JAMES JOYCE'S QUARREL WITH CATHOLICISM

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of English

Emporia Kansas State College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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July 1977

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Pat Cairney for the Master of Arts

in English presented on July 1, 1977

Title: James Joyce's Quarrel with Catholicism

Abstract approved: Karen Z. Hazard

James Joyce divorced himself from the Catholic Church for two major reasons: 1) he felt the Church deprived him of his individuality; 2) he thought this deprivation aided in the creation of what he viewed as a decadent society. The Church of Joyce's day demanded absolute obedience and total subjection of self to the powers above, both spiritual and temporal, and frowned on any acts of overt individuality within its massive community. Joyce attempted to battle this stifling atmosphere through his depiction of priests and assorted beleaguered individuals in The Dubliners, Stephen Hero, and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

The priests depicted in these works are invariably incompetent and usually unable to communicate with their people in any meaningful way. Joyce saw these parish priests as the primary catalysts in the deterioration of Irish society. By binding their minds to the edicts of their Church, by becoming essentially passive creatures, Joyce thought they had degraded themselves and so were inadequate for the tasks they had to perform. The smugness they displayed in

propagating their narrow-minded views upset Joyce immensely.

By limiting themselves to a Church-oriented view of the world, the priests betrayed a large part of the Irish populace. Lacking real direction and living in untested virtue, the Irish easily fell prey to sin. This lack of real leadership and moral fiber can be documented in Stephen Dedalus' painful backsliding in Portrait, as well as in other selections. Ultimately, Joyce sees the Irish people as a largely unprincipled, unthinking group, cursed by their priests, a people susceptible to becoming "dullwitted loyal serfs." (Portrait, 181)

Serfdom was not for Joyce. His total focus in life was toward the becoming of an individual and attempting to understand life completely, in opposition to the Church's ideal of humble servitude. By virtue of this desire to be free, Joyce simply could not fit into the Catholic family.

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PREFACE

This study proposes to deal with the reasons behind James Joyce's quarrel with Catholicism. As I see it, his dispute can be traced to two points: 1) The Catholic Church deprived him of his individuality, and 2) this deprivation in general aided in the creation of a decadent society. An attempt will be made to clarify these two ideas by investigating them in relation to Joyce's delineation of the priests and the society in his early works.

By limiting this inquiry to Dubliners, Stephen Hero, and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, much of the obvious anti-religious venom and sacrilege of his later works will be missed. But these are of no import to this particular case because, by the time Joyce wrote Ulysses and Finnegan's Wake, he no longer cared about public reaction, and so he wrote with ruthless impiety. However, in his earlier works, lacking the cocksure attitude of his later days, his withdrawal from the Church was a much more onerous chore than it might appear on the surface.

Also, in this particular scholarly delicacy, all judgments of literary merit have been purposely neglected in order to allow for a sharper focus. This concentration will center of Joyce's depiction of certain characters and incidents befitting the thesis statement.

Lastly, I would like to offer special thanks to my loving wife, Anna, whose permanently indented index finger will serve as an eternal memorial to this literary junket. I would also like to offer my deepest thanks to Dr. Green Wyrick and Dr. Charles Walton, without whose help and guidance this work could not have been accomplished.

P. C.

Emporia, Ks. 1977

Chapter I

ROCK OF AGES

The monolithic structure of the Roman Catholic Church has for centuries had a stranglehold on a majority of the inhabitants of Ireland. The unbending traditions which have been the basis of its strength for nearly two thousand years constructed the foundation of Irish society. James Joyce, however, being the rebellious Irishman he was, refused to buckle to this influence and become what he termed a "dull-witted loyal serf."[1] However, his undisguised bitterness towards the system from which he drew so much has long puzzled many of his readers. What aroused this hostility? What was it that gave him the incentive to burst loose from the manacles of Catholicism? What drove him to make such spiteful statements as "I spit upon the image of the tenth Pius."[2] What did the Catholic Church do to him? What was his quarrel based on? Two things: 1) the Church deprived him of his individuality and any aspirations he might have; and 2) he saw that this deprivation served to create an empty Irish citizenry, totally lacking in direction and

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[1] James Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, p. 181.

[2] Stuart Gilbert, ed., Letters of James Joyce, p. 58.

personal fulfillment.

Joyce perceived that it was not just himself, but all of Ireland that was being stifled by the inanities of an outdated church, and he was well aware of the methods utilized by the Church to keep their "sheep" in line. The hierarchy packed a strong political punch, and the priests, who were perhaps some of the most powerful men in the country, held a devastating control over the general populace. This is not to say their power was only spiritual, because much of it was temporal. The Catholic establishment in general, the priests in particular, and the stagnant society which the preceding helped to create--by delineating Joyce's attacks on these three areas, the actual loss of self and society can be clarified.

The power that the Catholic Church wielded in Ireland was not to be underestimated. This was the body that demolished Parnell in a fraction of the time it took him to build up his devoted following. This was an establishment that closely controlled the lives of Irish Catholics with an iron hand, stating that it had "no confidence in the general conscience of mankind,"[3] and insisted that not only the simple folk, but educated men also should bend to its will. Its grip was so strong that the Jesuits preached, "We ought always to hold that we believe what seems to us white

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[3]Paul Blanshard, The Irish and Catholic Power, p. 73.

to be black, if the Hierarchical Church so defines it."[4] The Church demanded obedience and submission as it took dead aim for the "world's conversion."[5] As Father Cuthbert so aptly stated:

> The main purpose of the Church... is to make saints, to teach the redeeming Gospel of Jesus Christ, to warn men against the evils of the world, and to bear witness to the truths which come not from the natural intelligence and life of man, but from the supernatural revelation of God in Christ.[6]

Obviously, then, the Church stationed itself in the position of almighty controllers of the body politic. Enveloped in this statement also is "an essential mistrust of human nature ... which the Church viewed as the most powerful element in man's moral degeneracy."[7]

Lacking any faith in human nature, thereby placing all faith in the hands of the Creator, was the focal point of Catholic Christianity. Joyce, however, would not be shouldered into this belief. What repelled him was "not God, not any possible absurdity of dogma, but the institutional coercion of the individual mind."[8] The denial of individual merit, along with the authoritative stance helped to propel

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[4] J. Mitchell Morse, The Sympathetic Alien: James Joyce and Catholicism, p. 78.

[5] Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C., "Literature and Religion," The Catholic World, (1914), 289-300.

[6] Fr. Cuthbert, p. 290.

[7] Darcy O'Brien, The Conscience of James Joyce, p. 243.

[8] Morse, The Sympathetic Alien, p. 4.

him from the clutches of the Church. He could not and would not allow his spirit to be fettered. Instead, he chose to pursue art, to pursue a life ideal,[9] and he selected earth and humanity as his arena rather than the self suffocation of heaven-oriented Catholicism.

As Joyce could not abide by the edicts of the Church and therefore shunted them, he saw in the priests singular examples of the inadequacies of the Catholic religion. To him, the priests were the marionettes of the power lords of the Church. Although it was a fact that the parish priest was a figure of tremendous potency in Ireland, since he pretty much controlled social as well as religious functions,[10] it appeared to Joyce "that by mortifying their wills they degraded themselves and damaged or destroyed their soul."[11] Such a passive stance would not do for the budding artist. He saw the priest as an opportunistic, hypocritical, incompetent creature who had both betrayed his religion and his country. This attitude certainly gained force when, shortly after the death of his younger brother George, the local priest came to visit Mrs. Joyce. At this time of deep grief, the priest tried to convince her that she should cast out

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[9]Joseph Gerard Brennan, Three Philosophical Novelists, p. 12.

[10]Robert M. Adams, James Joyce: Common Sense and Beyond, pp. 24-25.

[11]Morse, The Sympathetic Alien, pp. 69-70.

her two eldest, James and Stanislaus, because of the evil influence they passed to the rest of the family.[12] This harbinger of peace and solace produced only chaos through his incredible insensitivity and incompetency. Such scenes as this contributed to the poisoning of Joyce's opinion of the clergy. It was precisely this smugness, this righteousness, this deliberate abuse of the individual that brought Joyce's ire to the fore.[13] This hostile attitude can be easily detected in his portrayals of different priests in his works.

It was Joyce's opinion, then, that the priests had forsaken a large part of the Irish populace in order to serve their own selfish needs. In this sense, they had betrayed their people by denying them the guidance they needed. As a result of this lack of direction, the Irish stumbled in the pitfalls of the world and, as Joyce saw it, developed into a decadent, lifeless society. However, the clergy and the people both were proud of the fact that theirs was purportedly the most morally chaste of all societies. Amenable and tolerant as they were, the Irish were adamant concerning this pet theory.[14] But Joyce blows this hypothesis to the wind when he depicts the Irish as they are, that

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[12]Stanislaus Joyce, My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years, p. 190.

