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The Delayed Flight of an Artist: A Psychoanalytical-Feminist Perspective of

Selected Works from James Joyce

Prospectus

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In the early twentieth century, the Modernist genre grew to encompass literary techniques involving structural order, discontinued time, suspended space, complex psyches, and stream of consciousness language. All of these factors are very prevalent in the works of James Joyce, an author deemed the “Father” of Modernism. Of course, Joyce is as much a part of his works as the works are a part of him. *Dubliners* (1914), *Stephen Hero* (1904-1906), and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) are works that show Joyce workshopping his characters as well as his aesthetic theory. With each work, Joyce begins to understand himself as an artist, and his works portray the development of his characters, especially Stephen Daedalus, Joyce’s literary alter-ego. Furthermore, these three works depict characters who are paralyzed, or controlled, by their Irish-Catholic environment, and these characters need to “fly by those nets” of Catholicism, country, and family—all of which bind them to a passionless, paralyzed existence (*Portrait* 220). With each work, Joyce grows closer to his literary doppelganger and realizes that the only way to be a free artist is to take flight. Therefore, Joyce writes in the *Bildungsroman* tradition in his autobiographical novel *Portrait*, and in order to become an artist, Stephen (and Joyce) must reject three women: Mother Mary, Mother Ireland, and his own mother. He rejects these women by correlating them with bats, making them sullied in his mind. Yet neither Stephen nor Joyce can take his flight from these women to become an artist. They are ultimately still bound by the nets from which they seek to escape in these three literary works and, thus, will not take flight until Joyce’s last published novel, *Finnegans Wake* (1939).

In regard to Joyce’s complex ideologies and symbolisms, this thesis assumes a psychoanalytical perspective with a feminist angle and applies Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and

Jacques Lacan's theories to these three selected works from Joyce. With the aid of these three psychological ideologists, this thesis connects James Joyce the author to the James Joyce found within his biographically cloned characters. This implied parallel explains the importance of the figurative nets that restrain or paralyze both Joyce and his characters. These nets are personified with the image of a woman. As the works progress in length and development, these "nets" evolve in *Portrait* to become the three previously stated static women. The use of the oedipal complex becomes a critic's boarding pass to understanding Joyce's need to corrupt his female characters in relation to their virginal reputation through his literary vehicle: Stephen Dedalus. Thus, the feminist angle contributes to this psychoanalytical analysis because the female characters must be sullied and deemed subservient in Stephen's mind in order for him to take his artistic flight from these "nets." Joyce and his literary male counterparts do not recognize the female characters beyond their stereotypes within the Catholic religion, Irish nation, and family household. Therefore, with the assistance of Suzette Henke, Nancy Chodorow, and Simone Beauvoir, Joyce's psychological connection between the mothering images and the symbolic "bat," a nineteenth-century slang term for prostitute, becomes identifiable (Teal 72). To both Stephen and Joyce, the mothering images found within *Portrait* are too controlling to be deemed holy or loving. While Joyce's male characters tend to demean women, their epiphanies revolve around the female image. In order to be an artist, Joyce and his male characters need to experience self-fulfillment by rejecting the three mothering images. Ironically, their artistic flights are stimulated by women who embody those controlling characteristics that the male characters must reject, creating the argument that neither Joyce nor Stephen actually takes flight as an artist within these three literary works.

This thesis begins by looking at Joyce as the boy, the student, the man, the ideologist, and the writer. It is imperative that we fully analyze the integral moments of Joyce's personal life, especially since *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait* are in the genre of autobiographical fiction. More importantly, the evolution of Joyce's works parallels the growth of Joyce's artistic and philosophic maturity. Thus, it is sensible to begin with the intellectual seed of these three literary works. With the assistance of literary scholars such as Eric Bulson and Richard Ellmann, this thesis narrates Joyce's biography, especially the significance of Joyce's family, both immediate and marital. Joyce's characters are inspired by the people in his own life, and as a young boy, Joyce experienced many hardships and circumstances that aided him in constructing his literary works. Opening the door to a psychoanalytical perspective, Joyce transfers specific characteristics of his parents, siblings, friends, and teachers to his literary characters. Furthermore, he obsessively used the location of Dublin, his own hometown, as well as his own educational institutions as essential locations in these three literary works. For example, Conglows, a Jesuit educational institution (Conglows Wood College) that Joyce himself attended, is a location in *Portrait* (Bulson 2). Joyce's personal education and religious training allow readers to understand the significance of his implied religious motifs and his preoccupation with Mother Mary. Moreover, these minute but numerous biographical details provide both readers and psychoanalytical critics insight into Joyce the boy, the student, and the man.

