnall and Paddy Barrett would have become and what Mr McGlade and Mr Gleeson would have become if they had not become jesuits. *It was hard to think what because you would have to think of them in a different way with different coloured coats and trousers and with beards and moustaches and different kinds of hats*. (*P* 40, emphasis added)

For Stephen, rather literally, the habit makes the monk. These men are priests first and foremost, but they are also the agents of oppression and repression. Stephen's inability to speak is explicit in this scene: he was silenced by fear, and when he did speak he wasn't listened to. Even his

99 Mary Lowe-Evans, «Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*» in *The Explicator*, vol. 48, n. 4, 1990, p. 276.
100 *Ibidem*.
101 *Ibidem.*

considerable descriptive power – or the narrator's through him – fails him, becoming somewhat paralysed. Stephen almost cannot describe Father Dolan positively: he isn't old, he is not young, his eyes aren't black, or grey, they have no colour, he repeats whitegrey twice, he is bald and he wears glasses. So much for his schoolboy eloquence. Stephen becomes the subaltern to the priests', one priest in particular, authority. He was tried without judgement, punished without mercy. His last hope at justice in the form of a power appointed advocate, Father Arnall, couldn't or wouldn't do more. Father Arnall's position in Clongowes hierarchy isn't clear, but it would be expected that he would defend the boy he himself excused from writing. At a point, Father Arnall himself seems to be put on trial – Father Dolan dismisses his explanation and immediately leaves him out of the conversation. Perhaps Father Arnall had already lost his credibility when he failed to report the two boys who, in Dolan's opinion, deserved flogging. Or perhaps there is some sort of golden-rule, much like with the boys, stating that priests should not undermine one another's authority, yet this is precisely what Father Dolan does. There wasn't an actual trial. The punishment Stephen endures is arbitrary and, for that, even more violent. Such mindless violence, of course, can also be damaging to the regime. Stephen will feel betrayed by Arnall and wronged by Dolan. And, perhaps worst of all, he will feel ashamed in front of his school mates, losing even what little respect he had in Clongowes, a good academic reputation: «Then to be called a schemer before the class and to be pandied when he always got the card for first or second and was the leader of the Yorkists!» (*P* 43). Stephen's shame, however, isn't exactly a product of being belittled before his school mates, nor of having shown weakness by lightly sobbing with pain. In fact, it's the exact opposite. Stephen is probably aware that being pandied would work towards his inclusion with the other boys rather than the other way around – he'd become one of them, not the perfect little over-achiever he was before. His outrage comes from not having been made any distinction between him and the other flogged boy, Fleming: «Father Arnall told them both they might return to their places *without making any difference between them*» (*ibidem*, emphasis added). The narrator's words are quite telling: it's not that Stephen is, at this point in the narrative, against authority by default. He thinks Fleming had been deservingly punished. It's the fact that nothing had been done to separate the actual offender from him, the innocent man. As Vicki Mahaffey notes, «Stephen's aim is to establish for himself an authority comparable to the authority he admires and resists, to see himself raised above his peers, and to resist any awareness of the universality – the commonness – of his feelings»[102].

Interesting to note is the fact that even though Stephen cannot think of the figures of authority as anything else but priests, as we've seen before, a conflicting value system – a Catholic one, quite clearly – is confusing him: «The prefect of studies was a priest but [what he did] was

102 Vicki Mahaffey, *op. cit*., p. 290.

cruel and unfair» (*ibidem*), as if there were no such thing as a cruel and unfair priest. Cruel and unfair are, perhaps, the most frequent words in the aftermath of Father Dolan's visit to the class. Stephen's mind will be dominated by thoughts of cruelness and unfairness and their derivatives and synonyms throughout the day. Most significantly, they will find echo in his newly found acceptance in the boy's fraternity. Possibly for the first time in the young boy's life, his father's golden rule will actually make sense. It really is a question of us versus them, boys versus masters, subalternity versus power:

> – It's a stinking mean thing, that's what it is, said Fleming […]
>
> – You really did broke your glasses by accident, didn't you? Nasty Roche asked.
>
> Stephen felt his heart filled by Fleming's words and did not answer.
>
> – Of course he did! said Fleming. I wouldn't stand it. I'd go up and tell the rector on him.
>
> – Yes, said Cecil Thunder eagerly, and I saw him lift the pandybat over his shoulder and he's not allowed to do that. […]
>
> – I wouldn't stand it, Fleming repeated, from Baldyhead or any other Baldyhead. It's a stinking mean low trick, that's what it is. I'd go straight up to the rector and tell him about it after dinner.
>
> – Yes, do. Yes, do, said Cecil Thunder.
>
> – Yes, do. Yes, go up and tell the rector on him, Dedalus, said Nasty Roche, because he said that he'd come in tomorrow again to pandy you.
>
> – Yes, yes. Tell the rector, all said.
>
> And there were some fellows out of second of grammar listening and one of them said:
>
> – The senate and the Roman people declared that Dedalus had been wrongly punished. (*P* 44)

It becomes hard to tell how much of Stephen's eventual rash decision to go up to the rector was a product of his own outrage and how much of it was peer pressure. As Stephen thinks, when he is about to give up, «[t]he fellows had told him to go but they would not go themselves» (*P* 45). He is right. Fleming in particular might be understandably angrier at his own punishment than Stephen's, yet he urges Stephen to go, as if by doing it Stephen would be vindicating him as well. In a way, he is. Stephen's rebellion – let us borrow this term from now on – has been signficantly approved by the «senate and the Roman people». He is now the representative of his fellow

students, their leader and vindicator in the fight against their masters' oppression. Yet, he wonders if he is up to the task, or even if his plight is fair and lawful. The young boy will struggle between living up to his schoolmates' expectations and accepting his fate as unchangeable. Interestingly, his thoughts of rebellion will follow a clearly historical path, while his thoughts of obedience will be clouded in fear. By appealing to a historical background in his struggle, Stephen is expressly inserting his plight into a historical narrative of great leaders and great victories against oppression:

> A thing like that had been done before by somebody in history, by some great person whose head was in the books of history. […] Those were great men whose names were in Richmal Magnall's Questions[103]. History was all about those men and what they did and that was what Peter Parley's Tales about Greece and Rome[104] were all about. (*P* 44-45)

Much like it happens with the infirmary scene, Stephen's outward self-sacrifice lies upon foundations of a desire to glory in posterity. Significantly, by inscribing himself into history, Stephen is also equating his, and his classmates' struggle, within a framework of greater historical narratives. Their fight is no more about escaping undeserved punishment, it's about their own freedom, Stephen reasons. As Weldon Thornton notes, «one of [Stephen's] fundamental ways of coming to a sense of his own self is by identifying with various literary characters or historical figures»[105]. Of course, all great leaders must have a great nemesis. Father Dolan's undiscriminating punishment is the public face of the enemy, and his fearful looking figure suits the part, but what Stephen is really fighting against is the atmosphere of fear that has fallen upon Clongowes following his school mates crime (or sin). Stephen realises that the only reason for his punishment was precisely the climate of repression that had set after they had been found. Watching the perpetrators in the refectory, Stephen acknowledges that «[t]hat was why the prefect of studies had called him a schemer and pandied him for nothing» (*P* 45). When left alone to his own thoughts in the silence of the refectory, Stephen's willingness to become the saviour for his whole community will face a great adversary: Stephen's own fear. He will begin to have second thoughts about the part he has been pushed to play in Clongowes history. No longer cheered by his school mates, he stands alone in his fight – and fear can be a fearful adversary:

> But he could not go. The rector would side with the prefect of studies and

103 History book used to teach elementary history and geography. Cf. Johnson in *P*, p. 235, n. 45.1-2.
104 Conflation of two books by the same author, Peter Parley, used in children's indication. Cf. Johnson, in *P*, p. 235-236, n. 45.3-4.
105 Weldon Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

> think it was a schoolboy trick and then the prefect of studies would come in every day the same only it would be worse because he would be dreadfully waxy at any fellow going up to the rector about him. (*ibidem*)

As it becomes clear from the fragment above, Stephen's fear derives not only from the fear of being pandied again, but significantly because of his certainty of not being believed by hierarchy. Stephen is quite aware of his position as a subaltern within Clongowes hierarchy, and he is positive that his plight will go unheard, for hierarchy will always protect the power against the subaltern. His mind is so deeply moulded by hierarchy that Stephen resorts to trying to find a way in which he could survive despite the hierarchy and despite the punishment: «No, it was best to forget all about it and perhaps the prefect of studies had only said he would come in. No, it was best to hide out of the way because when you were small and young you could often escape that way» (*P* 46). What is weighin on Stephen's mind is, I argue, a form of what Bhabha defined as *sly civility*, that is to say, a mode of operation between coloniser and colonised where both find the possible confort on their respective positioning in the power structure by ignoring the other's thinly disguised provocations. Strictly speaking, Bhabha's sly civility is best applied to discourse. Sly civility derives from the hybrid position of the coloniser over the colonised, fashioning itself as both ruler and father: «What threatens the authority of colonial command is the ambivalence of its address - father and oppressor or, alternatively, the ruled and reviled – which will not be resolved in a dialectical play of power»[106]. Such hybridity in the coloniser's discourse opens up space for a play between both roles of father and oppressor, where the coloniser can make clear the irreconcilability of such roles. Sly civility is thus a «mode of contradictory utterance that ambivalently reinscribes across differential power relations both colonizer and colonized […] [putting] on trial the very discourse of civility»[107]. The concept of sly civility might, perhaps, be better understood by an hypothetical situation. Let us consider that two people of a colonised community are talking within earshot of someone from the coloniser community. The colonised start talking about the coloniser using an outwardly innocent moniker that, nonetheless, has derogatory implications known to both sides. The coloniser upon hearing this has two basic courses of action: either he'll act on it, by punishing or confronting the colonised, or he'll ignore it. If he takes action, he is also endangering his role as father to the colonised; if he doesn't, he is undermining his own authority. Whatever action the coloniser decides to take is irrelevant, for sly civility has already shown the ambivalence of his position. Sly civility is not, therefore, an active way of fighting the oppressor, but rather a form of making oneself comfortable in an uncomfortable environment. Stephen's consideration of inaction, of not saying

106 Homi K. Bhabha, «Sly civility», in *op. cit.*, p. 97.
107 Homi K. Bhabha, *idem*, p. 95.

anything, of not fighting back, could thus be argued to work within a framework of sly civility. By doing nothing, Stephen would be putting to trial Father Dolan's actions. If he did come the next day, and if he pandied Stephen once again, he would be compromising his role as, well, father to the children at his care, for everyone – both Stephen's classmates and Father Arnall – would see it as doubly undeserved; if he didn't come in the next day, or if he did but didn't pandy Stephen, then he would be undermining his own authority and putting in check his actions of the day before.

Stephen, of course, could not begin to grasp the consequences of his desire for inaction and will dismiss it as simple cowardice, for it came from fear rather than a carefully calculated decision to problematize Father Dolan's actions. Stephen's fear is a direct result of the Catholic hierarchy's power over him, a power so great that it will eventually lead him to start questioning his own innocence, admitting the possibility of actually deserving to be punished. His humiliation had been too great, too public, for it to be as unfair as it seems to him: «he suffered time after time in memory the same humiliation until he began to wonder whether it might not really be that there was something in his face which made him look like a schemer» (*P* 44). Inherent to Stephen's thoughts is a phenomenon commonly called *catholic guilt*. I will not pursue this line of investigation because, so far, there is no scientific consensus about a predominance of excessive guilt in Catholics over other religious groups. However, even if there is no scientific evidence, Stephen's reflections do reveal an excessive and inexplicable amount of guilt, of the same type of that is usually identified as Catholic. This Catholic guilt is usually characterised by an individual taking an excessive amount of personal responsibility over events or actions that cannot be personally ascribed to him. It mainly derives from the rite of Confession, and its emphasis on personal guilt over sin. Reading a version of the famous Maynooth Catechism, the same Joyce and Stephen would have learnt during their formative years, one finds that contrition is one of the necessary elements of Confession, with contrition defined as «[a] hearty sorrow and detestation of sin, for having offended God, with a firm resolution of sinning no more»[108]. Such emphasis on personal responsibility over sin is said to be the reason for an overbearing sense of guilt within the Catholic community. Even if there is no actual proof of this phenomenon, the fact is that Stephen's reaction seems to fit with this paradigm, by considering the possibility of having actually done something wrong – or of just looking like someone who does something wrong. It seems that Stephen cannot escape from Catholicism, not even from its stereotypes.

But escape he does. All the self-doubt Stephen experienced from the moment he was urged by his school mates to fight back until the moment when he stands in the brief window of

108 *The Most Rev. Dr. James Butler's Catechism: revised, enlarged, approved, and recommended by the four archbishops of Ireland, as a general catechism for the kingdom*, Dublin, The Catholic Book Society, 1836, p. 63.

opportunity he has to go up to the rector wasn't enough to stop him: «turning quickly up to the right, [he] walked up the stairs and, before he could make up his mind to come back, he had entered the low dark corridor that led him to the castle» (*P* 46). There is no turning back now. Facing the rector, Stephen's self-conscious subalternity will again act up, preventing him from presenting his case to the rector, but even against this Stephen fights: «Stephen swallowed down *the thing in his throat*», «Stephen swallowed down the thing again» (*P* 47). The thing in his throat preventing him from speaking becomes a physical manifestation of subalternity that Stephen manages to overcome. The rector, of course, will stand by the power structure and dismiss Father Dolan's actions as a mistake, underplaying Stephen's complaint: «it was a mistake; I am sure Father Dolan did not know», «Father Dolan did not understand» (*P* 48). Father Dolan did understand and Father Dolan did know, he was told by Father Arnall about it. Stephen, however, is not interested in punishing Father Dolan neither in fighting back against oppression. As it becomes clear, Stephen wishes only to secure his own safety, even if he had fancied himself akin to great historical figures and even if his school mates will rejoice with his partial victory. Partial victory it is, and one will not understand how partial until the rector, by this time the Jesuits' provincial[109], retells the story to Stephen's father in the second chapter:

> Father Dolan and I, when I told them all at dinner about it, Father Dolan and I had a great laugh over it. *You better mind yourself Father Dolan*, said I, *or young Dedalus will send you up for twice nine*. […] *I told them all at dinner about it and Father Dolan and I and all of us we all had a hearty laugh together over it. Ha! Ha! Ha!* (*P* 60-61).

It wasn't a victory, not even for Stephen who, even though free from punishment, was ridiculed by the power structure. It was, as Stephen's father put it, simple diplomacy: «Shows you the spirit in which they take the boys there. O, a jesuit for your life, for diplomacy!» (*P* 60). In other words, the rector knew Stephen had been unjustly punished but couldn't admit Father Dolan's zealousness. He thus offered the boys at Clongowes an opportunity to reconcile themselves with power without actually compromising authority. Of course the boys couldn't understand that: they were just glad Stephen was heard. Stephen himself felt freer than ever, his fight had, in his opinion at the time, paid off, «he was happy and free» (*P* 49). Stephen's freedom, however, despite his victorious cry, couldn't be complete. He will immediately refrain himself by adding that «he would not be in anyway proud with Father Dolan. He would he [*sic*] very quiet and obedient: and he

109 Provincial is the highest ranking Jesuit in a province, in this case Ireland. Cf Johnson in *P*, p. 235, n.40.13-15.

wished that he could do something kind for him to show him that he was not proud» (*ibidem*). Clearly Stephen doesn't understand it as a conditional freedom, he frames *his* decision – at least he thinks it's his decision – as a magnanimous act of gracious victory. Yet, his emphasis on *obedience* betrays something different, something the rector of Clongowes would be very aware when he granted the school boy his wish: obedience is, after all, one of the Catholic moral virtues. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* article on «Obedience» states that it is not regarded «as a transitory and isolated act but rather as a virtue or principle of righteous conduct»[110], and so it would be expected of a Catholic, specifically of a young boy being educated at a Catholic school, to show obedience to his masters both for their position and for their role in Catholicism. Consequently, the rector's concession was a true act of diplomacy: giving something the other party required without actually losing anything. Stephen and the other boys see it as a victory, the rector and the other masters know it was a very small one. Both of them, however, are seemingly unaware of Stephen's truly remarkable move: his strength in confronting hierarchy marks his first departure from Catholicism. By going up the hierarchy, Stephen is actively refusing the virtue of obedience he was supposed to hold at every time. Perhaps because he is subconsciously aware of his disobedience, he puts so much emphasis on his effort to obey Father Dolan from then on. There is a loophole in which Stephen could be arguably trying to position himself: obedience is first and foremost an obligation to God, while the obligation «to obedience to superiors under God admits of limitations. We are not bound to obey a superior in a matter which does not fall within the limits of his preceptive power»[111]. Even if the question of whether or not Father Dolan's actions fall outside of his power can be a matter of dispute, it seems unnecessary to go into so much depth. The fact is that Stephen has purposefully ignored a Catholic precept by denying Father Dolan the legitimacy to punish him. This first rebellion against Catholicism, albeit a veiled one, is, in my opinion, one of the most relevant elements of this scene, for it shows for the first time Stephen struggling with an invisible power over his individual actions that he cannot quite identify – and that is why Catholicism can be said to act as a shackling power over its subjects. The fact that Stephen is seen to juggle with the concepts of obedience and, significantly, pride – of which we will have much to say later in the following chapter –, after his supposed victory constitutes proof that his act of rebellion could not completely dismiss the hold Catholic doctrine had over his actions. This scene can thus be argued as a synthesis of Stephen's progress in his relation with Catholicism. Its language of oppression and rebellion allied to a background of Catholic power and practise fighting for control of Stephen's mind against his own individuality and sense of justice provides a prologue to the rest of the novel

110 Joseph Delany, «Obedience», *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 11, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11181c.htm].