[13]J. Mitchell Morse, "The Disobedient Artist: Joyce and Loyola," PMLA 72(1957), pp. 1018-1035.

[14]Maurice Murphy. "James Joyce and Ireland," Nation 129(1929), p. 426.

is, as individuals with all the human basic drives.

Besides exploding the falsity of this purity myth, Joyce depicts this Catholic controlled environment as being cursed by its controllers, "an island . . . the inhabitants of which entrust their wills and minds to others that they may ensure for themselves a life of spiritual paralysis."[15] They are "as children," and are quite content to be taught and led in the manner prescribed by Catholic dogma. Because they are easily controlled, unthinking, unprincipled, the seeds of immorality are sown in this supposedly moral state. Joyce saw that this intellectual meekness was a fatal flaw, and he rebelled.[16] In his drive for the ideal, not the actual, and for the exemplary rather than the common, he attacked what he termed "Irish moral hypocrisy."[17] He desired to break from the childish, self-deceptive faith of the common people and forge a faith of his own.

To achieve such a conception, though, he had to crack the tegument of the faith that bound him. And as he went on to say in a letter to Lady Gregory: "I want to achieve myself--little or great as I may be--for I know that there is no

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[15]Joyce, Stephen Hero, p. 146.

[16]Morse, "The Disobedient Artist," p. 1020.

[17]O'Brien, p. 51.

heresy or no philosophy which is so abhorrent to my church as a human being."[18] This passage summarizes and defines the facets of Catholicism he opposes. First, the denial of the individual which, secondly, leads to a loss of motivation thereby creating the relatively easy subjugation of society. He zeroes in on both of these points through his treatment of priests and society in his works.

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[18]Gilbert, p. 53.

Chapter II

BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS

> Had he not been dead I would have gone into the little dark room behind the shop to find him sitting in his arm-chair by the fire, nearly smothered in his great-coat. Perhaps my aunt would have given me a packet of High Toast for him and this present would have roused him from his stupefied doze. It was always I who emptied the packet into his black snuff-box for his hands trembled too much to allow him to do this without spilling half the snuff about the floor. Even as he raised his large trembling hand to his nose little clouds of smoke dribbled through his fingers over the front of his coat. It may have been these constant showers of snuff which gave his ancient priestly garments their green faded look for the red handkerchief, blackened, as it always was, with the snuff stains of a week, with which he tried to brush away the fallen grains, was quite inefficacious.[19]

This extract from "The Sisters" describes the Reverend James Flynn as viewed by a young boy. Contained within this portrayal are Joyce's two main protestations, the loss of individuality and putrefaction of society, both exemplified in the priest. Father Blynn, as stated in the first sentence, was dead. The implication is that he was "dead" when he was still alive. He sat in a tiny room in the rear of his sisters' shop, "smothered in his great-coat," unable to fill his own snuff-box, or to transfer the snuff to his nose without

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[19]James Joyce, Dubliners, p. 12. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

sprinkling it all over himself. His "ancient garment" is faded, his handkerchief blackened, and his movements inefficient. Even his smile, in which he "used to uncover his big discoloured teeth and let his tongue lie upon his lower lip," (13) contributes to this picture of gross inadequacy. Altogether, he is incompetent, and he stands as a symbol of Joyce's conception of "a long paralyzed and now finally dead parish priest."[20]

As life ends for Fr. Flynn, in essence he has become a nonentity. "Ah, poor James," sighed his sister Eliza after his death, "He was no great trouble to us. You wouldn't hear him in the house any more than now." (16) He was the phantom of the back room, a dilapidated old man who was completely incapable of discharging his priestly duties. He lived out his final years in solitude, dehumanized, and ministered to and given succour by his sisters, certainly a reversed situation considering his supposed role as priest, one he could not handle. "The duties of the priesthood was too much for him," (17) Eliza later states, adding that his life was "crossed." The suggestion, here, is that his burden was too great, the responsibility of the priesthood too much for him, because he could not bear his "cross." Eventually, he was removed from his pastoral position when he was discovered snickering in his confessional late one night when he was needed "on call."

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[20] Adams, p. 70.

Perched in his box, locked in the darkness of the chapel, he becomes a symbol of the insulated, useless part which the priest plays in the general scheme of things. By locking out the world he becomes a traitor to his office and himself, not to mention his people. As the story ends, Eliza describes him in the confessional: "Wide-awake and laughing-like to himself . . . So then, of course, when they saw that, that made them think that there was something gone wrong with him . . . ." (18) But the "wrong" was not just with him. It lay in the organization that could construct such a being - the Catholic Church.

As inept and inconsequential as Fr. Flynn was in "The Sisters," he does not stand alone in his mediocrity in Dubliners. Priestly degeneracy is fairly rampant throughout the remainder of the book. In "Araby," for instance, the youthful narrator describes the house he lives in, formerly owned by a priest who "died in the back drawing-room." (29) Here, again, the concept of ineptitude is revealed. The priest who lived in this house evidently only rarely steered forth. The dank atmosphere within the building was probably emblematic of the same condition within the priest. Weighed down by convention and tradition and committed to obedience, he was unable and unwilling to attempt anything which would fracture the fragile stillness

of the aura surrounding his existence. Locked within these gritty old chambers, he was as free from the troubles of the world as was Fr. Flynn.

He, like Fr. Flynn, was a traitor to his cause and people. By isolating himself, shielding himself from reality, by his non-presence in the places where he could have done some good, he becomes a betrayer, a self-deluder, which can be observed in the treatment of the three books the boy found, The Abbot, The Devout Communicant, and The Memoirs of Vidocq. Although some critics have tried to assign importance to the contents of the books,[21] it would appear that this matter is only of secondary significance. The fact that these books were retrieved from the litter of the waste room, which was located behind the kitchen, serves to point out the inadequacy and hypocrisy of this priest. The Devout Communicant, a once popular religious document, being assigned to the moldering back room along with the other two more earthly tomes, is typical of the priest's own breakdown. Just as the pages have yellowed through age, and curled and dampened through lack of care, so has the priest decayed, and because of his lack of care, his congregation has lost its fiber. Perhaps this

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[21]cf. Robert P. APRoberts, "Araby and the Palimpsest of Criticism," Antioch Review, 26(Winter 1966-'67), pp. 469-490; and Harry Stone, "Araby and the Writing of James Joyce," Antioch Review, 25(Fall 1965), pp. 375-445.

decay is further symbolized through the fact that the boy personally favored The Memoirs of Vidocq over the other two "because its leaves were yellow." (29) Such a shallow basis for selecting this book symbolizes the empty, unfulfilling life which the priest led. He was not noted for his depth of understanding, rather only for his outward appearances.

The best example of the priest's inability to function properly can be seen in the garden behind the house. It is a "wild" garden, containing a centralized apple tree and some seedy looking bushes under which is located the priest's rusty bicycle pump. The focus, here, is on the bicycle pump, whose function is to inflate, to build up, yet it lies useless beneath the shadow of the bushes. Being mechanical, it has been overcome by the natural forces which surround it, rendering it no longer functional. If then, the garden is viewed as a profance Edenic state, with the "wild" things and the "straggling bushes" representing the evils of the world, it is plain to see that the priest in his milieu is about as utilitarian as the non-functioning bicycle pump. He is an "unnatural" being in the real world. Though he may have been charitable, and possibly was friendly, he was, nonetheless, incompetent.

One of the obvious facets of the priests in "The Sisters" and "Araby" was their low visibility. By the fact that they could not and did not handle the requirements of

their masses, they resigned themselves to some form of seclusion. Their lack of depth and inability to reason freely-(being hindered by the restriction of their church), severely impeded their own growth and served to create mere shells of men. In these two selections, they are mysterious types, relatively unknown to themselves and their flocks.

This idea gains credence in "Eveline," wherein the idea of the priest as both a spiritual and visual nonentity is solidified. Early in the narrative, Eveline is found sitting in her living room perusing the objects therein. Her gaze falling upon the portrait of a priest, she thinks to herself:

> . . . during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the colored print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. (37)

She appends that whenever her father would show some visitor the photograph, he "used to pass it with a casual word: 'He is in Melbourne now.'" (37) The priest, here, literally becomes an unembodied representation. He is suspended, mute, blind, and deaf, the object only of a passing quip. The intimation is that this state of unreality is the actual condition of the priest. At this critical state in Eveline's life, she cannot get help from a priest, of which one of his jobs is to aid those in distress. But as the picture suggests, that is, a frozen, insensitive

portrayal, yellowing with age and inertia, so probably would be the real life edition. The crux of the problem is that there is no solace to be gained from any such effort.