More importantly, Joyce is also an ideologist and a writer, making him an integral figure within his time and the Modernist movement. In fact, critics working with Modernist ideas and styles, such as Elizabeth Drews, R. A. Scott-James, and Weldon Thorton, understand the significance and impact Joyce had on fiction, and even within his time period other authors such as Ezra Pound and William Butler Yeats acknowledged his potential as well. On the other hand,

Joyce himself was inspired by the previous generation of writers, too. For example, the Norwegian author Henrik Ibsen, who is known as the founder of modern prose drama, affected Joyce as both an ideologist and a writer. As a result, Joyce changed the structure of his writing by incorporating discontinued space and suspended time in each literary work. In *Dubliners*, the short stories provide only fragments of static characters who are paralyzed within a certain Irish-Catholic mind-set or setting. In *Stephen Hero*, a reader has an obscure sense of time and space because only an incomplete partial of the manuscript is available, and, finally, *Portrait*'s Stephen Dedalus grows from a toddler to an adult in the progression of the novel. Hence, *Portrait* is written in the *Bildungsroman*, a coming-of-age style. Moreover, each work shows the progression and development of complex psyches, internal dialogue, and life-changing epiphanies. Using and developing these literary techniques, Joyce himself grows as a writer. Though he experienced hardships with the publishing industry and with some public readers, especially with *Ulysses*, Joyce's fiction and literary style prevailed and affected the literary world, inspiring several avenues of interpretation, analysis, and criticism and thus earning him the title of "Father" for the Modernist genre.

By combining his background with his literary style and time frame, this thesis analyzes a few specific short stories from *Dubliners* (1914) to illustrate the significant themes that can be found in Joyce's subsequent works. The first notable short story is actually the first story in *Dubliners*. The analysis begins with "The Sisters" because this story was written and submitted to the *Irish Homestead* under the pseudonym Stephen Daedalus, providing evidence of the connection between Joyce and his literary doppelganger. Moreover, "The Sisters" introduces three key concepts that can be used when describing Joyce's literature: *gnomon*, *paralysis*, and *simony*.

The term *gnomon* is very important in comprehending Joyce's dialogue. According to the critic Eric Bulson, "'Gnomon' is the stylus of a sundial that marks off time with shade and the remainder of a parallelogram after a similar parallelogram containing one of its corners has been removed, but it can also be stretched to refer to the missing detail of a story" (36). True to the Modernist style, Joyce employed internal dialogue as well as nonlinear settings. Therefore, readers only obtain snippets of information from actual conversations between characters, creating *gnomon*. *Paralysis* is a prevalent, dysfunctional motif for Joyce's main characters. In order for the protagonists to prevail, they must have an epiphany about their paralyzed lifestyles within their Irish-Catholic settings. Joyce believed that *simony*, the selling of ecclesiastical positions for profit or "the vulgarization of religion, romance, and intellect," was a dilemma within Catholicism (Bulson 36). Therefore, his religious motifs revolve around this conflict of *simony*.