111 *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, *ibidem*.

in what concerns Catholicism as a colonial power.

Catholicism is not the only larger narrative fighting for Stephen's *soul*, as it were. There is another such larger narrative that will try to take over Stephen's mind, a narrative that has been historically associated with Catholicism in Ireland but that has, nonetheless, moments of collision with religion. I'm referring, of course, to Irish nationalism, the topos that, alongside Catholicism, is one of the major themes of *Portrait* and much of Joyce's work. Although, historically, Irish nationalism of the late nineteenth century had strong connections with Catholic hierarchy in Ireland, its arch-narrative concurred with the Catholic one for primacy over its people. The Christmas dinner scene can be regarded as one of the clearest examples of this dispute. At the table, besides Stephen's parents, sat uncle Charles, a friend of Stephen's father John Casey, and Mrs. Riordan, know by Stephen as Dante[112]. Discussion breaks out at the table when someone[113] retells an anecdote about a hotelkeeper named Christy, supposedly a manufacturer of «champagne»[114], who had said «*I'll pay you your dues, father, when you cease turning the house of God into a pollingbooth*» (*P* 25). To this, Dante replies, full of scorn that it's a «nice answer […] for any man calling himself a catholic to give to his priest» (*ibidem*). The issue quickly evolves from a rather academic, though by no means dispassionate, *should religion interfere with politics* to an outright attack and defence of Catholicism vs Nationalism – «if it comes to that, no God for Ireland» (*P* 32). The table is unevenly divided. Casey and Dante are the most fierce contenders; Simon Dedalus is on Casey's side, though he is also, at times, trying to preserve the peace at the table – and, in fact, as William O'Neill makes clear, both Mr. Casey's and Simon Dedalus' ideas of themselves «have been formed entirely by the institutions that govern them»[115]; uncle Charles and Mary Dedalus are mostly silent, though probably silently endorsing Casey and Dante respectively; Stephen is but an observer, trying to make sense of it all. Stephen's mother Mary is, perhaps, the most intriguing character in this scene, despite her small role, or precisely because of it. As Michael Wainwright notes, «Dante's volubility is a dramatic contrast to the silence of Stephen's mother»[116]. The few lines she is given are to try and prevent a discussion – «For pity's sake and for pity sake let us have no political discussion on this day of all days in the year» (*P* 26) – or to protect her child from the foul mouthed anger – «Really, Simon, said Mrs Dedalus, you should not speak that way before Stephen. It's not right» (*P* 27).

112 Dante being both a child's mispronouncement of «Auntie» turned into a family nickname and a reference to Dante Alighieri, author of the Catholic epic *Divine Comedy* and a major influence on Joyce.

113 Simon Dedalus and John Casey seem to be discussing the anecdote amongst themselves, but there is no direct reference as to who utters the sentence that provokes Dante's retort.

114 There seems to be no clue as to what this «champagne» might refer. Jeri Johnson advances explosives, but with a question mark. Cf. Johnson in *P*, p. 230, n.23.25.

115 William O'Neill, «Myth and identity in Joyce's fiction: disentangling the image» in *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 40., n. 3, 1994, p. 386.

116 Michael Wainwright, «Female suffrage in Ireland: James Joyce's realization of unrealized potential» in *Criticism*, vol. 51, n. 4, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2009, p. 658.

Even though she doesn't engage directly in discussion, one can assume that she would be on Dante's side, given her devotion to the Church. Another hint of Mrs. Dedalus partisanship can be found in her willingness to follow Dante when the old lady storms out of the room, or on her veiled criticism of the other party, first by trying to dissuade Dante privately rather than out loud as she has been doing with her husband, and later by dismissing the other party with a pinch of contempt: «Mrs Riordan, don't excite yourself answering *them*» (*P* 32, my emphasis). Mrs Dedalus role in this scene has been consistently underread by critics, yet I find in her a perfect example of what Spivak called subalternity. She is indeed, the most subaltern of all the characters at the table, alongside Stephen who doesn't utter a single word[117]. Mrs. Dedalus seems not only to be a subject of Catholicism – rather than a champion of it, as that role is fulfilled by Dante – but also of a patriarchal power-structure – significantly a social order endorsed by the Catholic church – who prevents her from openly defending her point of view. The pressing question here is, precisely, what point of view? The reader hears not a whistle from Mrs. Dedalus regarding her own opinions on the issue at hands. She mainly tries to keep the dinner going as peacefully as possible and her child protected, as any good wife should. Her warnings to her husband are only meant to restrain his anger, never to contradict him. She is thus doubly silenced by Catholicism and by her gender role. She is, after all, a Catholic woman who must defend her faith, as Dante does, and also obey her husband. Pope's Leo XIII encyclical «Arcanum» provides a clear definition of the Catholic Church's stance regarding married women:

> The husband is ruler of the family and the head of the wife; the woman as flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone is to be subordinate and obedient to the husband, not, however, as a hand-maid but as a companion of such a kind that the obedience given is as honourable as dignified[118]

Obedience to her husband might be honourable and dignified, but it's still a subjection of a woman to a man, one that Mrs. Dedalus has to comply with, if for nothing else, for her Church. On the other hand, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* also states that «In religious and moral matters, the common obligations and responsibilities of men and women are the same. There is not one law for a man and another for a woman, and in this, of course, the canons follow the teachings of Christ»[119], that is to say that a wife must also defend Christ and its Church, as any other Catholic must. Mrs

117 Apart from being given the honour of saying grace before the meal started (*P* 24).

118 Leo XIII, «Arcana», apud Augustin Rössler and William Fanning, «Woman», *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 15, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1912 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm].

119 *The Catholic Encylopedia*, *idem*.

Dedalus is thus positioned in a hierarchical limbo, having to obey her husband as the Church commands, and having to defend her Church against her husband. She is doubly subjected to two power structures: Catholicism and Patriarchy. She may speak, but she has no voice.

Stephen, on the other hand, albeit silent, manages to have a voice, if for no one else, at least to the reader. He doesn't speak *per se*, but the reader is given a glimpse of what is happening in Stephen's mind through the narrator, and even that occurs scarcely. Only twice does the narrator turn to Stephen, which, in itself, might be read as proof of Stephen's attentiveness to the heated discussion. When the narrator does pay attention to him, the boy's reactions are quite telling:

> Stephen looked with affection at Mr Casey's face which stared across the table over his joined hands. He liked to sit near him at the fire, looking up at his dark fierce face. But his dark eyes were never fierce and his slow voice was good to listen to. But why was he then against the priests? Because Dante must be right then. But he had heard his father say 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 savages for the trinkets and the chainies. Perhaps that made her severe against Parnell. And she did not like him to play with Eileen because Eileen was a protestant and when she was young she knew children that used to play with protestants and the protestants used to make fun of the litany of the Blessed Virgin. *Tower of Ivory*, they used to say, *House of Gold!* How could a woman be a tower of ivory or a house of gold? Who was right then? (*P* 29)

This first instance of Stephen's thoughts can be quite elucidating. For one, there is a clear juxtaposition of politics and Catholicism in the young boy's mind. His value system by this time in the narrative ranks Catholicism and Nationalism as good. Hence his first perplexity. The narrator starts by describing Mr. Casey in a pleasant light, but if he is so good, why isn't he on the side of the priests? If priests are good, and Mr. Casey is good, they must surely be on the same side. If they're not, then certainly Dante is right about him. By following his thought, one realises that this scene might be one of the first times, if not the first, when Stephen's childish certainties are put to the test. Dante herself, a figure for whom Stephen has mixed feelings of terror[120] and love, has been questioned. Stephen now recalls the time when he overheard his father badmouth her, significantly by pointing to her failed experience at a convent[121], as if undermining her affiliation to the Catholic

120 See the scene were Dante threatens Stephen with an eagle that will come and pull out his eyes if he doesn't apologise, in the very first section of the novel (*P* 6).

121 Richard Ellmann offers an explanation to what Dante's real life counterpart reasons for being a spoiled nun are: she inherited her brother's fortune and left the convent to find a husband (Cf. Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 25). There is, of course, no reason to assume that the fictional Mrs Riordan had similar

Church. Stephen might be too naïve to understand the implications of being a *spoiled nun*, he understands it merely as a sign of being extremely religious, rather than, as Stephen's father might have implied, having merely a personal interest in Catholic hierarchy[122]. Proof of this is the fact that his mind takes being a spoiled nun as being fanatically Catholic – which indeed she is – and thus as an explanation for her dislike of Parnell, a protestant of Anglo-Irish descent. As if by osmosis, Stephen then recalls an occasion when he might have felt Dante's opinions to be too narrow-minded, namely in her sectarianism forbidding Stephen from playing with a neighbour based solely on the fact that the child came from a protestant family. Stephen is thus reflecting on a series of issues that threaten to shake the foundations of the certainties he cherished before. Also relevant is his understanding of Protestantism at this point. Unlike Dante, Stephen doesn't seem to have any sectarian dislike of Protestants – he liked Eileen, he liked Parnell – and in fact the boy seems to judge negatively this trait in the old lady's character. For Stephen, the major difference between Protestants and Catholics is that the former mock a prayer said by the latter. He is not incorrect. One of the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism lies in the devotion owed to the Virgin Mary. What Catholics call Mariology, or the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, protestants call it Mariolatry, or the idolatry of the Virgin Mary. It is a fact that Catholicism places much more emphasis on devotion to the Church's saints than protestantism. *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* maintains that «Protestantism has been sorely deprived if saved from excesses by its suspicions of the cult of the saints»[123]. This is even more so in the case of the devotion to the Virgin Mary who is arguably the most venerated saint in Catholicism while being «basically rejected […] in the Reformation re-evaluation of faith and belief»[124]. The litany of the Blessed Virgin is, thus, a mark of difference between Catholics and Protestants, and, as Tracey Teets Schwarze demonstrated, a difference with nationalist echoes, as seen by the Catholic faction:

> [Protestant] refusal to accept these metaphorical descriptions of purity and value, 'ivory' and 'gold', as signifiers for womanhood implies that Protestants are sexually 'loose' – a proposition demonstrated for many Irish Catholics by the Parnell-O'Shea scandal. Protestants by extension of this argument would not be truly Irish because they do not possess the chastity that is integral to the definition

reasons, though both share an affectionate nickname and a brother who made fortune by exploiting native americans, as it's hinted in what Stephen remembers his father saying. Regardless of the motives for it, a *spoiled nun* refers to someone who left or never made it into a convent, cf. Johnson in *P*, p. 231, n.29.18.

122 Admittedly, *spoiled nun* might encompass a critic of over religiosity. However, by leaving the convent of her own will for whatever reason, Dante is also putting religious life *after* other, probably more mundane, priorities. Stephen fails to understand this less flattering dimension of the expression.

123 *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spiritualithy*, Gordon S. Wakefield (ed.), Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1983, «Saints, Sanctify», p.350.

124 Idem, «Marian devotion», p. 259.

of the Irish national character propounded by […] Dante here.[125]

Stephen's ultimate question «Who was right then?» could thus be applied to all his reflections – Dante or Casey, Catholics or Nationalists, Catholics or protestants – and the inherent undecidability of these issues is something Stephen will have to learn to overcome and that will haunt him to the end of the scene.

If the first of Stephen's thoughts are mainly concentrated on Dante's character, in the second glimpse of Stephen's mind the narrator allows the reader to pry into his opinion of Casey:

> It was not nice about the spit in the woman's eye. But what was the name the woman had called Kitty O'Shea that Mr Casey would not repeat? He thought of Mr Casey walking through the crowds of people and making speeches from a wagonnnette. That was what he had been in prison for and he remembered that one night Sergeant O'Neill had come to the house and had stood in the hall, talking in a low voice with his father and chewing nervously at the chinstrap of his cap. And that night Mr Casey had not gone to Dublin by train but a car had come to the door and he had heard his father say something about the Cabinteely road.
>
> He was for Ireland and Parnell and so was his father: and so was Dante too for one night at the band on the esplanade she had hit a gentleman on the head with her umbrella because he had taken off his hat when the band played *God save the Queen* at the end. (*P* 30-31)

Stephen now turns his mind to re-examine his preconceptions about Mr. Casey, a man he thought with tenderness before. Casey has just finished telling his story about the time he spat on the face of an old lady who insulted Parnell's lover, Kitty O'Shea. That was not a nice thing to do, Stephen reckons, but he has no way of knowing what word the old woman shouted – Mr. Casey didn't want to shame himself, so he claimed. This initial remark about Casey's lack of niceness, as Stephen puts it, will drive the young mind to a rather curious association. He weighs Casey's story against his image of a political agitator for the Nationalist cause, imagining Casey publicly speaking at demonstrations and, significantly, being arrested. At face value, both the spitting incident and Casey's arrest are occasions when he might have been «not nice». Nonetheless, Stephen's affiliation to both national – as he says afterwards, he too is for Ireland and Parnell – and Catholic narratives might be working into transforming the «not nice» spitting into a martyrdom of imprisonment. Casey thus becomes the secular martyr to the cause, by being arrested simply for speaking in public

125 Tracey Teets Schwarze, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

demonstrations (probably against the British Empire, one assumes). It is not possible to ascribe with any degree of certainty such reasoning to Stephen's thought, for there are no direct evidence that he consciously makes an association between Casey's arrest and martyrdom. However, once again, Stephen's father provides some interesting clues in that direction. For one, Stephen recalls his father talking to a police officer who seems more nervous than any lawman that fully believed in what he does should be – «chewing nervously at the chinstrap of his cap». Simon Dedalus is also overheard by his son saying something about the Cabinteely road which, according to Johnson, is a little used back road to Dublin[126]. Both these elements point towards a direction: Casey's arrest, by its secrecy and by the nervousness of the policeman, are a matter who could arouse public outrage. Casey is thus constituted in Stephen's mind as a hero for the Irish cause, and his arrest can be regarded as an unjust punishment, martyred for what he believes in. Stephen might not realise it, but his thoughts about moments when Mr. Casey was «not nice» are less black and white than he, or the reader, might take them to be. Having finally reevaluated the characters of Dante and Casey, Stephen finds himself in a stalemate. All – Dante, Casey, his father and himself – seem to be on the same side, for Ireland, yet the fight goes on. We hear little more about Stephen's state of mind until the last moment in the scene, when the narrator lets the reader know, *en passant*, that Stephen is staring at his father's tears with a «terrorstricken face» (*P* 33). The reasons for Stephen's terror are plenty: he feels insecure watching his father cry; he feels scared by the violent discussion. Furthermore, according to my reading of this scene, Stephen might feel some of the foundations of his boyish certainties shaken: that people are either good or bad and that Catholicism and Nationalism are so intrinsically connected as to be the same. Not by chance this is Stephen's first time at the grown-up table for Christmas: he must now become a grown-up himself and join the discussion.

Even though Stephen's role in this scene is mostly that of an observer, I would like to take a brief closer look at some of the discussion itself, mainly to Dante's character who functions as a mouthpiece for Catholic doctrine. In fact, it's impossible to get any clearer than Dante about Catholicism as a colonial force. The whole discussion begins when Dante becomes offended upon hearing that a Catholic had disobeyed his priest claiming he had no power in temporal matters. Significantly, her actual intervention mentions language – «A nice answer […] for any man calling himself a catholic to give to his priest» (*P* 25), a recurring trope during the discussion, particularly on what is and what is not appropriate language for a Catholic – «Nice language for any catholic to use» (*P* 26) –, as opposed to the «language of the Holy Ghost» (*ibidem*) taken directly from the bible. From the start Dante posits that Catholicism should and must take control of every aspect of life, including the use of language and the intervention in temporal matters. Dante doesn't see

126 Johnson in *P*, p. 232, n.31.7.

Catholicism merely as a religion, or to put it better, she sees religion as being an all-encompassing society – «It is religion […]. They're right. They must direct their flocks […] It's a question of public morality. A priest would not be a priest if he did not tell his flock what is right and what is wrong» (*P* 25). Catholicism, for a Catholic, is thus construed quite literally as a law-making, law-enforcing power. A Catholic must obey, first and foremost, to Catholicism itself – «God and Religion before everything!» (*P* 32) – particularly to its temporal face, the priests, the bishops, the leaders of Catholic hierarchy – «The bishops and priest of Ireland have spoken […] and they must be obeyed» (*P* 26). Again obedience comes into the equation as any Catholic first duty. Dante is a remarkable character for my argument: she is keenly aware of Catholicism's temporal power over its believers, she is keenly aware of Catholicism's more or less covert actions to direct and restrain individual will – and still she fiercely defends it. She is the perfect subject of Catholicism, something Stephen could never be, no matter how much he tried.