Joyce's use of the color yellow to suggest the decay of the priests takes on wider proportions, here. In "The Sisters," it was Fr. Flynn's ghoulish yellow teeth which created a grotesque image of the priest, and in "Araby," the priest's books are yellowed, suggesting mental deterioration. But in "Eveline," the unknown priest's entire visage is yellowing. He is decomposing, and no one knows who he is. The subjugation of his will, the blind obedience to all superiors has taken its toll, and he has become the epitome of what the priest stands for. Incompetent, hypocritical in his non-service, inadequate in fulfilling the needs of his people, slowly mildewing, thus reflecting the society he helped to create - all these qualities he manifests. An analogy can be drawn between him and the broken harmonium over which he is settled. The harmonium, a small organ designed for church music, functioned by having air forced by a bellows through its metallic reeds. Inoperable, this instrument served no purpose, although the shell of the structure and the necessary accoutrements were there; similarly with the priest, an instrument of the Church, but rendered inoperable because he was just that, an instrument, and thus

broken down by his own inefficiency.

An inoperable portrait, a back-room spectre, and a mummified great-coat, rather free interpretations of the three priests thus far depicted, are conjoined with the soulful emptiness of Father Purdon in "Grace" to complete Joyce's delineation of the crippled and crippling clergy. Through him, once again, are depicted the priestly characteristics of isolation, incompetency, and hypocrisy. "Grace" is the account of a certain Mr. Kernan who, in a drunken stupor, plummets face down to the filthy, oozing floor of a pub lavatory. With the aid of some friends, he is restored to health, and then becomes the target of this same group in an effort to save his soul from everlasting inundation. The obvious irony at the outset is that it is his friends who are attempting to save his soul rather than a priest who is endeavoring to accomplish the job. Nonetheless, he is ultimately coerced into attending a weekend retreat. The appointed day arrives, and all the men gather in the Jesuit Church. Up to this point, Father Purdon, who was conducting the retreat, has remained fairly anonymous. Suddenly, however, he "was observed to be struggling up into the pulpit," (173) and his gigantic figure was "drowned by a massive red face, appearing above the balustrade." (173) As if deigned by some powerful spiritual force, he "appears" above the balustrade, setting in motion the idea that he was isolated from the

common run of men. He stands above them, peering over the balustrade of his parapet, surveying all before him, and only then speaks "with resonant assurance." (173) As his sermon develops, he states that the text from which he had drawn his inspiration "seemed to him specially adapted for the guidance of those whose lot it was to lead the life of the world and who yet wished to lead that life not in the manner of worldlings." (173) He further elucidates by intoning that Jesus Christ"understood that all men were not called to the religious life, that by far the vast majority were forced to live in the world, and, to a certain extent, for the world." (174) In so many words, it becomes clear that Fr. Purdon does not consider himself, or other religious, of this world. Perhaps they are falling stars. But the point is that he has isolated himself, set himself apart from the common man, and yet finds himself able to utter his pronouncements "with resonant assurance." (173)

For a man to do his job, he must know well the elements of which it is composed. It is apparent that Fr. Purdon has no real grasp of the composite temperament of his group of retreaters. After all, Mr. Cunningham, the esteemed judge of character, terms Purdon a "fine, jolly fellow! He's a man of the world like ourselves," (164) to which the others graciously assent. There is something

drastically wrong here. The priest considers himself as separate from his group of repenting sinners, yet they consider him one of them. Superficially at least, the irony of this situation goes to show the blatant inadequacy of Fr. Purdon as a spiritual leader. The conception of the men is that he is just as much "in the world" as they are. Even his wheezing physiognomy bears this fact out. On a deeper level, it signifies the decay which spiritual leaders such as he set in motion. Rather than his bringing his band of transgressors up to his lofty stature, instead of really communicating his ideals, they drag him down to their rank and lovingly embrace him as one of their own cut. The tables have turned. This is a total contradiction of accepted Catholic methodology, a deterioration precipitated by incompetency.

If it is possible to conceive of a Shakespeare-oriented, Joycean God, glumly depositing himself in utter dejection on an aimless cloud, he might be overheard muttering, "Frailty, thy name is priesthood." It is frailty, the lack of internal and external strength, which engendered such inability as heretofore witnessed. Similarly, it is frailty that allows Fr. Purdon to act hypocritically. Instead of exacting the self-sacrifice and penance that the Catholic faith demands of sinners, he avoids the issue by offering something less: "Fr. Purdon, by reducing the obligation of the Dubliners to God, as he does when he instructs them that salvation is simply a matter of keeping a good set

of books, ingratiates himself with his hearees."[22] He makes grace an easier goal and heaven a far more reachable target for his parishioners by reducing the personal cost. The motivation behind such a proclamation is uncertain, but it does appear that he would prefer to remain within the satisfied communal embrace by reciting unmonitored "resonant" sermons and passing out adulterated penances. He violates his own faith and the needs of his people by his unwillingness to be a "temporal accountant" of his congretation's lives as well as a "spiritual accountant."

"Hapless" is perhaps the word which best suits the priests whom Joyce portrays in Dubliners. They are all similar in one effect, that is, they are gloriously anonymous figures. They are depersonalized to such a degree that it is well possible that most Dubliners received just as much inspiration from the picture of the unknown priest in "Eveline" as they could have received from the real life Fr. Purdon. The incapacity of these religious shepherds to help their congregations led to a gradual social breakdown. There was no room for humanity in the Church or in its priests; instead, there was the capacity to propagate only traditional edicts and customary tenets, the chief of these being the notion of abject obedience. Mired within its own laws and doctrines, the church became stagnant and given to recriminating the people for their

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[22]Carl Niemeyer, "'Grace' and Joyce's Method of Parody," College English, 27(1965),pp. 196-201.

forays into satanic delights, which the Church itself did so much to foster. Holy Mother Church smothered the Irish, ground its doctrine into the people, and promised relief from malefaction only after periods of intense humiliation. It is no wonder, then, that Dubliners were so exuberant in their celebration of life's seamier aspects, and it is also no wonder that so many journeyed through life, guilt-ridden and uncertain, because of the constant umbrage cast by the all pervading demeanor of Catholicity. Deprived of their own initiative, unable to act alone, the Irish citizenry were soon groveling in the detritus tank of immorality which they and their clergy had mutually constructed.

This crumbling of Irish society, the second reason for Joyce's exodus from the Church, can also be easily witnessed in Dubliners. It will be necessary to keep in mind the role that the priests played in this deterioration, and Joyce's generally demeaning view of the Church itself. For ease in handling, the improprieties that afflicted the Dubliners will be lodged in two categories: 1)hypocrisy, and 2) self-abnegation. Together, these elements contributed to create the state of turpitude in which the Irish wallowed. It was this condition that Joyce captured so well in Dubliners.

The duplicity that pestered the priests was also a constant partner of the common Irishman. "The Sisters" sets the tone for this hypocrisy in the opening scene at the supper table. Old Cotter and the uncle and aunt are prattling about the death of Fr. Flynn. Cotter deems it necessary to harass

the young boy by dropping innuendoes as to the priest's morality. The irony surrounding this situation is that it was not Fr. Flynn, "the soul of Christian kindness," who had corrupted the boy, but the adults around him.[23] Cotter, who would be wary for his children, was inculcating the very thing he wanted to fend off. By his act of gossiping about and demeaning the priest, he is rubbing off the hypocritical morality of the Irishman which allows him to take pride in his priests, yet also to profess unfounded degrading certainties concerning them.

This same attitude can be detected in the treatment given Fr. Keon in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room." Stumbling upon the small group of men situated in the committee room, he asks whether anyone knows the whereabouts of Mr. Fanning. No one does, and as he turns to leave, Mr. Henchy grabs a candle to illumine the dark stairway. Fr. Keon rejects his offer and turns to enter the darkness and the miserable, rainy weather. Conversation continues, and Mr. Henchy points out that the priest is "what you call a black sheep. We haven't many of them, Thank God." (126) Soon after, the matter is dropped. Henchy's name is suitable to the manner in which he acts. Reminiscent of a "henchman," that is, one who fawns over higher figures in the hope of personal advantage, he fully plays the part which his name implies.

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[23]Bernard Benstock, "Joyce's 'The Sisters,'" Explicator, 24(Sept. 1965), no. 1.