Along with Bulson, the critic Thomas F. Staley concurs that these concepts become prevalent motifs within Joyce's literary works. For example, the prostitute and *simony* motif can be found within the two short stories entitled "Araby" and "Two Gallants." These motifs are very important to the feminist critique of the "bat" symbolism in *Portrait*. Joyce's short stories portray the significance of sex in relation to money. Therefore, in *Portrait*, Stephen is conflicted by the complexities of virginity and promiscuity. When considering his virginal crush on Emma Clery, Stephen cannot obtain sexual gratification because of her rigid belief in Mother Mary, which causes him to label her as a "bat." Once Emma Clery is associated with a prostitute, Stephen can offer *simony* to reject the rigid controls between religion and lust. Showing *paralysis*, the short stories "The Boarding House" and "A Little Cloud" revolve around the societal restraint of matrimony. In both Bob Doran and Little Chandler's eyes, marriage is

portrayed as the horrible “ball and chain” adage within the male perspective. These two male characters seek freedom, not the net or *paralysis* of matrimony.

More importantly, this analysis of *Dubliners* also focuses on a character’s name, Icarus, in “A Little Cloud.” The significance of the name along with the character’s role plays into the desires of Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait*, bringing us to Joyce’s short story “Ivy Day in the Committee Room.” This tale revolves around the idea of nationalism as well as Charles Stewart Parnell, an Irish political leader, and the significance of this political slant contributes to the analysis of Mother Ireland in *Portrait*. During Joyce’s own time as well as Stephen’s literary time period, Ireland was an unstable nation that was pulled between two concepts: loyalty to England and the need for independence. “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” is a story that questions the ultimate path for Mother Ireland’s future race. Finally, Joyce’s pinnacle novella in *Dubliners*, “The Dead,” shows the development of Joyce’s characters as well as his use of epiphany. Moreover, there are several parallels between the story’s main characters, Gabriel and Greta, to Stephen and the bird-girl in *Portrait*, providing evidence that *Dubliners* is a workshop of motifs and characters for Joyce’s later works.

After considering the progression of the short stories to the novella, this thesis analyzes the manuscript *Stephen Hero*, which was written between the years 1904 and 1906. According to Theodore Spencer, the manuscript was thrown into a fire, and only 383 pages were recovered, providing the content for the last 93 pages of *Portrait*. Like *Dubliners*, *Stephen Hero* is a workshop version of Joyce’s first published novel. Hence, the development of the characters and their interaction with one another in the manuscript provides readers and critics with background information, which makes analysis and interpretation possible for *Portrait*, a novel that is progressively more modern because of its internal dialogue and withdrawn interaction. For

example, readers of *Stephen Hero* are able to read more dialogue between Cranly and Stephen about the aesthetic theory and learn more about Emma Clery. These conversations portray the development of the characters, their thoughts, and their interactions—all of which help readers understand the subtle dialogue in *Portrait*. Then, with the assistance of critic Scott W. Klein, this thesis focuses on the important character, Emma Clery, who is known as “E—C—” in *Portrait* and is also a transcendent figure for the three mothers Stephen must reject. Yet readers do not see this transcendence until they read *Portrait* because in *Stephen Hero*, readers can only see the infatuation Stephen has for her on a physical and emotional level, not the cerebral level portrayed in *Portrait*. Through the interactions between Stephen and Emma, this analysis provides background information for Stephen’s justification in for sullyng her as a bat and attempting to conquer her through his literary creation of his villanelle, which is later argued to be a *faux* aesthetic creation.

Like the villanelle, *Stephen Hero* is a work in progress, especially in the development of Stephen’s (and Joyce’s) aesthetic theory, which is very significant in *Portrait*. Joyce himself, as ideologist and writer, attempts to fully develop and understand his own thoughts about his theory. With the aid of the biography chapter and critic Joseph A. Buttigieg, this thesis draws parallels between Joyce’s own literary papers that he delivered in college to the literary papers Stephen discusses within his own college experience. Yet, in *Stephen Hero*, Joyce performs a written Socratic method of understanding the aesthetic theory by having Stephen dwell on the topic with his classmates, especially his friend Cranly. Only in *Portrait* does Joyce portray the polished version of his theory. Moreover, this theory is extremely important in terms of understanding why Stephen fails to become an artist, which will be further discussed later. Nevertheless, *Stephen Hero* provides great insight into understanding the stilted, or gnomonic,

dialogue in *Portrait* as well as putting the pieces together for Stephen's need to fly from his surroundings.