Paradise lost, paradise regained, paradise rejected

Any book with almost one hundred years of history is bound to have sprouted a fair amount of critical interpretation. When it comes to James Joyce's work, the critical output multiplies tenfold. Since its first serialised publication in the little magazine *Egoist*, in 1914, until now, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* generated thousands upon thousands of books, essays, articles and reviews. Yet, only a comparatively small number of critics and particular insights have made it through the battlefield of criticism's history. One such critic whose influence can still be noticed to this day is Hugh Kenner, with recurring critical *topoi* on *Portrait* reappearing numerous times, such as the «Uncle Charles Principle» I've mentioned before. Yet, this may not be Kenner's most famous critical insight about *Portrait*. Another of his thoughts has been so widely circulated, rewritten, disputed and appropriated as to almost transfer to the realm of common knowledge. I'm alluding to the famous commonplace of the novel's circular structure, with Stephen beginning a chapter in humility only to end it in triumph. Kenner writes: «the action of the five chapters is really the same action. Each chapter closes with a synthesis of triumph which the next destroys»[127]. There are at least two possible readings of Kenner's assertion: the triumph of the previous chapter is destroyed by a return to humility, that is to say, in simpler terms, that humility replaces triumph at the start of new chapter; or that the triumph of the previous chapter has been destroyed by new information about the action that led to triumph coming to light in the beginning of the next chapter. The first reading of Kenner's remarks has been, perhaps, the most widely repeated[128], and to some extent, its validity is hard to be argued against. The second possible reading however, that Stephen's previous triumph had been undermined by new information, is somewhat harder to sustain after the second chapter. On what concerns the first chapter, however, this reading still stands. As I've explored before, my understanding of the final scene of the first chapter, when Stephen goes up to the rector to complain about Father Dolan's punishment, can only be regarded, at best, as a partial victory within the framework of post-colonial studies. Stephen might have gotten the outcome he wished for, but he achieved nothing that could be understood as freedom – even though he thinks he did. His thought had been so deeply conditioned by *obedience* that, arguably, he achieved actually

127 Hugh Kenner, «The *Portrait* in perspective», in *Dublin's Joyce*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1955, p. 129.

128 «the movement of each chapter mimics the rising action of the novel as a whole: each begins with Stephen in humility and ends with him triumphant. And then the next opens again in humility», Johnson, «Introduction», in *P*, p. xxxviii.

nothing at all – he would behave even more humbly and well-mannered to his tormentor. And that was exactly what the climate of violence and repression was trying to achieve. Furthermore, we learn at the beginning of the second chapter that even his heroic rebellion was met with contempt and ridicule by the hierarchy. Some triumph that is. I brought this brief discussion of Kenner's argument in to highlight the fact that Stephen's triumphs can only be regarded as such through his perspective – we have no other – and at that specific point in the narrative. Consequently, Stephen's triumphs over Catholicism can only be regarded as such subjectively, as in, his achievements are only victorious insofar as he considered himself triumphant. To a degree, this dimension of individuality in rebellion is a victory in itself against the Catholic sense of universal community – Catholic, from the Greek καθολικός, meaning «throughout the whole, i. e., universal»[129]. As such, to be allowed a subjective victory, although not necessarily a victory over the whole system, is a jagged attack at one of the most central concepts of Catholicism, that of a universal, all-encompassing, non-individualistic community. All of Stephen's victories against Catholicism will fall within this category, including the famous *non serviam*. They are all seen as victories first and foremost by Stephen himself judging his degree of detachment from the community. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, won't see it as an attack, but simply as a sheep lost from the flock. This is a particular characteristic of Catholicism when seen through a post-colonial lens: the only way to overthrow the church's power is through individualism, rather than a collective uprising. In other words, you cannot free everyone; you can only break yourself free from the rest of the flock. This individual break, in Catholic terms, can be equated with the concept of schism:

> Schism (from the Greek schisma, rent, division) is, in the language of theology and canon law, the rupture of ecclesiastical union and unity, i.e. either the act by which one of the faithful severs as far as in him lies the ties which bind him to the social organization of the Church and make him a member of the mystical body of Christ, or the state of dissociation or separation which is the result of that act.[130]

Historically, schism is most commonly associated with major fractures in the Church's structure. The East-West Schism, or the Great Schism as it came to be known, might have been one of the most influential events on Christianity's history whose effects are still noticeable today. The schism itself resulted in the separation of the Eastern Orthodox Church from the Roman one in the

129 Herbert Thurston, «Catholic», *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1908 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03449a.htm].

130 Jacques Forget, «Schism», *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1912 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13529a.htm].

eleventh century, over theological, ecclesiastical and political differences. The Western Schism, which might have contributed to the later Protestant Reformation[131] – itself a schism, though not usually referred to as such –, happened in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when the papacy was claimed by two different men and their respective supporters, and was mostly driven by politics rather than theological issues. Even though general understanding, backed by historical fact, takes schism to refer only to major divisions within the Church rather than the personal action of one individual, its definition still applies to fractures between one subject and the body of the church:

> schism does not necessarily imply adhesion, either public or private, to a dissenting group or a distinct sect, much less the creation of such a group. Anyone becomes a schismatic who, though desiring to remain a Christian, rebels against legitimate authority, without going as far as the rejection of Christianity as a whole, which constitutes the crime of apostasy.[132]

As one can infer from the fragment above, schism and heresy are not exactly the same thing. Although, according to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, «heresy and schism nearly always go hand in hand»[133], they differ in the fact that heresy constitutes a perversion of Catholic dogma while schism means only a break with Catholic hierarchy. Schism, therefore, presupposes a voluntary disengagement with Catholicism but not necessarily a different system of belief or a complete lack of belief. Although it would be perhaps easier to equate Stephen's ultimate refusal of Catholicism as an act of atheism, *Portrait* offers no proof that the young artist had abandoned spirituality. In fact, Stephen will confess to his university friend Cranly towards the end of the novel, that he is not at all sure of whether there is or is not a God[134]. Schism might thus be the most accurate description, in Catholic vocabulary, of Stephen's self-chosen break with Catholicism. As Roy Gottfried notes,

> an unbeliever [is] someone for whom religious issues and questions would have absolutely no weight or interest. Stephen is certainly not that; no one who could repeatedly entertain questions of the Trinity, or of church history, or of transubstantiation, could have any claim on agnostic unbelief.[135]

131 «The severest blow was dealt by the disastrous papal schism (1378-1418) which familiarized Western Christians with the idea that war might be made, with all spiritual and material weapons, against one whom many other Christians regarded as the only lawful pope», in Johann Peter Kirsch, «The Reformation» *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12700b.htm].

132 Jacques Forget, «Schism», *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1912 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13529a.htm].

133 *Ibidem*.

134 Cf. *P* 205. I will look at this conversation thoroughly later in my argument.

135 Roy Gottfried, *Joyce's Misbelief*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2008, p. 1.

Gottfried's argument departs from the same basic issues my work does, as I have explained in the introduction, however his approach differs from mine in its point-of-view. Gottfried explains Joyce's, and his characters, stance from the authoritative point of view of religion, while I have been looking through a post-colonial lens, shifting my analysis to the subject rather than to the power-structure. Nonetheless, Gottfried's argument can be quite illuminating and his assessment of Stephen's character, although made in theological terms, can be aligned with mine:

> Orthodoxy resides in the authority outside an individual; it is collective and incapable of error. To embrace the variety of other possibilities is to take a stance that resists subordination and asserts individuality.[136]

Authority outside the individual is precisely what Stephen will try to fight. The nature of such authority, I argue, is akin to a colonial authority precisely because it works to erase individuality, and overwriting a collective narrative in its stead. Gottfried will also emphasise the schismatic dimension of Stephen's movement, particularly when looking at three scenes in the second chapter where he is accused not of schism but of heresy: when Stephen is made to *confess* to Heron of his interest in Emma; when he recalls an occasion when his English master accused him of having heresy in his essay; when Heron accused him of favouring heretic poets such as Lord Byron. The critic underlines that there is only one reference to schism in *Portrait*, however, much later in the novel and enshrined in a conversation about art and language with the dean of studies. In this triptych of the second chapter, however, Gottfried finds the emphasis of its action not on heresy but on schism:

> words of rupture in various participial forms recur: «ripping», «split», «cleft», «torn». These words objectify Joyce's keen interest in the possibilities of a «breaking through» that creates freedom and possibility, and they are all synonyms for schism. If one does not submit to authority, to the voice of the rector in the church, but even parodies it, persisting in heresy, then one produces a schism. *Schism is the unstated, primary concern of the heresy scenes*, where religious choice resides in literary gesture. And for Joyce, schism is the very means by which art is made.[137]

I agree with Gottfried's assertion that *schism* is much more relevant in these scenes – as it is

136 Roy Gottfried, *idem*, p. 3.
137 Roy Gottfried, *idem*, p. 14, my emphasis.

in the remainder of the book – than heresy. Stephen's journey is not one of arguing with dogma, but one of refusing it and its authority[138]. When looking at the scenes mentioned above, one quickly realises that Stephen is not challenging the Catholic Church's dogma, but its authority. The first scene of this triptych occurs when Stephen is about to play a part in the Whitsuntide play at Belvedere: he is to play the lead role, «that of a farcical pedagogue» (*P* 61). Stepping outside of the chapel where the festivities are taking place, Stephen meets his schoolmate Vincent Heron, accompanied by another boy who Stephen doesn't recognise. Although, as Carolyn L. Matthews underscores, while Heron calls Stephen his friend, «[their] relationship is based on constraint and torment»[139]. Heron immediately incites Stephen to mock their rector in the play: «I was just telling my friend Willis what a lark it would be tonight if you took off the rector in the part of the schoolmaster. It would be a ripping good joke» (*P* 63). As had happened previously with his unjust punishment at Clongowes, Stephen is once again being selected to represent his schoolmates against authority. However, this time around it is not a question of us *versus* them, not one of justice nor freedom. Simply, it derives from Heron's self-fashioning as the *bad boy*, as opposed to Stephen's model behaviour. Heron, in this scene, can be recognisable as an early prototype of what will later become Buck Mulligan in *Ulysses*: he claims not to be pleased by the coloniser's action over its subjects (in Heron's case Catholicism, in Mulligan's British Imperialism), but he will play along for personal gain. As the narrator reveals, Heron is as good a student as Stephen, and as important and influential: «Stephen and Heron had been during the year the virtual heads of the school. It was they who went up to the rector together to ask for a free day or to get a fellow off» (*P* 64). Yet, Heron proudly opposes Stephen's good behaviour: «No, said Heron, Dedalus is a model youth. He doesn't smoke and he doesn't go to bazaars and he doesn't flirt and he doesn't damn anything of damn all» (*P* 63). Heron implies that, because Stephen does none of those things, while he, one infers, does, Stephen is, therefore, again not one of the boys. Yet, once again, it's Stephen, the outsider, who has been challenged to play a trick – or confront, or face – the authority figure. Heron might fashion himself as a bad youth – and therefore a model to others like himself – but he doesn't seem to have the courage to do it personally. Yet Heron's challenge was nothing but a test. His real interest lies precisely in destroying Stephen's image as a «model youth»:

> – You're a sly dog, Dedalus!
>
> – Why so? said Stephen.

138 Cf. Roy Gottfried, *idem*, p. 16: «To be heretic is to argue *with* dogma in a dialogue, often with the sense of exploration and investigation of the truth. To be schismatic is to argue *against* dogma, resisting authority, insisting upon difference, and thus to embrace willingly and after the fact the freedom of the outside and opened space».

139 Carolyn L. Matthews, «Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*» in *The Explicator*, vol. 50, n. 11, 1991, p. 38.

> – You'd think butter wouldn't melt in your mouth, said Heron. But I'm afraid you're a sly dog.
>
> – Might I ask you what are you talking about? said Stephen urbanely.
>
> – Indeed you might, answered Heron. We saw her, Wallis, didn't we? And deucedly pretty she is too. And so inquisitive! *And what part does Stephen take, Mr Dedalus? And will Stephen not sing, Mr Dedalus?* Your governor was staring at her through that eyeglass of his for all he was worth so that I think the old man has found you out too. I wouldn't care a bit, by Jove. She's ripping, isn't she, Wallis? (*P* 64)

To Heron, the fact that Stephen has a friend of the female sex coming to see him perform at the Whitsuntide play is proof that Stephen is not as perfect as he seems. The velocity with which Heron will shift his position regarding religious authority is astonishing. No longer does he seem interested in making a fool out of the rector. Quite the contrary, Heron will take the part of the inquisitor, forcing Stephen to confess a supposed infraction of the Catholic code of conduct: «So you might as well admit, Heron went on, that we've fairly found you out this time. You can't play the saint on me any more, that's one sure five» (*P* 65). Although Heron's outward speech seems to endorse his self-fashioning as a bad boy, the fact is that by aggressively insisting that Stephen admit his supposed infraction, he is embodying a surrogate figure of authority conducting an interrogatory. Specifically, Heron is embodying a Catholic figure of authority. By threatening Stephen to admit that he can't «play the saint anymore», Heron is taking the Catholic virtue of *humility* as Stephen's most grievous fault. According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, humility can be defined as «[a] quality by which a person considering his own defects has a lowly opinion of himself and willingly submits himself to God and to others for God's sake»[140]. Consequently, although Heron pretends – or believes – his admonition to be merely playful, he is in fact serving as a mouthpiece of Catholic doctrine and authority. *You're not being a good Catholic*, he seems to say, *because you're not humble*. Heron is not so much interested in forcing Stephen to admit that he has an admirer as he is in forcing him to recognise the lack of humility in his behaviour. If Heron's interrogation plays on this double dimension of being both a playful alliance and an attack on Stephen's sin, Stephen's answer doubly fulfils Heron's expectations. By reciting the *Confiteor*, the Catholic prayer of confession, Stephen mocks Catholic authority and rite – as Heron had asked him to do during the play – while submitting himself to it: «bowing submissively, as if to meet his companion's jesting mood, began to recite the *Confiteor*» (*P* 65). Interestingly enough, Stephen's

140 Arthur Devine, «Humility», *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07543b.htm].

confession is much more subversive to Catholic doctrine than Heron's jesting accusation. Heron seems to be outwardly mocking Catholic authority while, in fact, abiding by it and being a mouthpiece for it, Stephen is openly abiding by it (thus playing the saint Heron accuses him of being) while subverting Catholic rite by taking it out of context and using it unnecessarily and even sinfully, for the confession «came only from [his] lips» (*ibidem*)[141]. Stephen seems to have finally learnt how to appease his companions while keeping his individuality. Reciting the *Confiteor* is confessing nothing of what Heron demanded, it is simply following his jesting mood.

Despite Stephen's jesting mood, it is nevertheless worthy of notice that Stephen acknowledged Heron's interrogation as being Catholic-informed and responded accordingly. He could have admitted that yes, he was a sly dog after all, or he could have denied any knowledge or guilt in the situation. The fact that Stephen answered through Catholic rite shows his inability to escape it. Stephen immediately equated admittance with *confession* and proceeded as such. Tellingly enough, the narrator describes Stephen's bowing as *submissive*. Mockingly as it might be, Stephen acquiesced to the Catholic undertone of Heron's accusation and responded through the appropriate Catholic rite, submitting himself to his classmate authority. Carolyn L. Matthews argues that «in the dialectic that ever demands an 'other', he is this other who is passive and must submit»[142].

The second scene of the heresy triptych also depicts Stephen submitting to authority. While he is reciting the *Confiteor* for Heron's amusement, Stephen looks back at another time when Heron tormented him, when he was still in number six[143]. It all started, however, when Stephen was publicly accused of heresy by his English master, Mr. Tate:

> Mr Tate, the English master, pointed his finger at him and said bluntly:
>
> – This fellow has heresy in his essay.
>
> A hush fell on the class. Mr Tate did not break it but dug with his hand between his crossed thighs while his heavily starched linen creaked about his neck and wrists. Stephen did not look up. It was a raw spring morning and his eyes were still smarting and weak. He was conscious of failure and of detection, of the squalor of his own mind and home, and felt against his neck the raw edge of his turned and jagged collar.
>
> A sort loud laugh from Mr Tate set the class more at ease.

141 As mentioned before, confession presupposes contrition, that is a «hearty sorrow and detestation of sin» (cf. Butler's catechism, p. 63). Therefore, if Stephen's confession came merely from his lips, it lacked contrition and cannot be considered as true repentance.

142 Carolyn L. Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

143 Six years away from leaving school. At the time of the Whitsuntide play, he is in number two, consequently Stephen is remembering what happened four years before. Cf. Johnson in *P*, p. 240, n. 65.35.

– Perhaps you didn't know that, he said.