Obsequious in the presence of the priest, displaying great Christian charity, only moments later he imagines himself Mayor of London "driving out of the mansion house . . . in all my vermin," (127) with Fr. Keon as his private chaplain. So benevolent to the priest's face, he is considerably less kind after the cleric departs. Smug in the knowledge that he is superior to the "black sheep," he finds it within himself to thank God that there are only a few wayward ecclesiastics. The hypocrisy is so ingrained that he is most likely unaware of the contradiction of life's terms he has just uttered.

From the preceding examples, an inkling can be gained as to why this particular facet of Irish life so upset Joyce. With an investigation of two other selections, however, "Grace" and "The Boarding House," his distaste with this side of life comes more to the fore. Probably, the single key word which occurs in "Grace" is Mr. M'Coy's utterance, "Tenebrae." This term is generally associated with Catholic Easter services and can be defined as a death ceremony commemorating the extinguishing of the "Light of the World."[24] Besides being a pointed gibe at the Church and its priests, it is also symbolic of this entire story. A large part of this selection is set in Mr. Kernan's "sick room," where he is convalescing from his bout with the lavatory steps. A group of his friends are with him, and their conversation

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[24] O. B. Hardison, Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages, p. 117.

turns to the Church and some of its priests. In the course of their chat, it is proclaimed that "the Irish priesthood is honored all the world over." (164) As proof of this, Fr. Tom Burke is mentioned, and the gathering thunders its approval of him as a "splendid fellow" and a "born orator." To this wave of enthusiasm, Mr. Kernan offers that "I heard him once . . . . I forget the subject of his discourse now. Crofton and I were in the back of the . . . pit, you know . . . the---" (165) Prodding his memory, he recalls that the sermon dealt with the Pope, and he says, "Upon my word it was magnificient, the style of the oratory. And his voice! God! hadn't he a voice!" (165) Evidently, voice and style carry more weight than content. It is not the teaching of the preacher that is remembered, but the elocution. This roomful of Catholics, stout members of the "one, true religion," care less whether their religion is made clear to them. What is significant for them is the appearance of piety. The light of understanding is secondary to the external representation of wisdom. As they stand around Kernan's bedside, arguing about Catholic principles and ideas of which they know nothing, their hypocrisy sounds the death knell for the "Light of the World."

This absolute indigence in proprietary matters that should be of the utmost importance to these people can best be seen in "The Boarding House." Mrs. Mooney, the unscrupulous owner of the boarding house, was determined to get her

daughter married. The daughter, through solicitous glances and other suggestive activities, succeeds in snaring young Mr. Doran. However, she occupied all if not his heart. The trap Doran felt was based more on his own social misgivings. Returning to Mrs. Mooney, who had sketchily plotted this entire strategy, the forces of hypocrisy are veritably grinding away. An admirably depicted scene evinces this hypocrisy in a clear manner. It is Sunday morning, breakfast has just been finished, and the bells of George's Church are pealing to warn the people that it is about time for Mass. Mrs. Mooney resides over her breakfast table, and in her watch-dog manner, observes her servant cleaning up the pieces of broken bread, among other things. The next few minutes serve as a profane eucharistic feast for her as she contemplates the situation in which she has Doran. Bound to extract a promise of marriage from him, she anxiously dreams of her daughter's rising fortunes (resurrection, if one will). Coolly, she estimates that she can have a convincing dialogue with the youth and still have time to make the short mass at twelve o'clock. The hypocrisy of her situation is obvious. Her plan is to shackle Doran for life, doing so through the devices of her own immoral being, and in the next instant to skip off to church to perform her weekly function of attending Mass. There is something demented in one who can so completely overlook his own questionable behavior so as to lord it over a weaker individual. Joyce

apparently sees Mrs. Mooney as a fitting reflection of her society and the religious system in which she evidently places her faith.

"The Boarding House" is a suitable embarkation point for the second affliction found in Dubliners, that is, self-abnegation. As the tale draws to a close, Doran is described as he prepares to have his fateful discourse with Mrs. Mooney:

> Going down the stairs his glasses became so dimmed with moisture that he had to take them off and polish them. He longed to ascend through the roof and fly away to another country where he would never hear again of his trouble, and yet a force pushed him downstairs step by step. (68)

The implication of the final words in this passage displays the inevitable outcome of this little scenario. He will marry Polly, he will give up any personal aspirations (which are even presently fluttering through the roof), and he will resign himself to a life he does not want. By subjugating his own ideals, he does what he thinks is proper.

This exact method of coping with problems is what helped make Joyce so pessimistic. Why did Doran act as he did? Why do other characters do the same? In some cases, it can be attributed to group pressure, which Joyce certainly disdained, but the answer is not always that clear. Perhaps the problem lay in the collective conscience, in the form of the Catholic Church, that hovered over the Dubliners. Perhaps it was pressure that forced individuals to foreswear their own humanity in favor of some greater aim, to obey certain given natural and spiritual mandates rather than to exercise their own free will. Joyce thought so. He depicted

a dead society controlled by a dead institution. Dead to humanity, that is.

"Eveline," for example, is the sad case of a girl leading a life of quiet desperation. She has the chance to escape her stifling existence, but her effort fails and her "end is not a coming to awareness but an animal experience of inability."[25] Frustrated by life, what with a loathsome father and an equally loathsome job, she is yet unable to burst the bonds that hold her. Interestingly enough, shortly before she was to leave with Frank, her lover, for Buenos Aires, "she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty." (40) Evidently He did, because she did not go with Frank. Ironically, at the last moment she escapes the "escape" that could have led her to a greater awareness. The ultimate irony of this ending is that she, a descendant from "Eve's line," although not tasting of the forbidden fruit, is yet doomed for the rest of existence to "death-in-life."

Within reaching distance of her goal, she is still unable freely to pursue it. And why is she so incapacitated? A plausible reason is that she felt her act to be the will of God. Finally, she discounts herself in the face of the bewildering "seas of the world" tumbling about her.

The reduction of self to insignificance seemed to be a

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[25]William York Tindall, A Reader's Guide to James Joyce, p. 20.

perverse form of Irish martyrdom. Heaping indignations upon themselves, they were soon pummelled into docile submission. For Maria, the central figure of "Clay," the guiding light of her life was that she wanted "things to be nice at any cost."[26] Being gifted with an amazing ability to shield herself from all things unpleasant, Maria is able to lead what she evidently deems a satisfactory existence. However, the ultimate price she will have to pay for her self-delusion is foreshadowed by her selection of the clay (emblematic of death) in the blindfolded game she played at Joe's house. Through the course of the evening, she ignores numerous things distasteful: the fact that the "gentleman" on the tram was liquored; the loss of her plumcake; her exclamation that she did not want any nuts (protesting that she did not even like them); the mistake of raising the subject of Alphy only to have it quickly buried.[27] As the story closes, Maria peeps out two verses of "I dreamed that I Dwelt." As has been noted by others, she left out an important verse, but it is Joe's reaction which tells the real tale. He vows "that there was no time for him like the long ago and no music for him like poor old Balfe." (106) On an enlarged scale, Joe represents the sentiments of all Irishmen in their yen for the good old days. This yearning, though, for things that are never to be is the basis for Joyce's dissatisfaction with the Irish. By

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[26]Adams, p. 26.

[27]Adams, p. 77.

evading the truth and wallowing in sentimentality and artificial facades, these people are burying themselves.

This syndrome climaxes in "The Dead." The party is set around New Year's time. Normally a period of renewal and rejoicing, in this case it is not. The tedious conversational inanities, along with all the other traditional doldrums, make this party more like a wake. Gabriel Conroy, the protagonist, is at the core of this entombment. Unlike the others, however, he does appear to have the capacity to escape from his sordid situation. There are two reasons backing this rationale:

> First, he apparently is much more perceptive, sensitive, and intelligent than they (the others at the party), and therefore sees, feels, and understands life around him much more fully. Second, his memories are more than of merely personal experience: he "remembers" the entire history of his land and is weighted down with this.[28]

In the course of this story, glimpses of Gabriel's sensitivity can be witnessed by his defensive reactions to rebuffs from Lily, Gretta, and Miss Ivors. While Mary Jane pecks out her number on the piano, he reflects that probably no one in the room understood what she was playing, yet all had begged her to perform. He is well aware of the inadequacy of verbal communication and has developed a habit of nabbing catchy phrases that he has used in the past to support his more contemporary thoughts. His after-dinner talk was an example of social drivel which he felt

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[28]William E. Buckler and Arnold B. Sklare, Stories from Six Authors, p. 212.

impelled to perform, yet he did make revisions in an effort to improve it. In consequence of his deeper perceptions, perhaps he will escape his mundane subsistence.