After providing background information from Joyce's biography, *Dubliners*, and *Stephen Hero*, the main portion of this thesis analyzes *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) by focusing on Stephen's need to take flight from the three mothering images: Mother Mary, Mother Ireland, and his own mother. Throughout the novel, Stephen wants to become an artist, and in order for him to transform into an artist, he must reject these women. In his complex psyche, these women are sullied icons of what is wrong with his religion, country, and family; they are also the nets that restrain his artistic freedom. Hence, he must demean and portray them as the usurping "bats" that he sees them as. Moreover, Joyce (and Stephen) depicts the role of the woman as a figure who promotes sinful indulgences of the flesh along with societal constraints of duty and purpose, and, thus, the two men must fly free of these restrictive limitations prompted by these women so that they can assume their roles as artists.

The first significant mothering image is Mother Mary, an integral figure for the Catholic religion. Stephen has a problem with the quality that Mother Mary stands for most: virginity. Stephen cannot restrain himself from the indulgences of the flesh, but the young, reputable Irish women, like Emma Clery, do not share this problem because they follow the Catholic belief of being sexually abstinent until marriage. Stephen does attempt to control his fleshly desires by contemplating entering a Catholic order, but this religious control paralyzes Stephen's creative and sexual nature. Therefore, Mother Mary becomes a symbolic figure who restrains Stephen from obtaining his artistic and sexual desires through rigid regulations, especially since lust is a deadly sin within the Catholic religion. In order to fly free from Mother Mary's "net," Stephen must dishonor her holy image by demeaning her followers, who are these young Irish, virginal

women, as “bats.” Once he diminishes Mother Mary’s control in his mind, he takes a step closer to his artistic freedom, which he cannot achieve until he publicly rejects the church. By the end of *Portrait*, he contemplates cementing this rejection through his refusal to partake in the Eucharist. Although his rejection of the Eucharist is a step toward his artistic freedom, he must reject two other mothering images as well as Emma Clery, who is a transcendent figure for all three women.

Next, the second mothering image that Stephen needs to reject is Mother Ireland, a symbol for the unstable nation in which he resides. Stephen does not want to be another spokesperson for Ireland or her people’s nationalistic ideals. Yet many of the people he knows, especially women, are very supportive of Ireland’s Nationalist movement. Stephen refuses to be another number in the crowd. He wants to harness his individuality by taking flight from his troubled nation’s “net” and to pursue the beauty within his art. Again, he concludes that he cannot take this flight until he taints Mother Ireland’s image by correlating the women who represent her with “bats.” Stephen must be able to control his unstable nation through the women who symbolize it in order for him to fly free of his homeland. With the assistance of critics Bonnie Kime Scott and Scott W. Klein, this thesis illustrates how Emma Clery is a representation and product of her country, a concept that is problematic for Stephen. Yet Emma Clery is not the only symbolism of Mother Ireland in *Portrait*. When Stephen’s friend Davin recounts his encounter with the pregnant woman to Stephen, he is vicariously affected by her enticing but prophetic mothering image. In fact, critics Nehama Aschkenasy and Marian Eide agree that the pregnant woman is a symbol for the Irish people as well as the future for Mother Ireland. Moreover, Stephen’s dilemma with his country lies with the nation’s paralysis in regard to Parnell’s death, which has prompted this drastic move to reviving Mother Ireland’s Gaelic

language and Celtic history—all of which must be rejected by Stephen so that he can be an artist and free from his country's limitations.

Finally, the third mothering image that Stephen needs to take flight from is his own mother, Mary Dedalus. She, of course, is the mother who affects him the most, and she is also a woman whose qualities are transferred onto other female characters in *Portrait*, such as the prostitute, the pregnant woman, and even Emma Clery—all of whom perpetuate Stephen's struggle with his erotic desires and stand as a blockade to his artistic freedom. In order to symbolize their damning presence, Joyce uses bat references for two of the women; the third woman is cast in bird imagery as Stephen experiences an epiphany, and this connection between the latter woman and Stephen shows his horrific, oedipal shame. Therefore, with the assistance of Sigmund Freud and Suzette Henke, this thesis analyzes Stephen's oedipal complex with his mother, which, according to Henke, begins in his mother's womb. Stephen does not have a true understanding for his individual nature. Although he knows that he does not want to be another paralyzed Irishman, he does not know who he truly is. Hence, *Portrait* follows the traditional format of the *Bildungsroman* style, and Stephen does come of age in the course of this autobiographical novel. Yet we are left with the question: does he really grow into his artistic wings to join his mythic namesake and mentor, Daedalus?