– Where? asked Stephen.

Mr Tate withdrew his delving hand and spread out the essay.

– Here. It's about the Creator and the soul. Rrm... rrm... rrm... Ah! *without a possibility of ever approaching nearer*. That's heresy.

Stephen murmered:

– I meant *without a possibility of ever reaching*.

It was a submission and Mr Tate, appeased, folded up the essay and passed it across to him saying:

– O... Ah! *ever reaching*. That's another story.

But the class was not so soon appeased. Though nobody spoke to him of the affair after class he could feel about him a vague general malignant joy. (*P* 66)

Heresy might be too strong a word to qualify Stephen's error, though, strictly speaking, it was a corruption of Catholic dogma. Stephen's error, as he soon identified, was to not allow the soul the possibility of ever approaching God, while Catholic doctrine allows for the approaching but not for communion: «doctrine allows that the soul yearns for communion with its creator, is granted grace to approach, but never reach, such communion»[144]. However, because Stephen quickly corrects his mistake, it cannot be considered heresy, for as long as he «remains willing to submit to the Church's decision he remains a Catholic Christian at heart and his wrong beliefs are only transient errors and fleeting opinions»[145]. Therefore, Mr. Tate's blunt accusation falls into overzealousness. Interestingly enough, as his title betrays, Tate is not a member of the clergy but a lay teacher. His stress on Catholic theology is doubly interesting precisely because of that. Like Heron, Mr. Tate is functioning as a mouthpiece for the Catholic order, yet his position is even more complicated given his authority status within a Catholic hierarchy. Tate is, arguably, a *mimic man*, as defined by Bhabha, that is to say, one from outside the power-structure – he is not a priest in a Catholic school – being given a position of power within the hierarchy. Tate's overzealousness is thus an example of his own partial presence, he is almost a priest, but not quite. Because Tate's judgement of Stephen's work is based on Catholic doctrine – rather than other elements more pertaining to an English classroom –, Tate displays the ambiguity of his position: neither priest nor teacher but something in between. Also, by evaluating Stephen's work based solely on Catholic doctrine – we have access to no other comment on the schoolboy's essay –, the English master is also revealing how far Catholicism has been infused into education. Granted, Belvedere is a

144 Jonhson in *P*, p. 240, n. 66.30-3.

145 Joseph Wilhelm, «Heresy», *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07256b.htm].

Catholic school, yet even so the curricula of the various disciplines should not, one expects, be so deeply charged with religion in a normal situation. It would be understandable, if misguided, that Catholicism had acted to prevent science from challenging belief. However, in Mr. Tate's English class, regardless of how far one tries to find, there is no evidence of actual grammar or literary corrections to Stephen's essay. If his work wasn't perfect from that perspective, it would be expected that some corrections had been made by Tate and remembered by Stephen; if it was, then Tate's insistence on heresy demonstrates that a Catholic classroom is much more than a denominational group: it is a place where knowledge has been informed and filtrated through Catholicism. As Charles Andrews underlines, «Schools, hospitals, and churches are public fixtures that exhibit to varying degrees their Christian foundations. In the most public of Irish institutions – education, health care, and the mass – religion shapes social function»[146]. As such, by admitting his error and correcting it, Stephen is acquiescing to the authority of Catholicism, as Gottfried notes: «His 'submission' of a correction to the instructor is the public equivalent of his 'admission' to Heron. He acquiesces to authority»[147]. Yet, this second submission to his schoolmaster is double: he is not only admitting his error in the essay, he is also acknowledging that an error of Catholic doctrine is sanctionable within an English class. As Richard Bizot argues, «To bend or not to bend is of course a recurring question for Stephen in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. […] bending the head in the classroom […] has considerable symbolic weight behind it»[148]. In Dante's words, God and Religion before everything.

The third and last scene of this heresiarch triptych arguably starts in Tate's classroom. By publicly accusing Stephen of heresy, by pointing his inquisitorial finger at him, Tate opened up a space for similar accusations amongst the schoolboys. The hush that fell over the class after Tate's accusation fed by Stephen's delay in explaining what he meant by it – we have no measure of time but Stephen's subjective time experience allows for a scrutiny of Tate's person in excruciating detail – contributes to this atmosphere. For even after Stephen's correction the class was not appeased. The «general malignant joy» that Stephen felt after class is both an expression of *schadenfreude* and an anticipation of a changing of roles. If mimic man Mr. Tate, a layman with no known connections to the power-structure (except in his English teaching function) can accuse someone of heresy, so can a schoolboy. By occupying a position of mimicry within a Catholic power structure, Mr. Tate has opened a breach on the very basis of Catholic authority that will enable the schoolboys to judge one another by doctrinal measures. Through this breach in the wall of authority, Catholic doctrine

146 Charles Andrews, *Modernism's National Scriptures: Nation, Religion and Fantasy in the Novel, 1918-1932*, PhD Thesis, Loyola University, Chicago, 2007
147 Roy Gottfried, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
148 Richard Bizot, *op. cit.*, p.64.

will spill into the boys' everyday life. Interestingly enough, Mr. Tate's hybrid position did nothing to weaken the authority of the Church, as one might expect giving that his partial presence questions the basis of the priests' authority. Quite the contrary, Mr. Tate's use of Catholic measures to evaluate an English essay had the effect of making crystal clear, to the boys and to the reader, that Catholicism should not, and does not, confine itself to the chapel: it is a measurement for everyday life, and every single detail of one's life – what one eats, thinks, does, reads, etc. – is subject to Catholic scrutiny, and that such scrutiny and judgement is not only the priests' task but the whole community's. A few days later, that is exactly what happens. Stephen is walking when he is stopped by Heron and two other boys. The four start walking together, keeping what is seemingly a friendly chat, when the matter turns to literature and one's personal preferences. Heron will argue for Alfred Lord Tennyson as the best poet, a safe and conventional choice. At this Stephen reacts saying that Tennyson is «only a rhymester» (*P* 67). Questioned who he thinks was the greatest poet, Stephen will give his tormentors the excuse they were looking for:

> – Byron, of course, answered Stephen.
>
> Heron gave the lead and all three joined in a scornful laugh.
>
> – What are you laughing at? asked Stephen.
>
> – You, said Heron. Byron the greatest poet! He's only a poet for uneducated people! […]
>
> Heron went on:
>
> – In any case Byron was a heretic and immoral too.
>
> – I don't care what he was, cried Stephen hotly. […]
>
> – Here, catch hold of this heretic, Heron called out.
>
> In a moment Stephen was a prisoner.
>
> – Tate made you buck up the other day, Heron went on, about the heresy in your essay. […]
>
> Nash pinioned his arms behind while Bolan seized a long cabbage stump which was lying in the gutter. Struggling and kicking under the cuts of the cane and the blows of the knotty stump Stephen was borne back against a barbed wire fence.
>
> – Admit that Byron was no good.
>
> – No.
>
> – Admit.
>
> – No.
>
> – Admit.
>
> – No. No. (*P* 68-69)

What was lurking behind Tate's admonition in the English class has now been given full prominence in Heron's threat: Catholicism and Catholic doctrine are the yardstick for every instance of life, particularly in what concerns literature. The only argument[149] posited by Heron against Byron was based on Catholicism – that Byron was an heretic – and, for him and his companions, argument enough. Byron is not Heron's target, however, he is using the Romantic poet simply as an excuse to reprise Tate's accusation of heresy against Stephen. Only this time, Stephen chose not to give in to his schoolmate's authority. Because of that, he must be punished. Once more, Heron functions as the armed force of the hierarchy he claims to subvert. By physically assaulting Stephen, Heron and his partners are giving the young boy a taste of what disobedience feels like. Stephen's decision not to acquiesce to authority has but one reason: he will not relinquish art for religious morality. He sees no authority in Catholicism to censure poetry. Yet the whole affair can be reconfigured as to fit by Catholic or Christian models. His punishment can arguably be considered as a re-enactment of Christ's Passion. Charles Andrews notes that «Stephen's assimilation into a Christ-narrative also suggests Joyce's re-conception of Christian mythology»[150]. One could easily link the cuts of the cane and the blows of the cabbage with the cruel Roman soldiers tormenting Christ: «And they struck his head with a reed: and they did spit on him. And bowing their knees, they adored him» (DRB *Mark*, 15, 19); «And they came to him, and said: Hail, king of the Jews; and they gave him blows» (DRB *John*, 19, 3). The crown of thorns with which Christ had been crowned king of the jews turns into a barbed wire fence, crowning Stephen as king of the heretics. If Stephen's punishment can be regarded as a re-enactment of the Passion of Christ, then Heron and his companions have traded places with Stephen. Stephen now becomes Christ-like while his tormentors are akin to the enemies of the Church they accuse Stephen of defending. The interpretation of this equation can be problematic and somewhat misleading. I don't mean to suggest that Stephen, by recalling the events in this manner, is trying to reclaim the position of defender of the Church in the events, nor that he is consciously fashioning himself as a Christ amongst his unbelieving classmates. If anything, the biblical narrative is parodied in Stephen's recalled recreation. There is no nobility in being assaulted with a cabbage stump, there is no nobility in being left sobbing and aching. Nonetheless, the parody of Christ's torment is not necessarily subversive, not necessarily a perversion of Catholic narrative: there is no direct reference to it and no underplay of Christ's suffering; it's not even a conscious association. Stephen is simply reimagining the events with Christian imagery – not necessarily Catholic, yet identifiable as such because it would be what the young boy has been exposed to. By taking the biblical narrative as an

149 Heron also claimed that Byron was for uneducated people, that is, for people of foul tastes, that is, for people not abiding by Catholic mores.

150 Charles Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

archetype for his own suffering, despite its less than heroic nuances[151], Stephen is complying by the greater power-structure of Catholicism. Furthermore, the issue that Heron presses Stephen to admit to is ambiguous to say the least. He urges Stephen to admit that Byron was «no good». Not a good poet, perhaps, or perhaps not a good person, that is a heretic. Even if Heron means 'not a good poet', his criteria for this is still heresy. Stephen's refusal is not only a defence of Byron, but also a defence of himself against accusations of heresy. He could not admit to Byron's heretical stance – his previous answer to this is elusive, «I don't care what he was» – for that would be an open attack on the power-structure. If Stephen is seemingly standing up for himself against hierarchy, his behaviour is still being conditioned by Catholicism by refusing to admit to heresy and by re-enacting his martyrdom in Catholic imagery.

Although what explicitly connects these three scenes are ideas of heresy, I believe that, as I've tried to make clear above, heresy lies in what Stephen is accused of rather than on what he actually does. From Stephen's point-of-view, his actions are not those of an heresiarch but of one who struggles to find the limits of religion and religiousness in his day to day life on the edge of what is lawful and what is not according to Catholic precept. Accordingly, Stephen is close to various forms of breaking away, schisms if you will, without actually taking the step forward and openly parting from the body of the Church, not even in the last scene (first in narrative time) when he defends Byron. As Gottfried argues,

> it is not associated ideas of heresy, complicity and contrition that connect these scenes, but rather an accumulating pressure against ideological, artistic and spiritual bondage. It is a wish (on Stephen's part, on Joyce's part) to release the strictures that maintain narrative repetition […] and to to think freely, outside of convention and conventional wisdom.[152]

In other words, throughout these three scenes Stephen is testing the limits of his belief and his various possible answers: mocking, acquiescence, resistance. None of those possible reactions, however, will be enough to set Stephen free from the shackles of Catholicism. In each, he is also admitting its authority, he is fitting his answers to comply with the power-structure in one form or another.

While Stephen's mind keeps wrestling with the limitations imposed by Catholic authority,

151 Furthermore, although having been glorified by Christian dogma, Christ's crowning is made with the intent of mocking him. Being attacked with cabbage stumps, Stephen could be arguably recreating the mocking in the biblical narrative, not mocking the narrative itself but its Christian glorification. By doing it, he is not fighting doctrine but highlighting it.

152 Roy Gottfried, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

his body will soon start to rebel as well. If his mind has matured enough to start questioning the limits of religion, his body quickly picks up pace, overriding his spiritual concerns with urgent calls to act upon them. As Stephen hits puberty, his body starts calling the shots. He begins to experience sexual desire and his body initiates the long fight against the purity preached by religion: «Nothing stirred within his soul but a cold and cruel and loveless lust» (*P* 80). *Cold*, *cruel*, *loveless*: these are not Stephen's adjectives, they are the product of a Catholic upbringing qualifying the body's natural development. Cold and cruel and loveless because these new feelings are dragging him away from what would be expected of a good Christian. Initially Stephen will try to fight these urges. After winning a prize money for an essay, he will bask in the return of his previous glorious fortune[153]. He will treat the family to lunches, and theatre tickets, and will try his hand at capitalism by opening a small family loan bank using the money he won. Soon, the money is gone, and with it his distraction:

> How foolish his aim had been! He had tried to build a breakwater of order and elegance against the sordid tide of life without him and to dam up, by rules of conduct and active interests and new filial relations, the powerful recurrence of the tides within him. Useless. From without as from within the water had flowed over his barriers: their tides began once more to jostle fiercely above the crumbled mole. (*P* 82)

The narrator's choice of words in this description is quite telling in itself. For one thing, the allusions to sexual desire are encoded in flowing water, that is, both a natural occurrence and an uncontrollable (or barely manageable) phenomenon. Allying sexual urges with the natural world seems to point to Stephen's acceptance of his desires as part of his growth. Yet, water is also a powerful Catholic symbol. Not only is water part of the rite of baptism – one enters the Church through a ritualised cleansing of the body – it is also one of the many symbols associated with Christ: «But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting» (DRB *John*, 4, 14). The fountain now springing in Stephen has nothing to do with Christ or God's love, it's cold, cruel and loveless.

In addition, the constant euphemisms put to use by the narrator to describe Stephen's growing sexual feelings are also a measurement of his ability to keep them under control. What here was water breaking a dam, soon becomes a «mortal sin» (*P* 83), a «dark orgiastic riot» (*ibidem*), and «wasting fires of lust» (*ibidem*). The narrator's language is wary of openly addressing the issue

153 Stephen's family, previously well-off, has been in steady financial decline from the start of the second chapter.

because Stephen himself is feeling ashamed of what he is experiencing. The descriptions are charged with disguised Catholic imagery (such as the powerful stream of water) and with clear Catholic judgements. At no point is there a direct reference to what is implied Stephen has been doing with himself: masturbating. But masturbation is not enough for his growing thirst for sex. Stephen wanted to «sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin» (*ibidem*). The internal conflict of the young boy's Catholic arrested mind is quite clear, the recurrence of the word sin is evidence of that. His mind is battling with his bodily urges, tormenting him with humiliation and guilt, «[o]nly the morning pained him with its dim memory of dark orgiastic riot, its keen and humiliating sense of transgression» (*ibidem*). All this will culminate in Stephen's surrender – his first visit to a prostitute:

> He had *wandered* into a maze of narrow and dirty streets. From the foul laneways he heard bursts of hoarse riot and wrangling and the drawling of drunken singers. He walked onward, undismayed, wondering whether he had strayed into the quarter of the jews. Women and girls dressed in long vivid gowns traversed the street from house to house. They were leisurely and perfumed. A trembling seized him and his eyes grew dim. The yellow gasflames arose before his troubled vision against the vapoury sky, burning *as if before an altar*. Before the doors and in the lighted halls *groups were gathered arrayed as for some rite*. He was in another world: *he had awakened from a slumber of centuries.*(*P* 84, my emphasis)

Stephen's path to Dublin's red light district, what Stephen thinks as the jew quarter, is not a conscious one. He wandered there, as if commanded by something stronger than him. The mindlessness of his decision is a sign Stephen's inability to fight his sexual urge. He walks, as if sleeping, coincidentally, or so the narrator would have us believe, into the realm of prostitutes and pleasure. Perhaps what most jumps the eye is his description of the scene, the yellow gasflames burning as if before an altar and the groups gathered together as for some rite. Catholic imagery, even at this point, is clearly still alive in Stephen's mind. Not only the imagery comes up because it is part of his personal ideolect, it also seeps into the narration because Stephen himself cannot help but being painfully aware that he is in a place so contrary to his Catholic upbringing. Perhaps because of that, Stephen identifies the red light district (east central Dublin), with the Jewish quarter (south central Dublin)[154] – he is physically moving away from the Church into something other, and this other has to be thought of in religious terms. He really is in another world, and the narrator's conclusion that he had awakened from a slumber of centuries couldn't be more revealing: the

154 Cf. Johnson in *P*, p. 243, n. 84.14.

slumber is not only his own, but one imposed on him by a centuries old institution, the Catholic Church. The awakening was his own personal victory against the community's sleep. It is also the awakening for a new, dirtier, more complicated reality where God and religion are not above all or above anything.