The answer to this conjecture is given in the closing paragraphs. Gabriel, who had been cognizant of the sound of "shuffling feet" early in the story, at the end discovers that "his soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead." (223) The "shuffling feet" indicate his recognition of movement, of the passing of time, and of the memories of the past. When he does come face-to-face with his soul, he learns that it is time for him "to set out on his journey westward." (223) He must follow the sun, wherever it may go, and in this way he will be able to recreate his conscience. Gabriel is the single character to see the light, for as the newspapers reported, "snow was general all over Ireland." (223) Snow, with its ability to freeze and kill, becomes, then, a symbol for the lassitude that has overtaken the people. They are, indeed, all dead. It is from this carapace that Gabriel must escape.

If Ireland is dead, then who are its killers? To unearth them, it is necessary to disinter the causes of its death. Ostensibly, the reason for its demise can be placed on 1) the loss on the part of each person of an individual will to act; 2) the resulting breakdown which followed this loss of motivatio Who or what brought about this loss of will? Joyce's answer is the Catholic Church.

Chapter III

TRUST AND OBEY, FOR THERE'S NO OTHER WAY

In Stephen Hero, the apparent executioners of actual freedom for the Irish people are brought more sharply into focus. The fragment of this work that remains shows Stephen-Joyce leveling vehement diatribes against the Church and its priests. Ironically, Joyce's lack of esthetic distance, one thing that a majority of critics apparently agree is a drawback to Stephen Hero, serves more clearly to illustrate the reasons behind his departure from the Church. He allows his own kinetic emotions to enter his portrayal, thus seasoning his vituperative statements with a flavor of real truth and honesty that otherwise might have been lacking. In his best arrogant manner, he belabors the insidious effects the Church has on all mankind, and also indirectly supports his polemics through his depiction of unwieldy priests and a soporific society.

As is commonly known, Joyce pitched his Stephen Hero manuscript into a fire, accompanying his toss with the epithet that it was a "schoolboy production,"[29] only to have the unburnt portion of it rescued by his wife, Nora.

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[29]James Joyce, Stephen Hero, p. 8. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

Just exactly why Joyce threw it in the fire is not so clear. It would appear, however, that one feasible reason was that its content and style did not reach his own high standards. Perhaps, he had exposed more of himself than he cared to admit, much less have other people observe, and so resigned it to its fiery dissolution. Such motives would seem to fit the theory that it was a testing ground of sorts, from which A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man mushroomed, and this fact, of course, has been documented by a plethora of Joycean zealots. Stephen Hero, then, presents a workable basis for this investigation, considered as a foil between the scrutinizing objectivity of Dubliners and the intensely subjective Portrait. At this time, Joyce simply did not have the maturity nor the necessary understanding with which to create a Portrait.

Stephen Hero is "an invaluable document for the thought processes of Joyce coming to grips with the world."[30] In it, Stephen admits, "I am a product of Catholicism; I was sold to Rome before my birth. Now I have broken my slavery but I cannot in a moment destroy every feeling in my nature. That takes time." (139) Nonetheless, in this fragment he is still able to unload numerous volleys against priests and their milieu. Speaking of priests, he states that "These fellows . . . know nothing of the world. You might

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[30]Helene Cixous, The Exile of James Joyce, trans. Sally A.J. Purcell, p. 228.

as well say a rat in a sewer knew the world." (210) Such expostulations dot this entire work, and taken with his derogatory descriptions of numerous clerics, they help to solidify the image of decrepitude presented in Dubliners.

Infusing his priests with differing amounts of incompetency, Joyce is again able to successfully display their extreme lack of sensitivity and their inarticulate efforts to bring solace to others. For example, shortly preceding the death of Stephen's sister, Isabel, a priest, summoned to administer the last rites, is described as a "diminutive man who carried his head mostly on his right shoulder and spoke in a lisping voice which was not very easily heard. He heard the girl's confession and went away saying 'Leave it to God: He knows best: leave it to God.'" (164) Not exactly an awe-inspiring performance, it may be said, by this gnome-like creature. In performing his duty as God's "angel of mercy," he falls far short of creating the type of bracing atmosphere that might aid young Isabel in her final hours. Unable even to offer some small consolation to the grieving family, his inadequacy marks him as another victim in Joyce's vendetta against feckless clerics.

Joyce's desire further to demean the "third learned profession" elicits an engaging variety of priestly descriptions on Stephen's part. At Isabel's funeral, a priest "with a great toad-like belly balanced to one side came out of the sacristy." (167) He conducts his service rapidly

in a "droaking" voice, sprinkling the holy water "drowsily" over the coffin, and then hustles back to the sacristy "at a swinging [gate][sic] gait." (167) Once again, a lack of humanity on the part of the priest is shown. The abrupt manner in which he performed the rites, along with his corporeal presence, suggests that perhaps his interests lay more in the here-and-now than in the hereafter. Spiritual sluggishness would appear to be an apt reflection of his prohibitive bulk and hurried actions.

Stephen meets two other priests who would otherwise be insignificant. The first was barely able to rouse himself from "a stupefied doze" as Stephen entered the church on Gordiner Street for Good Friday services. The second, of whom Stephen says, "He was a fat priest and he had just dined so he really was good-natured," (177) he met while browsing in the Capuchin library. Incessantly, Joyce (via Stephen) depicts his priests as being totally unsatisfactory in their calling. Through his slanted vision they take on grotesque qualities quite befitting their station as sociological misfits.

For Stephen, the priests have nothing real to offer. Their ideas are firmly set in the slough of tradition. In a tête-a-tête with his mother, he firmly proclaims: "An artist is not a fellow who dangles a mechanical heaven before the public. The priest does that." (86) Stephen-Joyce "becomes an artist because art opens to him 'the fair courts

of life' which priest and king were trying to keep locked up."[31] To appreciate more clearly this idea, the character of Fr. Butt would bear a close perusal. The implications of his name are obvious. This particular priest is given a more lucid portrayal than any previously in Joyce's writings. He was the dean of the college and a professor of English. Comically drawn, he is seen always toting a handful of papers with his hands and soutane coated with chalk. His one outstanding quality is his pragmatism. He is, without a doubt, practical, practical, practical. In Stephen Hero, he acts the role of the mechanical force which attempts to ride herd on Stephen's budding individualism.

This pragmatic outlook is evinced in a number of situations. The first of these occurred on the morning after Stephen had propounded his personal literary doctrines to Fr. Butt. The priest, aware of Stephen's reputation as a free thinker, plotted to show him the error of his ways. It was a frigid morning, and Fr. Butt was lighting a fire in the hearth. Upon completing his task, he remarked that there was an art to lighting a fire, to which Stephen volunteered that it was a "useful art." "That's it," replied the priest, "we have the useful arts and we have the liberal arts." (28) Thereupon, he left Stephen to consider this statement. Apparently, the message he endeavored to impress

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[31]Richard Ellman, James Joyce, p. 153.

on him was that one must be sensible and practical. Stephen's role was not to question, but rather to be obedient; not to create, but to found his beliefs on the customary emissions of his guardians.

A second example of Fr. Butt's efforts to tie down Stephen occurred after Stephen's presentation to the Debate Society. After his speech and a period of criticism, Fr. Butt arose to say a few words. He generously allowed that it was "a remarkable piece of work," (104) but he was somewhat troubled by Stephen's use of Aquinas as an authority on esthetic philosophy which, "if it was anything at all, it was practical." (104) He proceeds to add that "beauty also has its practical side," (104) and that Stephen is perhaps not one of "the most practical people in the world," (104) because of the fact that he was such a "passionate admirer of the artistic." (104) He concludes by telling the tale of King Alfred and the old woman who was cooking cakes, that is, the difference between the theorist and the practical person. Once again, he makes an effort to stunt Stephen's creative flow by suggesting that he assume a more reasonable outlook on things. Fr. Butt, as can be easily perceived, is hard-headed enough to continue in his attempt to sway Stephen to his way of thinking.

A third and final instance of this priest's determination to make Stephen conform occurs toward the end of the fragment. At Mrs. Daedulus' instigation, he agrees to offer Stephen a job working in his office for an hour or two a day.

In this way, it would be possible for him to keep this "difficult case" beneath his thumb and ultimately squelch it. When Stephen reported his interview to his parents, his father agreed that it was a "highly practical notion." However, Stephen declines the opportunity and thereby upsets everyone associated with it. Even Fr. Butt lost control of himself after their initial dialogue and suggested that he be "put on the books of a brewery." (229) The fact that the priest finally lost his composure was the harbinger of defeat for him. In the end, he is just as ineffectual as all the other clerics previously mentioned.