In the final chapter, this thesis argues that neither Stephen nor Joyce takes flight to be an artist. They might have their boarding passes for their artistic flight from these three mothers' "nets," but their flight is delayed. Joyce and his doppelganger do not achieve flight in *Portrait*. He is prepared for it, but he is ultimately held back by the sight of the "bird-girl," a stimulating woman wading in the water, who hinges on his subsequent grand epiphany. Though she is not a bat, she does have bird qualities—hence, Joycean critics attribute the name "bird-girl" to the

thought-provoking woman. With the assistance of critics Laurie Teal, Eugene M. Waith, and Cordell D. K. Yee, this thesis illustrates how the “bird-girl” is the stimulant and signal for Stephen’s transformation for his flight, but it goes beyond these critics’ views by arguing that she does not free him for his ultimate take-off. Like the three static mothers, she has several qualities that evoke images of female fluidity, the womb, and birth. Moreover, the “bird-girl” presents an ironic problem, which is why Stephen’s subsequent epiphany is faulty: she is a virgin. Therefore, it is ironic that the stimulus for his transforming epiphany has several parallels to the women whom he seeks to escape, although Stephen believes he has found his new, artistic sense of self with his “virgin womb of imagination” (*Portrait* 236).

Stephen’s construction of the villanelle directly following his encounter with the “bird-girl” does not suggest artistic freedom. By definition, a villanelle is a very confined type of poem that must follow a strict format and rhyme scheme, a nineteen-line poem containing five tercets followed by a quatrain. The rhyme scheme consists of two repeating lines and two refrains. Therefore, there is no room within in this poetic style to express artistic freedom. Moreover, Stephen’s poem is inspired by a lustful fantasy of Emma Clery and followed by masturbation. After the climax, Stephen writes the poem on a cigarette paper, implying the stereotypical but literary smoke after his self-gratification. Stephen believes that he has turned Emma Clery, the transcendent figure for all three mothers, into a static object. He believes that he has conquered her, but in reality, she has controlled him. The thought of her flesh makes Stephen turn to his need for physical pleasure, and, consequently, his “womb of imagination” does not create an artistic, free verse poem—no, he creates a villanelle (*Portrait* 236). Therefore, Stephen does not truly achieve an artistic creation because the poem is not free from the restraints of its form—it is essentially a paralyzed creation. Therefore, Stephen’s artistry is paralyzed, inhibiting him from

achieving his flight, and since he is Joyce's literary alter-ego, Joyce himself does not achieve his flight, either.

Although Stephen and Joyce do not achieve their artistic freedom, they do prepare themselves for the long journey toward taking flight from these three nets. The evidence of this preparation is found in the final pages of *Portrait*. Joyce switches his literary technique from using an omniscient third person perspective to using a first person perspective in the form of a diary. In this diary, Stephen decides to reject Catholicism by refusing to take the Eucharist. Of course, this rejection is not the only one needed for artistic flight. Therefore, this thesis concludes the argument by stating that the diary and literary style change is only an act of flight preparation, and it reinforces this argument by connecting all of the parallels from the biography of Joyce to the progression of characters, development of content, and maturity of writing within a psychoanalytical-feminist scope. Neither James Joyce nor Stephen Dedalus experiences an artistic flight in these three literary works, but they will experience it with Joyce's last work *Finnegans Wake* (1939) because the split identity will cease to exist. Joyce's most challenging, densest literary work is a creation devoid of his beloved Stephen Dedalus, thus creating Joyce's unique, artistic sense of self.

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