Even if the narrator claims Stephen has finally awaken, the fact is that he remains inactive during all of this. He wandered towards the red light district and, once there, «stood still in the middle of the roadway» (*ibidem*). The narrative is arguably excusing Stephen from what he is about to experience: he walked there by accident, he didn't procure anyone, he was picked up, and even up in a room, he doesn't initiate anything, it's the prostitute who orders him to kiss her, and it's by her own volition that they eventually kiss. Stephen remains in absolute silence throughout the whole scene, even though he «tried to bid his tongue speak» (*ibidem*). His tongue had been well trained in subjection. Stephen doesn't realise, or doesn't want to realise, that he is in a position of power in this situation. Throughout the end of the second chapter, Stephen's descent into sin is continuously narrated with hints of powerlessness in the young man's actions. He is led by some unknown force to act the way he does, to go where he went, and even his sexual initiation is depicted as if forced by someone else, even though Stephen is the one paying in the end: «He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly parting lips» (*P* 85). Stephen's *surrendering* clearly suggests unwillingness in his part when nothing could be farther from the truth. What the narration implies rather than admits is that, despite Stephen's willingness, he is conscious of behaving against Catholic mores, and that is the reason why the description of the red light district is so deeply infiltrated with Catholic imagery. The narrative is protecting Stephen, displacing his responsibility to the world around him, thus excusing him from actively breaking with the Church. It's not that he wanted to sin, the narration implies, it's that he was powerless to resist the world around him. Stephen's first visit to the underworld is not a step away from Catholicism, it's simply, as he keeps thinking, a sin. Only by keeping this in mind can one understand Stephen's ascetic turn at the end of the third chapter. In other words, the scene has been shrouded in a Catholic narrative of falling from grace, sinning, where the subject's will is less responsible for the action than it is for the inaction. Despite his sinning, Stephen is yet to break away from the powerful force of Catholicism, for even in his crime, he cannot escape to think of how guilty he is in the eyes of the power-structure.

At the start of the third chapter one finds Stephen's mind drenched in thoughts of sin. A slight narrative shift had occurred: no longer does the narration seem to excuse and displace responsibility onto the world around the young man, his body has taken charge. Staring at the classroom's window, his stomach muses upon the prospect of dinner, «Stuff it into you, his belly

counselled him» (*P* 86). The sin of lust had attracted others: gluttony, vanity, pride. Saint James said that when one commits one sin is guilty of all – «And whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all» (DRB James 2, 10) – meaning that one cannot pick and choose which laws to follow and which to ignore, that breaking God's law by one specific sin would be like breaking a chain. Yet Stephen is more literal in his interpretation of Saint James, he sees it as a deep well one throws oneself in, drowning in all other mortal sins, once the first sin is committed. An inevitability, that once one has sinned, one will sin again, and again, and again:

> From the evil seed of lust all other deadly sins had sprung forth: pride in himself and contempt of others, covetousness in using money for the purchase of unlawful pleasure, envy of those whose vices he could not reach to and calumnious murmuring against the pious, gluttonous enjoyment of food, the dull glowering anger amid which he brooded upon his longing, the swamp of spiritual and bodily sloth which his whole being had sunk. (*P* 89)

Stephen had now finally taken responsibility for his actions. Yet, consciousness and responsibility are very different things from regret and contrition. The boy shows no intention of redeeming himself, he thinks it a lost cause:

> He had sinned mortally not once but many times and he knew that, while he stood in danger of eternal damnation for the first sin alone, by every succeeding sin he multiplied his guilt and his punishment. His days and works and thoughts could make no atonement for him, the fountains of sanctifying grace having ceased to refresh his soul. At most, by an alms given to a beggar whose blessing he fled from, he might hope wearily to win for himself some measure of actual grace. Devotion had gone by the board. What did it avail to pray when he knew that his soul lusted after its own destruction? A certain pride, a certain awe, withheld him from offering to God even one prayer at night though he knew it was in God's power to take away his life while he slept and hurl his soul hellward ere he could beg for mercy. His pride in his own sin, his loveless awe of God, told him that his offence was too grievous to be atoned for in a whole or in part by a false homage to the Allseeing and Allknowing. (*P* 87)

While Stephen is conscious he is living in sin at the price of eternal salvation, he knows that consciousness is worthless without regret and contrition, how could he be saved if he still longed

for sin? As the Catechism says, grace is necessary for salvation[155] and Stephen's fountains of grace have dried out being substituted by the fountains of lust. At this point in the narrative, Stephen feels nothing but a «cold lucid indifference» (*P* 87) about his duplicitous life. Interestingly enough, Stephen's awareness of his sinning only pains him where the sexual sins are concerned. On his current hypocrisy – that is, his «pretention to qualities which [he] does not possess, or […] the putting forward of a false appearance of virtue or religion»[156] – Stephen wastes no second thought. Within Belvedere walls, he remains the model youth he has always been, having even been elected as the prefect in the college of the sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary[157]. His mind is arrested with thoughts of what he considers graver sins. He'll continue to play his outward facade of piousness without little else than a short nod of awareness: «The falsehood of his position did not pain him» (*P* 88).

If Stephen shows no intention of amending his ways, and no concern for the hypocrisy into which he turned his life, there would be little reason for his obsession with sin. Yet, sin is perhaps the most recurrent word in the first pages of the third chapter. The narrator's judgemental vocabulary functions as evidence of Stephen's own language. His lustful ways are only *lustful* because that's the name he knew them by; his sinning is only *sin* within a Catholic framework. That is to say that, even though Stephen has been willingly behaving against Catholicism, he has not broken his connection with the Church, and neither has his mind or his way of thinking. He hasn't lost belief in God – he looks at it with awe – neither in the teachings of the Church. Though he is detached, he is not separated from the community. He hasn't become a schismatic, only a sinner. He has fallen from grace – that is both from the innocence of childhood and from the grace of God – but he was within the Church's reach. Catholicism has conditioned Stephen to think of his actions in no other way than this, and even if at this time he didn't seek redemption, he would as long as the vocabulary of Catholicism moulds his worldview. Enter Father Arnall with his hell sermon.

Father Arnall's sermon on hell is arguably one of the longer segments of *Portrait* and perhaps, one of its most memorable ones. It occupies an almost central position within the narrative and functions as a turning point for Stephen's character. For its construction, Joyce drew on an immense tradition of Jesuit sermons, particularly, as James R. Thrane demonstrated in 1960[158], in a seventeenth century sermon written by Giovanni Pietro Pinamonti, S.J., *Hell opened to Christians, to Caution them from Entering into It* (1688). Whether one is to attribute the pastiche to Joyce

155 Butler's catechism, p. 33.

156 Joseph Delany, «Hypocrisy» *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 7, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07610a.htm].

157 «a confraternity of lay individuals who meet regularly for particular religious exercises (laid down in specific rules); this one is dedicated to the Virgin Mary; to hold such a position was a considerable honour», Johnson in *P*, p. 244, n. 88.4-5.

158 James R. Thrane, «Joyce's sermon on hell: its source and its backgrounds» in *Modern Philology*, n. 57, 1960.

himself or to his creation Father Arnall, the fact that this sermon has been tailored by centuries of jesuit preaching remains. Its powerful rhetoric is unquestionable and one can only imagine what effects it might have on any sixteen years old boy who has been frequently visiting prostitutes. In Stephen's case the sermon effectiveness is undeniable. I will not look at Father Arnall's sermon in any depth – the Catholic influence in it is not only to be expected but also required. However, before moving to Stephen's reactions, I would like to highlight two characteristics found in the Jesuit's words: one theological, the other formal.

Theologically, what most catches the eye in Arnall's speech, besides the hyperbolic descriptions of the terrors of hell, is one of the differences between eternal bliss and eternal damnation: community. What I mean by community in this specific instance is twofold. On the one hand, we have the soul's proximity, or lack of it, to God and his angels; on the other, the soul's company in hell. The first refers to the *poena damni*, that is the pain of loss, one of the pains inflicted on the souls of the damned and, according to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, «the very core of eternal punishment»[159]. The pain of loss is the pain inflicted in the soul by the separation from God. Father Arnall, following Catholic doctrine, stresses this element of punishment: «The unjust He casts from him, crying in his offended majesty: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels*. O what agony then for the miserable sinners!» (*P* 96). The first and most tragic punishment of the damned is, thus, not the everlasting fire, but to be cast away from God: «this, then, to be separated for ever from its greatest good, from God, and to feel the anguish of that separation, knowing full well that it is unchangeable, this is the greatest torment which the created soul is capable of bearing» (*P* 108).

The second form of community I alluded to, the company kept by the soul in hell, is thus an element of furthering the soul's detachment from God. Surrounded by the other damned souls its torment is even greater:

> the torment of this infernal prison is increased by the company of the damned themselves. […] In hell, all laws are overturned: there is no thought of family or country, of ties, of relationships. The damned howl and scream at one another, their torture and rage intensified by the presence of beings tortured and raging like themselves. (*P* 103)

In Father Arnall's sermon there is a sense of loneliness in this description of being surrounded by the damned. The damned souls are in physical proximity, but they have no

159 Joseph Hontheim, «Hell», *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07207a.htm].

aspirations to any connection amongst themselves. Their pain is not shared, it is individual. By the juxtaposition of these two types of separation, I believe one can read Father Arnall's re-imagination of the Catholic hell as a dichotomy of being within a desirable community – that is, with God and the other just souls – or closed outside of any hope of community, even an ill-one – the damned souls. This Catholic vision of hell as a complete deprivation of human connection thus recreates the Catholic precept of community on earth.

The second element I would like to stress in Father Arnall's sermon on hell is, as I've hinted before, one more directly connected with the narration than anything else. As I shall discuss below, Stephen will feel as if Father Arnall's words were personally directed at him, as if he was the sole recipient of the priest's sermon. An element of narration will emulate Stephen's solipsism. Although most of the scene is dominated by Arnall's sermon, Stephen's thoughts and reflexions will occasionally interrupt the priest's speech. Shortly after Arnall's initial remarks, for a number of paragraphs, the dialogue mark will disappear from the narrative, thus dissolving the possibility of direct speech, and Stephen's thoughts will become enmeshed with the sermon itself. As this happens, the narrator will retell the sermon *as it is being internalised by Stephen*, reinforcing the young man's belief that the sermon is being preached directly to him and to his soul. The narrative mark of the priest's words will reappear later, during the second segment of the sermon, yet its effect has already been taken in by the reader: we now know that, despite the presence of all the other boys, the words are directed at none other than Stephen.

The sermon's emphasis on community and Stephen's sense of it being personalised creates a perfect synthesis of why he has been so affected by it: by sinning, Stephen has shut himself away from the rest of the body of the Church and the preacher's words are now painting his own personal hell. In most occasions, Stephen's thoughts will echo this idea of punishable individuality. The underlying message of the sermon is quite clear: if you join the community here on earth, you'll enjoy an eternity of happiness in the after-life; if you choose to stay away from the community, not only will you be left alone by yourself, you will be damned to hell for all eternity. Later in the novel Stephen will consider this idea of hell as not being so hellish after all, for what is the alternative? «An eternity of bliss in the company of the dean of studies?» (*P* 202). For the time being, however, the prospect of eternal damnation will greatly affect his young mind. As the preacher speaks throughout the days of the retreat, the reader has a glimpse of Stephen's mind and his reactions. Right from the start, when the priest's words and Stephen's thoughts become entangled, Stephen's first signs of paranoia become evident, with the young boy believing there would be no time for redemption, feeling the cold embrace of death as he hears the sermon:

> He felt the deathchill touch the extremities and creep onward towards the heart, the film of death veiling the eyes, the bright centres of the brain extinguished one by one like lamps, the last sweat oozing upon the skin, the powerlessness of the dying limbs, the speech thickening and wandering and failing, the heart throbbing faintly and more faintly, all but vanquished, the breath, the poor breath, the poor helpless human spirit, sobbing and sighing, gurgling and rattling the throat. No help! No help! He, he himself, his body to which he had yielded was dying. Into the grave with it! Nail it down into a wooden box, the corpse. Carry it out of the house on the shoulders of hirelings. Thrust it out of men's sight into a long hole in the ground, into a grave, to rot, to feed the mass of its creeping worms and to be devoured by scuttling plumpbellied rats. (*P* 94)

Once again, as had happened in the Clongowes' infirmary, Stephen is imagining his own death. This time, however, there are no glorious bells tolling, no gathering of the college to pay homage to him in the funeral celebrations. Stephen's childish glorification of death has been replaced by the cruel fear of dying outside the grace of God. The emphasis here now lies on the rotting of the body. Stephen's platonic division of body and soul, already hinted at before in his first visit to the prostitute, becomes even more evident in his fantasy of death: he had yielded to his body and that was why he had sinned, he was a creature of the body, no more than a common animal, «he had sunk to the state of a beast that licks his chaps after meat» (*ibidem*). The body will get its punishment by rotting and being devoured by vermin in the grave; but the soul would have to be judged by God, as Father Arnall through Stephen tells: «God, who had long been merciful, would then be just» (*ibidem*). Stephen becomes increasingly aware of his shifty adherence to Catholicism during his time of hypocrisy. Even if he did try to dissociate his sinning from his piousness, there is no room in doctrine for such partial presence. If you are part of the Church, the totality of your actions and thoughts are controlled by it, if not, punishment will come. «For the pious and believing catholic», Arnall says, «for the just man, death is no cause of terror» (*P* 96), but Stephen's piousness was nothing but a facade and a just Catholic man would not keep the company of prostitutes. Increasingly Stephen will identify himself as the sole recipient of Father Arnall's sermon, thus furthering his sense of guilt. An unnamed speaker says – perhaps Mr. Tate as he is mentioned in the same segment and wouldn't be expected to attend the retreat –, Father Arnall «rubbed it into you well» (*P* 105). «Every word was for him. Against his sin, foul and secret, the whole wrath of God was aimed. The preacher's knife had probed deeply into his diseased conscience and he felt now that his soul was festering in sin» (*P* 97). As it happens with heaven and hell, if happiness is communal, sin is individual, despite similar reactions from his classmates around him, «[h]e put us

all into a blue funk» (*P* 105). The sermon penetrates Stephen with such violence that he begins developing physical symptoms of his internal turmoil – «He came down the aisle of the chapel, his legs shaking and the scalp of his head trembling as though it had been touched by ghostly fingers» (*ibidem*) –, prompting Stephen to let go of the various metaphors he used before to address his sordid life and to start enumerating the numerous ways in which he had sinned:

> The sordid details of his orgies stank under his very nostrils: the sootcoated packet of pictures which he had hidden in the flue of the fireplace and in the presence of whose shameless of bashful wantonness he lay for hours sinning in thought and deed; his monstrous dreams, peopled by apelike creatures and by harlots with gleaming jewel eyes; the foul long letters he had written in the joy of guilty confession and carried secretly for days and days only to throw them under cover of night among the grass in the corner of a field or beneath some hingeless door or in some niche in the hedges where a girl might come upon them as she walked by and read them secretly. Mad! Mad! Was it possible he had done these things? (*P* 97)

Although he has now shedded the metaphors and hidden allusions of the narration, he didn't let go of the Catholic idiom: he hasn't been masturbating to dirty pictures – also literally dirty, covered by the soot of the fireplace – he had sinned in thought and deed. Furthermore, a new piece of information about Stephen's life of sin has now been revealed: the confession letters. Even knee-deep in his life of sexual outlets, Stephen felt the Catholic commandment to confess his sins. The most interesting aspect of this small curiosity is the double function of the confession letters: at the time, perhaps unwittingly, Stephen used the act of writing them as a substitute for the Catholic sacrament. Yet, after confessing himself to the page, Stephen the sinner revealed and revelled in the perverse possibilities hidden in the act of confessing, by fantasising about his revelations being read not by a priest, who could absolve him, but by someone who could join him in sin. Now confession is his only chance of salvation. «There was still time […] No escape. He had to confess, to speak out in words what he had done and thought, sin after sin» (*P* 106). Once Stephen came to the inevitable conclusion that he had to confess his sins, not by letter to some random person passing, but vocalising his deeds to a priest, shame overcame him: «The thought slid like a cold shining rapier into his tender flesh: confession. But not there in the chapel of the college. He would confess all, every sin of deed and thought, sincerely: but not there among his school companions» (*P* 106). There is no specific requirement for a Catholic to confess to a certain priest, however keeping the same confessor is advised. Although Stephen is aware that a confessor is obliged under the seal of

confession to keep secret whatever is heard in confession, he still feels ashamed of disclosing his sins to someone who he might encounter in everyday life. At the end of Arnall's three day sermon, Stephen has but two feelings: shame and fear. Within a Catholic power-structure the only way to escape the fear of eternal damnation would be to confess, however auricular confession, to say word for word what he did, is punishment in itself. Yet Stephen cannot escape it; Catholicism is both the judge of his actions and the door to his forgiveness, and to go through that door, one must go to confession. Furthermore, his mind has been so deeply affected by Catholic discourse, that the same discourse will infiltrate the narration when Stephen is alone with his thoughts, examining his soul. The narrative replicates the structure of a catechism, direct questions with direct, if somewhat unjustified, answers: «Why was he kneeling there like a child saying his evening prayers? To be alone with his soul» (*P* 115).