As was stated earlier, Br. Butt is the most fully developed priest in Joyce's works up to this time. By virtue of this fact, can it be said that he stands as a symbol of all priests? If so, then Joyce's composite view of the priesthood and its relation to the world can be seen in a brighter light. The priesthood is the butt-end of the world. How then, should we construe its utterances?

The inefficacy of all that the priests do allows Stephen to equate them with beggars, and lets him typify them as pests that need to be rooted out of society. Infesting people with their stale maxims, they created a decrepit world based on trivialities. Strict adherence to the legislation set before them by the clerics led to the development of a jaundiced race. Stephen, chatting with Lynch

on the Library porch about the types of students to be found in the university, spouts the following peroration:

> I found a day-school full of terrorized boys, bonded together in a complicity of diffidence. They have eyes only for their future jobs: to secure their future jobs they will write themselves in and out of convictions, toil and labor to insinuate themselves into the good graces of the Jesuits. They adore Jesus and Mary and Joseph; they believe in the infallibility of the Pope and in all his obscene, stinking bulls: they desire the millenium which is to be [a] the season for glorified believers and fried atheists....(232)

Humbly servile, probably even obedient unto death, these students stagger through life, shackled by the restrictions forced upon them. They are all whipped dogs, and are modestly submissive to the whims of their hierarchical patrons.

This same self-deprecation can also be observed on another level of society. After attending Good Friday services and listening to Father Dillon's sermon on the Seventh Word ("Consummatum Est"), Stephen positions himself in the central porch of the church as the common people come trundling by him. One young fellow remarks concerning Fr. Dillon, "He knows his thayology, I tell ye," (121) and two ladies also comment:

> Two women stopped beside the holy water font and after scraping their hands vainly over the bottom crossed themselves in a slovenly fashion with their dry hands. One of them sighed and drew her brown shawl about her:

> -- An' his language, said the other woman.
> -- Aw yis.
> Here the other woman sighed in her turn and drew her shawl about her:
> -- On'y, said she, God bless the gintleman, he uses the words that you nor me can't intarpet. (121)

Even though these people cannot understand what has just been preached to them, they still find it necessary to debase themselves in the presence of this power, although it is unknown to them.

As if such blind obedience were not enough, this deference carries over into their daily existence. Just as the aforementioned ladies "crossed themselves in a slovenly fashion," so did they lead their lives. The callow approach to everyday tasks that these folks employed vastly depressed Joyce. The emptiness of their lives which caused them to don imbecilic pretensions was a constant source of pain. Stephen was subjected to these false aspirations at the hands of his best friend and confidante, Cranly. As they were strolling one day, Stephen informed him that he had left the Church, never again "to toe the line with those sycophants and hypocrites in the college." (141) Cranly was able to sympathize with his point of view, and after some time added, "How he too had felt a desire for life... when he had been younger and how at that time he too had been about to leave the Church in search of happiness but that many considerations had restrained him." (143)

Ironically, at this instant, Cranly is typifying those "sycophants" who so incensed Stephen. The "considerations" he mentions were undoubtedly those imposed upon him by his spiritual advisors. Cranly, sadly to say, was as meek as the rest of them. Even Stephen's contemporary functions as an agent of deflation and alienation.[32]

Dissimulation, a facet of social neurosis particularly strong in Stephen Hero, can be easily detected in two other instances. The first materializes after the death of Isabel. The condolences and sympathetic niceties were a little too much for Stephen. His duty was to receive sympathies, and he noted: "Nearly all the men said 'And how is the poor mother bearing it?' and nearly all the women said 'It's a great trial for your poor mother': and the sympathies were always uttered in the same listless monotone." (169) McCann, another friend of Stephen's also came to offer consolation, and when the little farce had been carried out, Stephen opined that the "acme of unconvincingness" had been reached just then. What actually transpired at this event was a grotesque massing of "living dead" to pay honor to one of their ilk. Isabel had never really lived, and the insinuation is that these people, in their "listless monotones" are not really living, either.

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[32]Robert S. Ryf, A New Approach to James Joyce: The Portrait of the Artist as a Guidebook, p.43

They are only assuming a thin veneer of respectability for the sake of propriety.

The second display of this free-wheeling ability to dissemble takes place in the Appollo billiards room. Stephen and Cranly are observing three fellows partaking of an amicable game when the marker strolls up to the table to remind them that their time has passed. The presence of this monitor immediately extracted all the joviality from the game. The three men began to play in earnest but were having a difficult time sinking their shots. Suddenly, the senior member of the group barked out an order to "hurry up," while another of them made a subtle excuse for having missed a shot. The "hopeless" falsity of these three men, "their unredeemable servility," (218) drove Cranly and Stephen from the building. It is doubtful whether the three players, shrouded as they were in their pretentiousness, felt even a fraction of the disturbance experienced by Stephen.

It was just this atmosphere that chilled Stephen-Joyce. He was able to recognize the fallout from Catholicism, and thus was able to combat it. "The Church is viewed as a 'plague.' It stands in the way of people's winning the privileges of life.... In consequence, it contributes to the distortion of the human personality."[33] Refusing the tempt-

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[33]James T. Farrell, "Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, The New York Times Book Review, December 31, 1944, and January 21, 1945, rpt. in Seon Givens, ed., James Joyce: Two Decades of Criticism, p. 194.

ing voices of this church and state, he bases his denial on Jesus,[34] because "...the narrative of the life of Jesus did not in any way impress him [with] as the narrative of the life of one who was subject to others." (111) He rejects Catholicism and all its pomp, as seen in his depictions of priests and society, and instead "would live his own life according to what he recognized as the voice of a new humanity, active, unafraid, and unashamed." (194) With Stephen Hero acting as a purgative, it can be construed that Joyce is about to bring these painful labors to fruition in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

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[34] Homer Obed Brown, James Joyce's Early Fiction: The Biography of a Form, p. 71.

Chapter IV

RESCUE THE PERISHING

With the cathartic influence of Stephen Hero behind him, Joyce was prepared to step forth and edify his race. In A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, he continues once again to bombard his favorite target, the priest, and he also unloads mortars on those he considers his intellectual and moral underlings, namely, the remainder of humanity. His arrogance stemmed from his absolute belief in the power of the individual. It is here, that he clearly makes his break from Catholic religion, although it is important to understand that his "non serviam" is not a "non credo."[35] Stephen desires a severing from the world and from the church, deeming this act necessary for artistic creation and perception.[36] In doing so, he sets himself against family, friend, and church, in order to achieve the lucidity of mind and soul that will allow him to fly by the "nets" of Irish life that have engulfed everyone else.

As proof of his belief, Stephen, in a conversation with Cranly near the end of the novel, states that he tried to love God, but found it very difficult and so he failed.

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[35]High Kenner, Dublin's Joyce, p. 126.

[36]Eugene M. Waith, "The Calling of Stephen Dedalus," College English, p. 259.

"I tried to unite my will with the will of God instant by instant. In that I did not always fail. I could perhaps do that still ...."[37] But Stephen, like Melville's Bartleby, would "prefer not to." He is only too aware of the emptiness and falsity massed behind "twenty centuries of authority and veneration," and he legitimizes his belief through his portrayal of priestly and social elements in Portrait. Much as in Dubliners and Stephen Hero, he presents misguided priests contributing to the decadence of a crumbling society.

The first real indication of Stephen's gradual understanding of the inadequacy of priests comes in chapter one when he is yet a small boy. Browbeaten by his peers, one of whom pushed him into a mud puddle, and by the priests, who infested his mind with inane fantasies, one of which was that all boys must have their prayers said and be in bed before the gas was lowered or they would go to hell, the frail Stephen becomes ill. In the morning, when he is discovered to be sick, the prefect is called to check that he is not "foxing," and be sure that he is really sick. The prefect appears:

And he felt the prefect's hand on his forehead;

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[37]Joyce, Portrait, p. 241. Subsequent references to this edition are given in the text.

> and he felt his forehead warm and damp against the prefect's cold damp hand. That was the way a rat felt, slimy and damp and cold. Every rat had two eyes to look out of. Sleek slimy coats, little little feet tucked up to jump, black slimy eyes to look out of. They could understand how to jump. But the minds of rats could not understand trigonometry. When they were dead they lay on their sides. Their coats dried then. They were only dead things. (22)

The connection between the rat and the prefect is obvious in this passage, Like the rat, he is cheerless. His occasional presence, like the rat's, prompts spasms of disgust and fear. As the rat could be taught to jump, so could the prefect. That is, the prefect can learn numerous mechanical abilities, but his humorless mien does not allow for any depth of understanding, just as a rat cannot understand trigonometry. As the rat eventually becomes a dead thing, so does the prefect. He will lay on his side, so to speak, and accept docilely the promulgations handed to him. Personal intellectual stimulation being disdained, the prefect withers and becomes a dead thing.