Stephen's desire to confession didn't come out of a sense of morality. It was rather provoked by the fear aroused in him by Father Arnall's words: «He waited in fear, his soul pining him, praying silently that death might not touch his brow as he passed over the threshold, that the fiends that inhabit darkness might no be given power over him» (*P* 114). Though the narrative of confession is filled with selfless notions of having offended God, of being ashamed of having caused God pain, of not being «worthy to be called God's child» (*P* 115), Stephen's impetus came directly from the fear of eternal damnation. As it happened in Clongowes, Stephen is forced to submission simply by fear of punishment. Until he can let go of such fear, he will never be truly free from the Church. Hence his new-found desire to reconciliation with God, hence why his previous sinning was just that, sinning, rather than rebellion. Like Lucifer, Stephen fell out of God's favour by sinning; yet, he hasn't uttered his *non serviam* yet. Instead, through confession, he goes to beg God's forgiveness.

As the moment of the actual confession approaches, Stephen's thoughts of shame will greatly increase, almost turning him around in his decision: «He could still leave the chapel. He could stand up, put one foot before the other and walk out softly and then run, run, run swiftly through the dark streets. He could still escape from the shame» (*P* 120). In Stephen's fleeing desire there's no hint of rebellion, no sense of actively wanting to stray away from the Church. If he had already freed himself from the Church's power, he would have had no trouble leaving the chapel, wouldn't even have felt the necessity to go there in the first place. However, because he is still not free, because Catholicism is still in command of his thoughts and actions, his desire to leave cannot be ascribed to anything else but the shame he feels in what he had done; and the shame itself is a creation of the Catholic doctrine that infuses his mind. The fear inculcated in him by the masterfully painted picture of an eternity in hell, however, was stronger than his shame. When the door of the

box opened, «[h]e stood up in terror and walked blindly into [it]» (*ibidem*). There was no turning back now. As the confession starts, with Stephen gasping for air a third of the way through the *Confiteor*, the youth begins by saying that he hasn't confessed for «[a] long time» (*P* 121). A Catholic must confess at least once a year for Easter; saying that he hasn't confessed in eight months wouldn't be a long time, frowned upon at the most, but not a long time. Stephen's idea of time here is more affected by the number and the severity of sins he committed since he last confessed. Although only being obliged to confess once a year, it would be expected that he had confessed immediately after committing a mortal sin such as lust. Stephen's sense of time has thus been thwarted by the heavy conscious of having both sinned and not repented sooner. A long time may have passed, but still Stephen seems wary of disclosing what actually led him there. He starts enumerating his sins according to their perceived gravity: masses missed, prayers not said, lies, moving up to sins of anger, envy, gluttony, vanity, disobedience (to his parents more so than to his masters, one assumes), moving up again to sloth until finally the priest asks «Anything else, my child?» (*P* 12), as if knowing of what was still unsaid. Unable to hide it any longer, Stephen confessed the sins that were troubling his mind. At this point, a sort of anti-climax occurs. While the reader, and probably Stephen as well, might have expected a more severe reaction from the priest, the old man seems little more than nonplussed, even slightly bored by the tales of Stephen's lustful ways. One imagines that the old priest had probably heard the same story countless times before. Although Stephen's perception of the confessor's reaction is in-line with the shame and fear he felt at the time, the actual narrative of the priest's movements and words reveal little more than a text-book reaction, re-enacted thousands of times, of the church's position on Stephen's sin:

> The priest passed his hand several times over his face. Then, resting his forehead against his hand, he leaned towards the grating and, with eyes still averted, spoke slowly. His voice was weary and old.
>
> – You are very young, my child, he said, and let me implore of you to give up that sin. It is a terrible sin. It kills the body and it kills the soul. It is the cause of many crimes and misfortunes. Give it up, my child, for God's sake. It is dishonourable and unmanly. You cannot know where that wretched habit will lead you or where it will come against you. As long as you commit that sin, my poor child, you will never be worth one farthing to God. Pray to our mother Mary to help you. She will help you, my child. Pray to Our Blessed Lady when that sin comes into your mind. I am sure you will do that, will you not? You repent of all those sins. I am sure you do. And you will promise God now that by His holy grace you will never offend Him any more by that wicked sin. You will make that solemn

promise to God, will you not? (*P* 122)

Stephen promises, he was sorry, how he regretted it, and «God had promised to forgive him if he was sorry» (*P* 120). Yet, because his regret came from fear of being condemned to an eternity in hell and not necessarily out of love of God, one wonders how forgiven Stephen might have been. Yet, because he complied with the power-structure's demands – regretting his sins, going to confession, promising not to indulge in them again – Stephen is absolved: «he bent his head and heard the grave words of absolution spoken and saw the priest's hand raised above him in token of forgiveness» (*P* 122). The chapter ends, rather meaningfully, the next morning, with Stephen waiting to take communion in the college chapel. «The ciborium[160] had come to him» (*P* 123), the last sentence of the third chapter, is both the culmination of Stephen's internal turmoil and new found piety as well as a preview into the action of the next chapter. Communion, also a synonym of community, a word of the same root, is exactly the crossroad Stephen will face next: whether to take part in the priesthood, as he is invited to do, or to refuse any affiliation with the body of the Church as he eventually does. The narrator leaves the chapter as a cliffhanger: will Stephen take communion when the ciborium approaches him, or will he break free?

Literally, at that moment, he will, and in doing so, he will undergo a complete transformation of his everyday life. Catholicism threatened Stephen into becoming the perfect subject, and the boy now lives every hour of his day according to the religion's precepts. The first paragraph of the fourth chapter is symptomatic of how thorough Catholicism's control of one's life really is:

> Sunday was dedicated to the mistery of the Holy Trinity, Monday to the Holy Ghost, Tuesday to the Guardian Angels, Wednesday to saint Joseph, Thursday to the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, Friday to the Suffering of Jesus, Saturday to the Blessed Virgin Mary. (*P* 124)

Stephen has now laid out his everyday life according to instructions. Literally. As Jeri Johnson notes, Stephen's weekly schedule has been created according to the plan for devotions outlined in *The Sodality Manual; or a Collection of Prayers and Spiritual Exercises for Members of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary*[161]. «His daily life was laid out in devotional areas» (*P* 124), the narrator's own words, not mine, «Every part of his day […] circled about its own centre of spiritual energy» (*ibidem*). Stephen had wholeheartedly devoted himself to amend his life, to

160 The vessel used to hold the Eucharist.
161 Cf. Johnson in *P*, p. 256, n. 124.1-5,

become as much the saint now as he was before the sinner. Not only did he pray constantly, he also furthered his piety by mortification of his body, punishing each of his senses as best as he could: «striving […] by constant mortification to undo the sinful past rather than to achieve a saintliness fraught with peril» (*P* 126). Stephen has never been under more subjection to the Catholic power-structure than he is now, to the point of blindly following the precepts he could not understand or agree with – «it seemed strange to him at times that wisdom and understanding and knowledge were so distinct in their nature that each should be prayed for apart from the others» (*P* 125). Yet, even during this state of almost saintliness, fear still lurks at the back of his mind, what if he has not paid for his sins yet? What if the first confession wasn't valid? What if, what if. Fear has been a constant element in Stephen's Catholic upbringing, from his days as a child at Clongowes until now: «It humiliated and shamed him to think that he would never be freed from [his sins] wholly, however holily he might live or whatever virtues or perfections he might attain» (*P* 129). Furthermore, his new ascetic life poses dangers of its own: Stephen, who once had sinned with pride, now dangerously approaches self-righteous pride. His devotion will have him believe he is closer to sainthood despite his constant fear of not having amended himself yet – «The very frequency and violence of temptations showed him at last the truth of what he had heard about the trials of the saints» (*ibidem*) – and will drive him away from the company of his fellow subjects of Catholicism:

> To merge his life in the common tide of other lives was harder for him than any fasting or prayer and it was his constant failure to do this to his own satisfaction which caused in his soul at last a sensation of spiritual dryness together with a growth of doubts and scruples. (*P* 128)

Stephen has outbursts of anger when someone, even his mother, disturbs his daily rituals of penitence, even if by simply coughing. He recognises in himself the same nervous twitches he has often seen in his masters' faces and he is now discovering their cause. Stephen's inability to connect with other humans is directly caused by his excessive piety – he is closer to saints than to other humans, and although he is aware of this flaw in his life, he is unaware of its implications. If community is at the very basis of Catholicism, his individuality in religion is a subversion of the Catholic doctrine. Subversion through submission: there is such a thing as being too obedient, apparently. His ascetic life is destroying his faith from the inside. As much as Catholicism preaches community, it operates on the individual, and even its path to salvation becomes, as Stephen now experiences, everyone trying to secure heaven for himself. This contradictory position Stephen finds himself in can be argued as being a direct result of the ambiguity of the Catholic narrative, as

defined by Bhabha. Stephen has stopped living his life as he would do normally in order to mould it according to what is defined by the narrative of Catholicism, only to find that the actual community defined as Catholic couldn't be further away from that narrative. By turning himself into the narrative of the perfect Catholic man, Stephen discovers that there is no such thing as the perfect Catholic man in his everyday life, thus exposing the inherit failure of the narrative of Catholicism. It's from this duplicity of being the model Catholic that Stephen will re-enact Lucifer's story. Lucifer, like Stephen, was once closer to God than any of the other angels, and because of that, he fell to damnation:

> Thy pride is brought down to hell, thy carcass is fallen down: under thee shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be thy covering. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning? how art thou fallen to the earth, that didst wound the nations? And thou saidst in thy heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the most High. But yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, into the depth of the pit. (DRB Isaiah, 14, 11-15)

Lucifer, the name Satan was known by before his fall, is a curious symbol; his name is believed to mean simply morning star, and although the above passage from Isaiah is traditionally understood as a reference to Lucifer's fall, it refers to a Babylonian king. Perhaps most interestingly, Lucifer, in its original meaning of morning star, is also used to refer to Jesus himself in *2 Peter* 1, 19, though all translations will choose a periphrasis of Lucifer rather than using it as a proper noun, as it happens in the fragment above, thus furthering the popular belief that Lucifer refers to Satan before his rebellion. Lucifer is thus a double symbol of falling from grace and of light in a dark place and, as such, embodies the perfect synthesis of both Satan's and Stephen's path. The popular narrative of Lucifer's fall, perhaps most famously rewritten by John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), holds that Lucifer, God's favourite angel, consumed by jealousy over God's newest creation, Man, leads a revolt to occupy God's throne, and is defeated by God's army and cast away into the depths of hell. Lucifer's, now Satan, famous words in *Paradise Lost* have echoed through the years as the ultimate expression of pride: «Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven»[162]. Stephen's narrative of rejection, however, slightly differs from Lucifer's. He was not after the power given by God, he was offered the power. His rejection of the Church begins when he is offered a place in the priesthood by the director of Belvedere, a scene I referred to before. The priest's emphasis on the

162 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I.263, New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1851, p. 125.

power held by the ministers of God is quite telling of the Church's ambition to rule mankind, as I've explored before, though Stephen, at that point in the narrative, having realised the disconnection between the Catholic narrative and the lives of Catholics, is less than thrilled by the prospect of such power. That is not to say that he refused priesthood lightly, he did consider being ordained, though he thought of it as serving in a minor role, away from the minister's central place in the mass:

> He longed for the minor sacred offices, to be vested with the tunicle of subdeacon at high mass, to stand aloof from the altar, forgotten by the people, his shoulders covered with a humeral veil, holding the paten within its folds, or, when the sacrifice had been accomplished, to stand as a deacon in a dalmatic cloth of gold on the step below the celebrant, his hands joined and his face towards the people, and sing the chant *Ite, missa est* (*P* 133-134)

His longing for the secondary role is both an extension of his piety, a strive for humility despite his pride in becoming a minister of God, and an expression of his ultimate refusal of Catholic community, for he wanted to be forgotten by the people, not their leader, and even if he saw himself as a celebrant, he saw it as being «in a church without worshippers» (*P* 134). At this point, Stephen is more seriously considering priesthood, and he wonders what secrets about the Catholic narrative he might learn. If he were to become a priest, Stephen would be given access to the knowledge of the Church, something that he had always been denied: «He listened in reverent silence now to the priest's appeal and through the words he heard even more distinctly a voice bidding him approach, offering him *secret knowledge and secret power*» (*ibidem*, my emphasis). Knowledge and power are two sides of the same coin that has now been offered to him. Yet, despite all his musings in knowledge and power, of his fantasies about Catholic rite and pageantry, Stephen doesn't seem to consider the vocation with any spiritual inclination. Perhaps prompted by the director's curious statement of how ridiculous he thought franciscan priests looked walking around in the streets in their vestments – «I used to see them out cycling in all kinds of weather with this thing up about their knees! It was really ridiculous» (*P* 130) –, Stephen's thoughts about priesthood will focus on more material, visible signs. The life he saw ahead was not one of joy: «It was a grave and ordered and passionless life that awaited him» (*P* 135). His inclination to think of priesthood in material terms will, shortly after taking his leave from the director, tip him into the abyss of non-priesthood:

> He was passing at that moment before the jesuit house in Gardiner Street, and wondered vaguely which window would be his if he ever joined the order. Then he wondered at the vagueness of his wonder, at the remoteness of his soul from what he had hitherto imagined her sanctuary, at the frail hold which so many years of order and obedience had of him when once a definite and *irrevocable act of his threatened to end for ever, in time and in eternity, his freedom*. The voice of the director urging upon him the *proud claims of the church* and the mystery and power of the priestly office repeated itself idly in his memory. His soul was not there to hear and greet it and he knew that the exhortation he had listened to had already fallen into an idle formal tale. *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.
>
> The snares of the world were its ways of sin. *He would fall*. He had not yet fallen but he would fall silently, in an instant. Not to fall was too hard, too hard: and he felt the silent lapse of his soul, as it would be at some instant to come, falling, falling but not yet fallen, still unfallen but about to fall. (*P* 136, my emphasis).

The last sentences of the excerpt above hold in them the smooth movement of a leaf falling from a tree, as opposed to the violent fall Satan and his angels suffer from heaven. Stephen realises, by wondering what his window might be, how disconnected he feels from what the Church expects of its ministers, regardless of his obedient and orderly behaviour. There are several keywords that one can take from the narrative of Stephen's *non serviam*, one being the absence of the *non serviam* itself: the emphasis he puts in freedom being, perhaps, the most revealing. Freedom is exactly what Catholicism had denied him so far, and freedom is what he would have to hand over if he wished to pursue the power and knowledge offered to him by the power-structure. Morse, in his Catholic reading of Joyce's work, argues that Stephen «renounces Catholicism not because he is irreligious but because he is anti-authoritarian»[163]. Stephen, or the narrator prying into his wonderings, also admits the impossibility of living up to the Catholic idea of community, he was destined to be forever apart from others. Most curiously, he mentions the «proud claims of the church», much like before he had noted a «strong note of pride» (*P* 133) in the director's voice. Pride, one must keep in mind, is defined by the *Catholic Encyclopedia* as «the excessive love of one's own excellence» and

163 J. Mitchell Morse, *op. cit.*, p. 4-5.

it is usually taken to be «one of the seven capital sins»[164]. Furthermore, pride is also commonly understood to be Lucifer's sin, the «rebellion of the intellect» (*P* 104), as Father Arnall puts it in his sermon, having before admitted that Lucifer's sin is considered by theologians as «the sin of pride, the sinful thought conceived in an instant: *non serviam: I will not serve*» (*P* 99). By repeatedly qualifying the Church as proud, even if unwittingly, Stephen is subverting and juxtaposing his sin – as seen by the power-structure – with the Church's ruin – as seen by him. He is the one breaking free, uttering the *non serviam*, yet the sin of pride is the Church's, not his. Stephen is appropriating the Church's language, as he does constantly, to subvert its law and order. This is not to say that Stephen is free from pride: even before the fall, pride has been repeatedly used by the narrator to qualify him and his actions, yet in this particular instance, when he himself uses «the fall» to identify his breaking away from the Church, it is the power-structure who hs been accused of the sin of the intellect, not him. His obsession with the fall, of course, also has Catholic undertones. It refers to his own fall from the previous state of piety to sin, but also allegorically to the fall of Lucifer, and, on top of that, to the fall of Man from Eden, that is, when mankind fell from the state of innocence in which it was created. The superimposition of these three Christian notions of *fall* gives us a hint of how complex Stephen's break with Catholicism really is: he is re-enacting the fall of Lucifer by refusing to obey the power-structure; he is, from his new free perspective, also falling from his previous state of innocence having now to be an individual rather than a sheep in the flock of the Lord; and to his former church he has simply fallen into sin. Furthermore, not only is Stephen re-enacting Lucifer's fall, his refusal can also be argued to replay the ambivalence of the name *lucifer* itself. Not only does he prefer to reign in the aesthetic world than to be yet another servant of the religious one, he also chooses to sacrifice his life and after-life to become a «priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life» (*P* 186) and, in doing this, he approaches the other Lucifer, Jesus Christ, as he occasionally did before.

Stephen's fall differs from Lucifer's in yet another crucial element: he falls alone, he doesn't bring with him a «third part of the cohorts of angels» (*P* 113). In other words, Stephen doesn't enact a rebellion against the Church: he is not a rebel, he is a schismatic. As I've mentioned before, the only effective break from Catholicism can only be achieved through individualism, not through revolt. Rebellions can be dealt with by the power-structure, as we've seen in the first chapter when Stephen goes up to the rector to ask for justice; but an individual break cannot be so easily controlled and is, perhaps, a stronger blow to the foundations of Catholicism than any large-scale revolt, for it questions the very basis of community, exchanging it for an individual choice.

164 Joseph Delany, «Pride», *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12405a.htm].

Furthermore, the reason why the narrative of Stephen's schism is so heavy in Catholic allusions is not only because, at that point in time, he is still under the control of the hierarchy; it is, most of all, because his mind has been shaped to think of his defection within the language of Catholicism and because only in that language would be able to effectively separate himself from the body of the Church. If he hadn't fashioned himself as a sort of Lucifer, his break would not be seen by the power-structure as an actual break, but only as a temporary departure. More, he himself wouldn't have been certain of his break if not by that specific movement of falling. Perhaps it helps to think of it in terms of language: by saying he has fallen, or that he will fall, is the only way of describing his definitive decision in the Catholic idiom. Also, the fall presupposes as much irreversibility as his other option – that of becoming a priest – would. There is no turning back from the fall of Lucifer, as there is no turning back from the fall of Stephen, and the only way for both Stephen and the Catholic Church to understand this is precisely to inscribe Stephen's rejection of the Church with Lucifer's rejection of God.

After Stephen's abrupt decision to break free, the reader still finds him, at the beginning of the next section, physically moving from the pub to the chapel and back again: «From the door of Byron's publichouse to the gate of Clontarf Chapel, from the gate of Clontarf Chapel to the door of Byron's publichouse and then back again to the chapel and then back again to the publichouse» (*P* 138), as if his defection was nothing more than a temporary insane decision, one sees Stephen almost taking a step back. Yet, one quickly learns that he has definitely moved away from the seminar to the university, and Stephen will also physically move away from the Church to a more idyllical setting where his new vocation will find him: «He set abruptly for the Bull[165]» (*ibidem*). The narrator masterfully gives us an impression of what might have happened in Stephen's mind during the intervening time between his interview with the rector and the present narrative time. However, Stephen's choice is not exactly between the seminary or the university (his father is in the publichouse enquiring about the university), but rather a third path, different from his most obvious options: he will follow the Bull. The Bull, however, is not only a topos of Dublin, but also an allusion to his mythical father Daedalus who invented a wooden cow so that queen Pasiphaë, wife to King Minos of Crete, could mate with a bull she had fallen in love with[166]. Stephen is thus, literally, following the path to creation, and by following the Bull he will found out his true vocation:

165 «A sea-wall running from the shore at Clontarf into Dublin bay», Johnson in *P*, p. 261, n.138.28.

166 From the union of the queen with the bull was born the Minotaur, for whom Daedalus later built his famous Labyrinth. Later, Daedalus was imprisoned so that he could not reveal to the world his knowledge of the labyrinth. To escape, he devised two pairs of wings who would eventually lead to his son Icarus death.

> His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her graveclothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable (*P* 143)

In discovering his vocation, Stephen once again adopts the language of the Church and fashions himself as akin to Christ: like him he resurrects from the dead to find his mission in life – to create, like his mythological namesake, something that can soar above the dull earth of priests and churches. This superimposition of Christian and mythological imagery will return shortly after in the narrator's description of the girl Stephen sees on the beach and interprets as the symbol of his newly found vocation. The girl is like a beautiful seabird, a crane, as if echoing Ovid's *Metamorphoses* where a Pygmy queen was transformed into a crane and made to wage war against what were once her people: «a second corner \ Portrays the fate of the Pygmy queen, whom Juno \ Turned into a crane, made to attack the people \ She once ruled over»[167]; but she is also portrayed as having thighs of ivory and being dressed in «slateblue skirts» (*P* 144) – ivory and blue being traditionally associated with the Virgin Mary. Stephen himself is thus transforming his own former queen into a symbol of the new war he is about to engage in.

Despite leaving Catholicism, Stephen will keep the Catholic language deeply engraved in his idiolect. As the fifth chapter of *Portrait* begins, the first where Stephen is no longer a member of the Church, so does the narrator's recycling of the Catholic language. Stephen's mind is dressed «in the vesture of a doubting monk» (*P* 148) while the narrator's descriptions become populated with priests and priestlike figures: «like the head of a priest appealing without humility to the tabernacle» (*P* 149); Cranly himself, one of Stephen's university friends who will later double as his secular confessor was described as having «a priestlike face, priestlike in its pallor» (*ibidem*). There are countless other examples of the incidence of Catholic language in the narrator's speech, now even more evident, for they are being employed after Stephen refused to serve the Church anymore. The predominance of Catholic language and allusions in Stephen's, through the narrator's, speech is, rather clearly, yet another sign of how Catholicism acts in the same way as a colonial power: its language becomes so deeply appropriated by its subjects that even when one breaks free from it, it becomes impossible to break free from its cultural heritage. What Stephen says of the dean of studies, with whom he has a famous conversation about language, is as true to the English language as it is to the Catholic language. Stephen claims that English was the dean's language before being his (the dean of studies is an English convert); much in the same way, for the dean of studies,

167 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, book VI.89-92, transl. Rolfe Humphries, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1955, p. 131-132.

Catholicism is Stephen's language before being his. The tundish, that strange word that began the whole discussion, turns into the thurible. If English will always be for Stephen «an acquired speech» (*P* 159), Catholicism is his mother tongue from which he cannot escape, despite his efforts to break free from the Catholic power-structure.

Catholic language is not the only thing Stephen becomes unable to let go throughout his new life as an individual. Most noticeably, throughout the fifth chapter, Stephen will indulge in a unexplicable urge to confess and beg for a reaction: either forgiveness, understanding or disgust. Lacking the company of priests, the young man now turns to his university friends for a listening ear, Davin and Cranly. Davin will be Stephen's sounding board to his loathing of Nationalism, while Cranly will perform the more adequate role of the Devil's advocate in their discussion of religion.

Davin comes from the countryside of Ireland and has been dully moulded to conform to Nationalist narrative, as much as Stephen was to conform to the Catholic narrative. Not surprisingly, Stephen equates Davin's attitude towards Nationalism as akin to one's attitude towards Catholicism: «the same attitude as towards the Roman catholic religion, the attitude of a *dullwitted loyal serf*» (*P* 152). Mindless subjection thus becomes the lowest common denominator to both the Nationalist and the Catholic narrative; Davin, being a proper Irishman will also voice his adherence to Catholicism as professed by the Nationalist ideology. It's to Davin that Stephen chooses to confess the sins of his adolescence:

> When you told me that night in Harcourt Street those things about your private life, honest to God, Stevie, I was not able to eat my dinner. I was quite bad. I was awake a long time that night. Why did you tell me those things? (*P* 170)

Why did Stephen tell Davin those things? The question is left unanswered, yet I would like to propose that the reason why Stephen told his friend of his sinful life is twofold: on the one hand, perhaps the most easily accepted hypothesis, Stephen wanted to prove to himself and to his friends how simple-minded, how dull witted, how subservient to Catholic morals the Nationalist narrative really was, and thus to justify to himself, once again, his detachment from it; on the other hand, I propose that Stephen was trying to find in Davin the reaction he expected from his confessor. I've noted before how the priest's reaction to Stephen's sinful tale might have felt like an anti-climax; when the boy expected shock, he got fatigued reprehension. Now, Davin brings him the reaction he thinks he deserves, even if he will feign being annoyed with it: disgust. Stephen looked in Davin for an appropriate reaction to his life of depravity, as if he needed a confirmation that yes, his previous life was sinful, and disgusting, and against Catholic doctrine. If so, then Stephen is here revealing

how far Catholicism is still his yardstick. In Davin's repulsion he found the reaction that confirmed his preconception: from a Catholic point-of-view, his previous lifestyle was wrong. Yet he doesn't look for another standard; Catholicism is still the power-structure through which Stephen frames his world-view; and that, much like with language, is impossible to write off with a *non serviam*. Stephen betrays an awareness of the impossibility of completely breaking free when he confesses to Davin that he will try to «fly by those nets [nationality, language, religion]» (*P* 171). By flying by, Stephen is stating his awareness that he will have to let go of them as much as be aided by those elements that shackled his individuality before.

The conversation Stephen has with Cranly is, possibly, the single most significant scene in the whole novel to my argument: in it, one can have direct access to the issues Stephen struggles with in his abandonment of religion and his ambivalent detachment from the narrative of Catholicism. The conversation starts in a confessing mode – confession, unlike baptism[168], being a sacrament that can only be performed by a minister –, with Stephen leading Cranly away from company to share with his companion his most recent sin – disobeying his mother, yet another serious violation of Catholic law:

> – [My mother] wishes me to make my easter duty.
> – And will you?
> – I will not, Stephen said.
> – Why not? Cranly said.
> – I will not serve, answered Stephen.
> – That remark was made before (*P* 201)

Making one's Easter duty refers to the Catholic commandment of taking the Eucharist at least once a year, for Easter. Taking the Eucharist must always be done in a state of purity, without mortal sin, therefore, confession at this time is a requirement. By confessing to his friend, Stephen is not openly disobeying his mother, as he acknowledges, he is also subverting the Church's order by taking the sacrament of confession and substituting it for a conversation with his friend. Furthermore, this particular subversion also betrays the instinct to follow the orders of the power-structure: even if he is not confessing to a priest, Stephen is still *confessing* to Cranly his most recent fault. Yet, the most striking element in the fragment above is, quite obviously, Stephen's reinforcement of his identification with Lucifer, by retaking the words commonly attributed to the fallen angel at the time of his rebellion. As Cranly observes, that remark has been made before, both

168 «In case of necessity any layman or woman can do it» (*P* 160), yet another example of how Catholic language has seeped into Stephen's idiolect.

by Lucifer as by Stephen at the moment when he decided to break away from Catholicism. Stephen is, therefore, stating what the narrator had only hinted at before, that his break with the body of the church has been informed by the church's narrative. Furthermore, the words themselves are also a statement of individuality and rejection of an unmovable power controlling him. *I will not serve* is also *I will not be a subject*, I will not be a servant of this in which I no longer believe or accept. Yet, Stephen's disillusioned rejection has been rewritten in *Ulysses*, when Stephen declares to Haines that he is, in fact, the «servant of two masters» (*U* 20). The difference between the Stephen in *Portrait* and the Stephen in *Ulysses* is quite simple: by the time the action of *Ulysses* is set, Stephen had realised that whether he obeys or not, whether he decides to take part or not, it is not in his hands to sever the connection inculcated in him at birth between the Catholic Church and himself; he might have escaped the visible face of power, he might not willingly take part in its narrative again, but whether indirectly through the environment in which he lives, or through his own Catholic informed mind, Catholicism still has power over the way he thinks, talks and behaves. Yes, he doesn't believe in the Eucharist, he says as much to Cranly, yet he is wary of openly disbelieving in it as well:

> – Do you believe in the eucharist? Cranly asked.
>
> – I do not, Stephen said.
>
> – Do you disbelieve then?
>
> – I neither believe in it nor disbelieve in it, Stephen answered.
>
> – Many persons have doubts, even religious persons, yet they overcome them or put them aside, Cranly said. Are your doubts on that point too strong?
>
> – I do not wish to overcome them, Stephen answered. (*P* 201)

Although Stephen claims he does not wish to overcome the doubts he supposedly has, I do not believe Stephen has any doubts about believing or not believing, simply because Cranly is asking the wrong question. Cranly's question is framed as to condition Stephen's answer, simplifying his plight as merely an issue of faith. As I've tried to prove throughout my whole argument, Catholicism is not simply a faith: it is a power-structure designed to subject its believers into obedience. Whether Stephen believes in a supernatural being or not, in the truth of the Catholic Church or not, he still refuses to accept its law. Even if he has doubts on the subject of faith, he doesn't wish to overcome them because that would be a movement of submission to the Catholic Church. Refusing the power-structure doesn't necessarily make Stephen an atheist or an heretic, as Cranly implies in his question; it makes him a schismatic – to use Catholic language – or simply an

individual breaking free from a power-structure under which he has been living.

Cranly may not have been able to understand why his question was not accurate to Stephen – he hadn't been as close to the power-structure as Stephen to realise clearly just how oppressive it really is – but he has the single most commented upon remark by critics of Catholicism in *Portrait*: «– It is a curious thing […] how your mind is supersaturated with the religion in which you say you disbelieve» (*P* 202). Adherents of Catholicism in Joyce will cling to Cranly's disbelief in his friend's position expressed through his detached «you say you disbelieve»; detractors will cling to Stephen's answer that he once believed, but that he is someone different now. My reading is plural insofar as it encompasses both positions: I agree with Cranly, Stephen's mind is supersaturated with Catholicism, but I also confirm Stephen's statement that he is someone else now: he has defied the power-structure, even though he still *speaks* Catholic. His individual war against the power-structure of Catholicism is thus the only reason why he refuses, despite Cranly's appeal, to perform lip-service at the mass and indulging in his mother's wishes: in doing so, he would be giving in to the power-structure and loosing an already hard battle. «If I could» (*P* 203), he says, but he can't, not without betraying the freedom he fought so hard to obtain. The fact is that it is not an issue of faith Stephen is striking at, but one of freedom. Stephen openly admits to Cranly that he both feels and is afraid that the host might indeed be the body and blood of the son of God; yet, it is not the eternal punishment he fears in taking a sacrilegious communion, but the fact that he would be giving in to «a symbol behind which are massed twenty centuries of *authority and veneration*» (*P* 205). Stephen is «not afraid to make a mistake, even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake and perhaps as long as eternity too» (*P* 208) by moving away from the Church. Freedom comes at a great price, but a price Stephen is willing to pay. Rather a lifelong freedom than «an eternity of bliss in the company of the dean of studies» (*P* 202).

Towards the end of the dialogue – and the narrative – Stephen will be as direct and clear about his position as he can:

> 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. (*P* 208)

In doing this, Stephen is stating once and for all his refusal of subjection to the Catholic narrative (as well as the nationalist), as well as the motives for such rejection: the freedom to act, express and create as an individual. As I've established in the beginning of this work, Stephen's fight

is one of self-expression, of having a voice which has been denied by his condition as a subaltern to the power-structure of Catholicism. Even if he must use silence, his individual silence can be much louder than the one imposed on him by the narrative of Catholicism. Stephen's striving for self-expression has been a long, difficult fight. However, by the end of *Portrait*, he believes that he has won, that he has set himself free from the shackles of Catholicism. Yet, in speaking, he unwittingly reinforces the nets flung at him by Catholicism; when he acts, he does so by replicating the structures in which he was taught to act, and when he thinks, his mind is supersaturated by the very thing he wished to free himself from. Catholicism is a powerful force. Despite having claimed not to serve it anymore, in freedom Stephen re-enacts countless times the very things he wished to flee from. Because he is no longer a subject of Catholicism, a *subaltern* of Catholicism, he is now finally free to speak. And isn't it curious that when he does speak, he *speaks in Catholic*?