These priests, though, were not without their influence, as Stephen discovered himself that he was partaking of meaningless acts of obedience, such as the arithmetic contest.[38] Mr. Tate also is able to force an act of submission from him.[39] The chief reason why Stephen was so easily molded at this time was because he was a child,child-

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[38]Kenner, p. 116-117.

[39]Grant H. Redford, "The Role of Structure in Joyce's Portrait," p. 22.

hood being the real proving ground for religious ideals, and as the clerics were well aware of how easily youth could be impressed, they went to quite elaborate extents to impart their doctrinal bases at this time. Albeit he was but a fledgling spirit, the indelible stamp of Catholic dogma imprinted on the older Stephen is proof of their power. However, it was but a short time before he rebelled against the idea of becoming another mechanized rat in the Jesuit fiefdom. Fr. Dolan and his pandybat created in Stephen the first inkling that something was awry.

It was Fr. Dolan, the prefect of studies, who inspired Stephen to question the morality of the Jesuit-Catholic method of discipline.[40] This priest's job was to instil order and obedience where previously pandemonium had reigned. He was the personification of the Catholic ideal of instructing and leading by using fear as a primary motivational source. Even his mere entrance into a classroom aroused reactions similar to those the aforementioned rat might excite:

> The door opened quietly and closed. A quick whisper ran through the class: the prefect of studies. There was an instant of dead silence and then the loud crack of a pandy-bat on the last desk. Stephen's heart leapt up in fear.(49)

Fr. Dolan's tyrannical presence snaps the entire group to

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[40]Harry Levin, James Joyce: A Critical Introduction, p. 54.

attention. Brash and cruel, he promises to plague the boys' daily with his sadistic demeanor, meting out punishments grossly disproportionate to the wrongdoing committed. Shortly after his entrance, he whacks Fleming with his pandy-bat and then proceeds to harass Stephen.

Stephen had broken his glasses accidentally, but the prefect was certain that it had been done purposely, and so was determined to chastise him. As Stephen peered into Fr. Dolan's face, he saw his "no coloured eyes" rimmed by steel-edged spectacles. He had a "whitegrey not young face" with fluff at the sides of his"baldy whitegrey head." (50) Altogether, he presented the image of a harsh countenanced oppressor, and he lived up to this image by unjustly smacking Stephen.

Another indicator of the "death" syndrome that had overtaken these priests can be seen in Fr. Arnall's reluctance to come to Stephen's aid. It was he, in the first place, who told Stephen he need not study until the new glasses came. However, he said not a word while Fr. Dolan pandied the boy. It certainly seems only fair that he would speak out against this miscarriage of justice, but he refrained. Evidently, disciplinary tactics take precedence over fair play. Fr. Arnall's blind obedience to and faith in the prefect's duties is a clear symptom of these Ecclesiastics' failures as human beings. Let fear be the teacher, they seem to say, as their evident goal is only the

strictest obedience.

Following his beating, Stephen goes to the Rector to obtain justice. For Stephen, this is an unprecedented step against all his previous teachings. It was not his right to reason why things were done, but only to accept them in good faith. He could not fathom this attitude, though, and so, screwing up his courage, he went to see Fr. Conmee. He discovered the rector to be agreeable, and extracted a promise that he would speak to Fr. Dolan concerning the matter. Upon returning to his friends, he was hailed as a conquering hero, which mattered little to him, however, as he silently vowed not to be proud and instead to be very quiet and obedient. Any gratification he may have gained from this confrontation was soured several years later, however, when he found out that his valiant gesture was the basis for a good laugh among the authorities.[41]

Fr. Dolan's "pandybat morality" is revived again during the retreat which takes place the three days preceding St. Francis Xavier's feast day. Fr. Arnall, the priest who earlier declined to help Stephen, was the retreat master. Sitting in the front row, Stephen notes that he was wearing a heavy cloak, that his face was drawn and pale, and his voice broken with rheum. Like a spectre from the past returning to haunt him, the priest invokes reminiscences of

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[41]Redford, p.21.

his bygone days at Clongowes. As these memories recur, "His soul ... became again a child's soul." (108) By becoming like a child, he plays into the hands of his religious overseers, and opens himself up to all the anxieties and apprehensions that the clerics so well manipulate. He is now ready to be gulled by the hell-fire sermons of Fr. Arnall.

As it turns out, Stephen is probably the only student even remotely affected by these homilies. Some undoubtedly were impressed by the cinematic effects of the sermon about hell, but, the spiritual results were probably negligible. This point itself speaks for the inadequacy of such undertakings, but it did touch one person, Stephen, although in an ironic manner. Prior to the retreat, he had fallen into a habit of obstinate unscrupulousness. This was the very activity he so adroitly avoided in his later life, and, ironically, it was this retreat that snapped his conscience out of its lethargy and set it rolling toward its eventual divorce from the Church.

Advising his group to remember the four last things, "death, judgment, hell, and heaven," Fr. Arnall begins his series of sermons. He states that these will serve as themes for his addresses in the hope that they will benefit each boy in his striving for the salvation of his soul. It was not until the evening after this introductory sermon that Stephen felt the first "faint glimmer of fear." The next day, with its lectures on death and judgment, began "stirring his soul

slowly from its listless despair." (111) His fear became a "terror of spirit" as the priest preached about death and final judgment. Fr. Arnall suggests that the boys keep death ever before their minds, and in that way will be unable to sin. Such heavy-handed use of terror tactics, it becomes evident, are the heart and soul of Catholic teaching.

The following day brings the sermon dealing with hell. Stephen, driven to wit's end by onerous guilt sensations, is on the verge of hysteria following this pronouncement. Feeling totally powerless, his world being ripped asunder, he faces the ghoulish indictment of hell as pronounced by Fr. Arnall. Prefacing his vivid account of the physical properties of hell, the priest clues his band of sinners into the one saving condition iterated by God: "obedience to His word."(117) Following this prelude, he lists some of the outstanding features of hell: walls four thousand miles thick; bodies heaped so tightly that wretched sinners are unable to remove a gnawing worm from their own eye; everlasting darkness; unspeakable stench; putrid corpses stacked high as the sky; torment of fire; the obnoxious company abounding there; hideous devils. This declaration left Stephen gasping. Trembling and shuddering, consumed by guilt and fear, he was certain that every word the priest uttered was intended only for him. Like a little lost lamb, his only desire now was to rejoin the flock. His compelling introspective misery left him no escape. Confession was his only hope, and with

that a rejoining with his lost spiritual community.

The priest's scheme worked. Stephen goaded more by desperation than inspiration, becomes one with the community of it. However, the very device that instigated his return to the fold will eventually be that which repels him. The unperceiving compliance induced by diffidence, which was a foundation of the faith, will finally provide the impetus to allow himself to part with the church. The sepulchral, morbid force (in the form of the sermons) that compelled him to come together with the commonality eventually will contradict itself and usher him away to what he considers a greater goodness and freedom.

The official departure of Stephen from the Church does not arrive until after his encounter with the director. Both literally and symbolically, this priest embraces all the lesser qualities that Joyce was so prone to implant in all his priests. The following passage provides a more distinct aspect of this facet:

> The director stood in the embrasure of the window, his back to the light, leaning an elbow on the brown crossblind, and as he spoke and smiled, slowly dangling and looping the cord of the other blind, Stephen stood before him, following for a moment with his eyes the waning of the long summer daylight above the roofs or the slow deft movements of the priestly fingers. The priest's face was in total shadow, but the waning daylight from behind him touched the deeply grooved temples and the curves of the skull. (154-1540

In this characterization, the priest is a symbol of the denial of nature that is so basic to priestly tenets, and

he also presents a death image reminiscent of the earlier mentioned rat. Standing with his back to the "waning daylight" and leaning on the crossblind, he blots out most of the natural light that might have entered the room. Adding to this image is the term "crossblind"-- blinded by the cross. "The curves of the skull" point up the death image, and "the slow deft movements of the priestly fingers" suggests the offering of a noose to Stephen with which he could also be strangled by the omnipresence of Catholicity.[42]

The director, then, stands as a symbol of the loss of individuality and the ensuing havoc it wreaks. The shadowy, entombed figure which he presents vivifies the idea that he is actually dead. The image, also, of sightlessness depicted in the rector serves to recall past bad experiences with priests which Stephen has suffered.[43] Stephen smiles in answer to an unperceived smile on the priest's shaded face, and he later felt that he was being searched by the eyes of the priest, which he could not see. This priest's benumbed state would appear to be a direct result of a blunted existence.