Lotus eaters: conclusions

In the chapter commonly known as «Lotus Eaters» of *Ulysses*, the second of the second part of the book, Leopold Bloom visits All Hollows church. Upon entering, Bloom notices that a service is taking place, «Something going on: some sodality» (*U* 77). Bloom joins in, sitting at the back, from where he starts observing the believers. «Nice discreet place to be next to some girl» (*ibidem*), he thinks still with Martha's letter in his mind. His attention, however, is quickly diverted by what's happening during the mass he accidentally joined:

> The priest went along by them, murmuring, holding the thing in his hands. He stopped at each, took out a communion, shook a drop or two (are they in water?) off it and put it neatly into her mouth. Her hat and head sank. Then the next one: a small old woman. The priest bent down to put it into her mouth, murmuring all the time. Latin. The next one. Shut your eyes and open your mouth. What? *Corpus*. Body. Corpse. Good idea the Latin. Stupefies them first. Hospice for the dying. They don't seem to chew it: only swallow it down. Rum idea: eating bits of a corpse why the cannibals cotton to it. (*ibidem*)

Looking through Bloom's eyes one can get a fresh perspective over what, for dozens of pages, we've been trying to analyse from its centre, that is to say, from Stephen's perspective. Bloom's curious gaze is a precious help to understand how Catholicism looks like to a non-Catholic. The moment Bloom comments upon is, quite clearly, the taking of the Eucharist. The mumbling he hears from the priest is, as he later recognises, Latin. Latin, one must keep in mind, was the official language of the Church before Vatican II, in which every rite was performed. As we've seen before, in the introduction, the use of Latin in Catholicism had the outward appeal of being an universal language that could unite Catholics of all nations under the same community. Its more direct effect, however, is one of subjugation, for the number of believers who could actually understand Latin, instead of mindless repeating the latin answers of the mass over the years, would be limited at best. Speaking in a language one cannot comprehend is, of course, a way of taking power away from the subject, for how can one fight back if not by arguing? Latin wouldn't be left out of the mass until the middle of the twentieth century. Consequently, during *Portrait*'s narrative time, as well as during

Ulysses', the mass would have been in Latin. Bloom is quite aware of the effects of practising a religion in a language one does not understand: it stupefies the believers into submission. That is why it is a «good idea», as he says: Latin as well as other elements of the mass, is used to elevate the rite into an aura of mysteriousness and dignity, to endow it with a touch of superiority so that the Catholic community will fear it as well as admire it. In this, Bloom is unwittingly voicing a commentary akin to Benedict Anderson's idea of *sacred languages*, that is a language that would function not only as a medium for communication amongst the religious community, but part of the community's identity of sacredness in itself. Anderson writes that «[all] the great classical communities conceived of themselves as cosmically central, through the medium of the sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of power»[169]. In this, Christianity until the sixteenth century and Catholicism in particular until the mid-twentieth are a perfect example. One of the major fragmentary issues between Catholicism and Protestantism was precisely the language issue: while the reformers voiced the necessity for turning to vernacular, Catholicism refused it. This refusal, ultimately grounded on the very sacredness of the language, conforms to Anderson's argument. Yet, its ultimate consequence, and perhaps the greater motive behind it, was to keep Catholic hierarchy profoundly centralised and in command of the flock. Catholic hierarchy thus assumed the position of interpreter between the word of God and the common people. As Anderson concludes, «the literati [those who could understand the sacred language] were adepts, strategic strata in a cosmological hierarchy of which the apex was divine. The fundamental conceptions about 'social groups' were centripetal and hierarchical, rather than boundary-orientated and horizontal»[170].

Bloom has a knack for identifying breaking issues within the Church: first the language and its attendant consequences, then the large theological quarrel of transubstantiation. He is right, Catholics, as if cannibals, truly believe that they're eating the body of Christ, or his corpse, as Bloom put it. That is yet another issue separating Catholics from Protestants: the question of whether or not the host becomes the actual body of Christ. The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, on the issue of transubstantiation defends its reality by arguing that the words Christ uttered at the last supper could not be read to mean anything else but that:

> When, therefore, He Who is All Truth and All Power said of the bread: "This is my body", the bread became, through the utterance of these words, the Body of Christ; consequently, on the completion of the sentence the substance of bread was no longer present, but the Body of Christ under the outward appearance

169 Benedict Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
170 *Idem*, p. 15.

> of bread. Hence the bread must have become the Body of Christ, i.e. the former must have been converted into the latter[171]

Yet, if within Christendom, despite their differences, opinions might diverge but are still understandable to one another, Bloom gives us the perspective of a non-Christian to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation: eating the corpse of a man, isn't that what cannibals do? Bloom's candid reflection provides us with the fresh perspective I was looking for. In this scene, Bloom's comments are those of an anthropologist commenting on a foreign and strange culture: cold, analytical, detached, slightly judgemental and based on his own understanding of the world. Bloom's world view might be slightly more inclined towards the Protestant position on what concerns the issue of the Real Presence of Christ, giving a veiled endorsement of their view that the consecration of the bread must be taken figuratively, or at the least, as consubstantiation[172] rather than transubstantiation, as the Lutherans have it; for if it is taken too literally, that's what Catholics are: cannibals. However, most interestingly for our argument, Bloom points yet another function of the communion: its ability to control through a token of sacredness the subjugated body of the Church:

> Something like those mazzoth: it's that sort of bread: unleavened shewbread. Look at them. Now I bet it makes them feel happy. Lollipop. It does. Yes, bread of angels it's called. There's a big idea behind it, kind of kingdom of God is within you feel. First communicants. Hokypoky penny a lump. Then feel all like one family party, same in theatre, all in the same swim. They do. I'm sure of that. Not so lonely. In our confraternity. Then come out a bit spreeish. Let off steam. Thing is if you really believe in it. Lourdes cure, waters of oblivion, and the Knock apparition, statues bleeding. Old fellow asleep near the confessionbox. Hence those snores. Blind faith. Safe in the arms of kingdom come. Lulls all pain. Wake this time next year. (*U* 78)

During his immediate reflexions on what he observes, Bloom has tapped in to some of the cruxes of my argument: most significantly, the notion of Catholic community as central to its doctrine, the promise of happiness in afterlife and the sedative power of ritual. For sedative it is, if it keeps them happy – read non-rebellious. This dimension of the taking of the Eucharist had already crossed Bloom's mind before, when he was considering the proselytising missionaries in Asia:

171 Joseph Pohle, «The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist», *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1909 [Retrieved 8 May 2013 from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05573a.htm].

172 The doctrine that sustains that the blood and body of Christ coexists with the substance of wine and bread.

«Wonder how they explain it to the heathen Chinee. Prefer an ounce of opium» (*U* 77). Furthermore, the chapter title «Lotus eaters» refers to a parallel arch-narrative in the *Odyssey*: when Odysseus arrived at the land of the Lotus-eaters, they were offered lotus to eat. The men who accepted the offer lost their desire to leave. The Eucharist is thus, in *Ulysses*, the equivalent to the numbing flower of Homer, numbing Catholics by the host. In his observation, Bloom is not only voicing the famous Marx dictum that Religion is the opium of the people; he is openly stating that, opium for opium, drug for drug, numbness from numbness, might as well take one from which one can awake. Geert Lernout, commenting on the same section, concludes that

> according to Bloom, the catholic church is a powerful organization that has evolved an almost total control over its members, who give up their freedom in return for the feeling of being part of a community with their fellow believers and with the divine.[173]

While I focused more keenly on confession, Bloom's comments on the sacrament of the Eucharist are much more poignant than mine could ever be: taking the communion is both a rite of belonging, a rite of subjugation and, perhaps less clearly so, a rite of exclusion. That is to say, those who are, and those who are not part of the Catholic community are differentiated by the Eucharist. Let us consider, once again, Stephen's Easter duty and the reason why he couldn't conform to his mother's will: if he did so, even if just by lip-service, he would be rejoining the same community he had fought so hard to escape from. To take communion would be, quite literally, to take part in the community. The same reasoning goes to Bloom: although he converted to Catholicism, he does not take part in it by taking communion. Furthermore, not only does he not take part of it, he looks at the consecrated host as an outsider, revealing the role played by the transubstantiated bread in my post-colonial reading of Catholicism: a sign differently interpreted by opposing groups. In «By bread alone. Signs of violence in the mid-nineteenth century»[174], Bhabha explores the curious reactions of the coloniser when a mysterious loaf of unfermented bread, the *chapati*, starts circulating in a village. The ancient tradition now has been transformed by the British power-structure into a sign that an insurgency is approaching. That is to say that the bread innocently handed from hand to hand becomes the site of a discoursive time-lag; or, in other words, because it is read in a moment of crisis and social unrest, and because it is incomprehensible to the coloniser, it must be a sign of a rebellion. Simplifying the analogy, a sign – bread in both cases, Catholicism and Bhabha's argument – has no essential value; it is read differently by different groups; the way in

173 Geert Lernout, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
174 Bhabha, «By bread alone. Signs of violence in the mid-nineteenth century», in *op. cit.*, p. 198.

which these different groups read the sign serves as a defining element of adherence to the group. The consecrated host functions, I argue, in much the same way as the chapati precisely because it becomes a sign read differently by Catholics and non-Catholics. When Bloom looks at it, because he is an outsider, he intelligently identifies the effects of communion – the sheepishness, the mind control of the people, the integration in the community, the promise of eternal happiness – but he fails to identify the single most obvious meaning it has for a Catholic: to take communion is a duty. A duty that has, obviously, been derived from Catholic theology: it's the body of the saviour and «nothing can conduce more to a holy life»[175]. Yet, most of all, Catholics do it because that's what they must do, and the obedience to such a precept defines them as Catholic: taking the Eucharist not merely as a sign, not merely as a symbol, but as the actual body of Christ. Between Stephen and Bloom, one can reunite and reconstruct the idea of Catholicism as a colonial power: its effects as seen from the outside, amusingly identified by Bloom in the fragment above, are, to a Catholic subject, synthesised in a simple obligation imposed on them by the power-structure.

At the end of this odyssey, how can one tackle the difficult questions posed at the start? Can Catholicism be regarded as a colonial force through Stephen's perception of it? Was Stephen a subject of Catholicism? Did he manage to break free from it in the end? It is my conviction that I've managed to prove that even if an absolute certainty about the answer to this questions is impossible, there is at least enough evidence in *Portrait* to back my argument. Mary Lowe-Evans finds that in Joyce's work «much of the nostalgic subject matter and many of the textual strategies Joyce employs derive from and subsequently reproduce certain troubling anomalies inherent in Catholic dogma in spite of Joyce's apparent unorthodox, ironic, and/or subversive intentions»[176], a conclusion that, although using a widely different methodology than mine, is in line with my own thoughts. By framing Catholicism in a post-colonial framework, I tried to demonstrate that, despite one's beliefs, religion can still act, censor, and restrain a large part of our day to day life. In this, Bhabha's concept of nation as a narrative has been central: the Catholic narrative actively fights any attempt of individualism. Individuals must not define themselves, they must be defined by Catholicism. The Catholic emphasis on community is a sign of the attempt to overwrite individuality. Consequently, individuals have no voice of their own and are, as per Spivak reasoning, subalterns to the community's narrative. I've advanced, through a reading of Stephen's unjust punishment and rebellion during his first year at Clongowes, how the Catholic power-structure works. Admittedly, the priests' power over their students comes at first glance from the educational setting they find themselves in. Yet, Catholic doctrine is used as law as much as any other school rule. It is

175 Butler's catechism, p. 61.
176 Mary Lowe-Evans, *Catholic Nostalgia in Joyce and Company*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2008, p. 58.

impossible to dissociate the two. The priests are in charge because they are teachers, but they are teacher because they are priests. Catholicism has a strong hold on education facilities in Ireland – even to this day – and by controlling one's education it is rather clear that one's mind can be controlled as well. The micro-structure I found at Clongowes of repression, community, fear and punishment will replicate itself throughout the rest of the novel. Whenever Stephen deviates from Catholic doctrine, he will be punished, shamed, tortured with devilish visions of an eternity of pain. Whenever Stephen complies by the power-structure's demands, he will be rewarded, even invited to join the higher hierarchy. That is to say that whenever Stephen behaves, thinks and speaks by the Catholic narrative, he won't get into any trouble. Yet this comes at a price: an overwriting of his individuality, as clear as when Fleming, one day for a cod, rewrote Stephen's self-definition. Stephen learns that when he plays exactly what the Catholic narrative asks of him to the most useless Oxford comma, his ability to self-expression will disappear, thus becoming an absolute subaltern. Paradise lies in community, punishment in individuality. When Stephen eventually chooses punishment over a grave, serious and joyless life and an eternity in the company of the priests who educated him, he will take back his ability to speak. Curiously, we never see Stephen as talkative and engaged in conversation with other people as much as in the fifth chapter; yet, his conversations tend to sound more like monologues, particularly those where he doesn't engage at all with the narratives which shaped him – Nationalism, Catholicism – as happens when he explains his aesthetic theory to his friend Lynch. This monological conversation only furthers the sense that Stephen, though now able to self-express, finds himself utterly alone amongst the dominant narratives. For when dialogue does appear, most notably with Davin and Cranly, it appears because Stephen engages with those narratives from which he had fled. Yes, Stephen does manage to set himself free from the prison of Catholicism, he does find a voice of his own and thus overcomes the subaltern position the reader finds him in at the start of the narrative. Yet, the Catholic narrative, even if unable to overwrite Stephen's desire for individuality completely, managed to sink in deep enough to transform his attempt at self-expression. Stephen finds himself using the language of Catholicism, finds himself compelled to seek in his friends a substitution for the Catholic rites, most clearly the sacrament of confession[177], and finds that his mind is supersaturated with the things he claimed to disbelieve. When Cranly points out this very obvious fact to him, Stephen doesn't comment on it. One can only imagine what might have gone through the mind of a fictional character: the closest we've got when Stephen, reincarnated in *Ulysses,* claims to Haines that he is

177 «The presiding ritual that locks Stephen into his limited Irish subjectivity is that of confession. Both the explicit Catholic (and specifically Ignatian) practice of imaginative self-examination, as Joyce conceives it, and the development of Stephen's limiting lyric stance continually enact a subjectivity in which the speaker reveals his examined inner self to an imagined audience», Jonathan Mulrooney, «Stephen Dedalus and the politics of confession», in *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 33, n. 2, 2001, p. 167.

the servant of two masters, English and Italian, Imperialism and Catholicism, much like, in his previous incarnation in *Stephen Hero*, he had openly stated that «[t]he Roman, not the Sassenach, was for him the tyrant of the islanders»[178]. Even if Stephen will never be quite as clear in *Portrait* as he was in *Ulysses* or *Stephen Hero*, both Empires, from my point-of-view, can be regarded equally as colonial forces. Yet, in *Ulysses*, things have changed drastically from what they were in *Portrait*. Stephen has returned to Ireland, whereas before, he was keen to get away from it; he is now a teacher, whereas before we saw him only as a student. Stephen's subservient position in *Ulysses* is, therefore, completely different from the one we see in *Portrait*. He is now an authoritative figure to his students – with limited power, admittedly. By returning to Ireland, his ability to self-express through exile, as he claimed he would do to Cranly, seems to have failed. Stephen's remark that he is the servant of two masters might, then, come as a disillusioned cry of someone who found it impossible to thrive by self-expression alone. From this, one could follow his own self-analysis and conclude that no, Stephen couldn't get away from the narratives that were thrown at him when he was born. Be that as it may, the fact is that, at the end of *Portrait*, this was not what I find. Stephen will repeatedly write in his diary expressions of freedom: «Free. Soulfree and fancyfree. Let the dead bury the dead. Ay. Let the dead marry the dead» (*P* 209). The diary itself, as Michael Levenson noted on a brief review of critical opinion about *Portrait*'s final segment, has a long tradition of being regarded as an example of Stephen's revolt: «The shift to the first person then appears as an assertion of individuality and a repudiation of public norms»[179], adding later that «the final movement of the novel plays out a drama between the individual speaker and the speech of the tribe»[180]. The change of the narrative mode into diaristic might in fact point towards the possibility of Stephen having finally found a voice of his own, not needing to hide behind the mask of a troublesome narrator anymore. Be that as it may, the truth is the very act of writing a diary highlights the impossibility of making oneself heard. Who reads a diary? No one but its author. A diary is the only form of narrative that has, at its underlying definition, the impossibility of an audience. Writing a diary is not communicating. At most, it is a further attempt at self-definition, this time impossible to be overwritten by a humourous friend. However, such impossibility also furthers the inevitable conclusion that no one is there to read; that Stephen, if he adamantly insists on detaching himself from the community, will not be heard.

Yet, for us, the readers who are able to listen to Stephen, his diary is priceless. In another entry, confronted by his mother about the very possibility of returning to the Church, Stephen

178 James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, New York, New Directions, 1944.
179 Michael Levenson, «[Stephen's diary: the shape of life]» in Philip Brady and James F. Carens *Critical Essays on James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, New York, G. K. Hall & Co., 1998, p. 37.
180 Michael Levenson, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

writes: «Then she said I would come back to the faith because I had a restless mind. This means to leave the church by the backdoor of sin and reenter through the skylight of repentance. Cannot repent» (*P* 210). For all his assertiveness, however, as Jonathan Mulrooney claims, «[Stephen's] expressive stance is a lyric one that has so deep an investment in the linguistic formulations of a Catholic confessional identity as to be inseparable from them»[181]. As such, Stephen cannot and will not repent, even if he may be admitting in *Ulysses* that he is still under the spell of Catholicism, but he still uses the same language of sinning and atonement he had learnt from the power-structure; his actions are still measured and filed under the same categories imposed on him by the narrative of Catholicism. At the end of *Portrait*, Stephen is adamant: he had left the Church for good, he cannot come back. He had fallen, after all, he had said he would not serve, and, as Karl Beckson concludes, «Stephen's vocation as artist, no longer dependent on his Catholic faith, is now free to embrace the ancient myth of the 'old artificer'»[182]. Service, as the Stephen in *Ulysses* seems to acknowledge, doesn't depend entirely on one's own volition, «Stephen develops a conception of reality, a consciousness, that is informed and indeed created by the continual regimented experience of his Irish Catholic family, school, and church environment»[183]. Stephen might think himself free from the narrative of Catholicism, yet Catholic is all he knows how to write, and although writing at the margins and outside the lines as much as he can, he is still writing the same book as countless others have written throughout the centuries: the book of Catholicism.

181 Jonathan Mulrooney, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
182 Karl Beckson, *The Religion of Art. A modernist theme in British literature, 1885-1925*, New York, AMS Press, 2006, p. 114.
183 Jonathan Mulrooney, *op. cit.*, 167.

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