Nonetheless, the priest does offer Stephen everything he has been searching for: "power, knowledge, and the possibility of a life of sinless chastity,"[44] yet

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[42]Sean Givens, James Joyce: Two Decades of Criticism, p. 133.

[43]William M. Schutte, ed., Twentieth-Century Interpretations of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, P. 46.

[44]Schutte, p. 43.

Stephen declined them all. A reason for refusal can be discerned in Stephen's observation that the Jesuits "had made him diffident of himself when he was a muff in Clongowes and . . . also while he had held his equivocal position in Belvedere." (156) He adds that he never once strayed from his habit of obedience, nor had he ever presumed to doubt openly. With this knowledge in mind, some of his reflections on the priesthood become more conspicuous. When he mused about himself as a priest, he would picture himself "accomplishing the vague acts of the priesthood which pleased him by reason of their semblance of reality and of their distance from it." (158) In his dim visions, he yearned for a minor office, such as being the subdeacon at the high mass, where he could"stand aloof from the altar" (158), or on the step below the celebrant and sing the "Ite missa est." He pictured himself as being the bearer of a "secret" knowledge and power, and he would be cognizant of "obscure things" which were hidden from others.

As it is plain to see, the very foundation of his reverie is the same as the nebulous stance from which the Church operates. He wishes to do all the vague little things that priests do, to become a forgotten figure in the background of the altar, to be the possessor of recondite bits of knowledge. By doing these things, he can become like other priests he has known, that is, impalpable creations,

ones who effect negative impact in their respective areas.

Consequently, he refuses the offer. By negating this chance to join the spiritual mausoleum, he occludes himself from the numerous extra benefits granted therein. These, however, were outweighed by the contrary aspects. "The chill and order of the life repelled him." (161) When he conceived of himself as "The Reverend Stephen Dedalus, S.J.," he could divine only an "undefined face or colour of face" (161) which would alternately pale and glow. The face was eyeless with tiny detonations of anger dotting the cheeks. When passing the Jesuit house he wondered which window would be his, thus exemplifying the narrow point of view from which they inspect the world. Even before the echo of the director's voice had died away, Stephen knew that "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." (162) The final irony in his conversion is the revelation that it is the chaos of his father's life that captures his soul, rather than the more orderly Jesuitical approach.

Stephen recoiled from all that the Catholic Church stood for. Instead of becoming just another of the inefficient, insensitive robots of the Church, he looses himself to glorious freedom. All the insecurity of his childhood, his fear-ridden adolescence, and his more recent regimen of extreme piety, are unimportant to him now because

he knows what he wants.[45] However, Stephen is apparently the only one of his group to make this escape. Even his dear friend Cranly was unable to elude the all-encompassing clutches of the Church. Cranly, although he was not a priest, will be inspected as a priestly figure because he is a perfect example of the typical Catholic product which Joyce mourned over.

Cranly was an instrument of the Fathers. He obeyed their orders with the same paleness and coldness they employed.[46] He also was afflicted with the same lack of identity that was preponderant among the priests. Having been unable to overcome the"nets" and traps positioned around him, he gave in to their allure and became a legitimate offspring of the religious process. Stephen perceived that Cranly had succumbed to these same pressures, as can be seen by his remarks in the following extract:

> Another head than his, right before him in the first benches, was poised squarely above its bending fellows like the head of a priest appealing without humility for the humble worshippers about him. Why was it that when he thought of Cranly he could never raise before his mind the entire image of his body but only the image of the head and face? Even now against the grey curtain of the morning he saw it before him like the phantom of a dream, the face of a severed head or deathmask, crowned on the brows by its stiff black upright hair as by an iron crown. It was a priestlike face, priestlike in its pallor, in the wide winged nose, in the shadowings below the eyes and along the jaws, priestlike in the lips that were long and bloodless and faintly smiling: and Stephen, remem=

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[45]Richard M. Kain and Marvin Magalaner, Joyce: The Man, The Work, The Reputation, p. 120.

[46]Edmund L. Epstein, The Ordeal of Stephen Dedalus, p. 145.

> bering swiftly how he had told Cranly of all the tumults and unrest and longings in his soul, day after day and night by night, only to be answered by his friend's listening silence, would have told himself that it was the face of a guilty priest who heard confessions of those whom he had not power to absolve. (178)

It is Cranly's visage only that encroaches upon Stephen's consciousness. He sees his friend as "a severed head or deathmask."[47] Thus disembodied, Cranly becomes one more in a long line of spectral priest figures. His countenance is priestlike in its pallor, in its shadowy eyes, and in its pursed, severe lips. He sits in the front of the classroom with his head raised above those of his classmates just as a proud priest stands over his "humble worshippers." Stephen's recalling the many things he confessed to Cranly without ever receiving an answer or a reprimand suggests the powerlessness of Cranly, and the priests, to grant absolution. This lack of strength stems from an inability to cope with such a free unfettered spirit as Stephen's. The incompetence of Cranly and the priests in these situations, therefore, casts a "guilty" shadow upon their faces. Perhaps the basis for this incompetence can be gleaned from the image describing Cranly's hair. Stiff, black, ramrod straight, and giving the appearance of iron, this figure suggests all those things that would lock in instability and keep out gainful growth. The coldness, as seen in the iron, and the militaristic bent, as witnessed in the stiff upright hair itself, are obvious in-

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[47]Kain and Magalaner, p. 128.

dications of an ordered life which would create difficulty in making adjustments to personalities such as Stephen's.

The "listening silence" with which Cranly greeted his admissions of uneasiness bothered Stephen. He beheld, in his friend, a certain danger or risk. He notes "the night-shade of his friend's listlessness seemed to be diffusing in the air around him a tenuous and deadly exhalation." (178) Cranly, as the priest's advocate, subtly is unraveling a web in which to capture Stephen. He has become a priest in everything but name and has so closely adopted their manner as to be almost indistinguishable from the real thing. Betraying his own individuality, he boards what Joyce sees as a sinking ship, giving himself up to the infirmity of the religious way of life. Even his speech "was an echo of the quays of Dublin given back by a bleak decaying seaport, its energy an echo of the sacred eloquence of Dublin given back by a Wicklow pulpit." (195) Cranly, having plugged himself into this puzzle of decadence, is well on his way to becoming another of the soulless phantasms which make up its body. This conflict between the phantasmal and the real contributed greatly to Stephen's anguish. The "heaven" of the Church and the "good life" of the priests are only false images to Stephen. The only thing that ever made him grasp for the latter was fear.[48]

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[48]Kenner, p. 126.

Ironically, Stephen triumphs over both fear and the clutches of religion in his last chat with Cranly. Probing Stephen's adamant desire for total individual freedom, Cranly falls back on that favorite old priestly ploy, albeit in a superficially joking manner, of addressing him as a child. Finding no success in this tactic, he strikes upon another idea in his last ditch effort to swing Stephen back on track. Cranly solemnly summons forth the anxieties associated with being alone, with not having "any one person . . . who would be more than a friend." With this utterance, Stephen gazed upon his confrere and discerned "a cold sadness" in his face. "He had spoken of himself, of his own loneliness which he feared." (248) Even though entrenched in the community of God, which his preachers promised would give him true happiness, Cranly is found to be the bearer of the despair that he tries to project into Stephen.

Ultimately, Cranly is a disheveled, trampled spirit, worn thin by the extreme self-submission he must undergo in order to become like all priests. Like them, also, he is ineffectual in his attempts to make sense of life and, as described by Stephen, has resigned himself to a slow but steady erosion that will eventually find him framed, yellowing, and unknown, and hanging on some stranger's wall. On the other hand, Stephen, as a "priest of the imagination," will be able to go out into the world and create and recreate

himself. "The church would have meant order, but it would also have meant a denial of the life of the senses."[49] Thus, he has finally realized that he must struggle free of the moral grip of the clerics, at the same time realizing that he must take them into account as representatives of an attitude that does a great deal to make life what it is.[50] Stephen himself says "he had passed beyond the challenge of the sentries who had stood as guardians of his boyhood and had sought to keep him among them that he might be subject to them and serve their ends." (164) He has broken loose and will serve his own ends, thereby assuring evasion of the obsequial trauma of priesthood. As Stephen comes to realize, his "greatest sufferings are not imposed by the Dublin reality which disturbs him so much, but by the images of another world (Hell) as painted by the priests."[51]

The funeral aspect which Joyce attributed to his priests can be described in his vision of society, also. No less than nine times he refers to the "squalor" or "squalid" conditions surrounding Stephen and his environment. He mutters about his "undivined and squalid way of life," "the squalid stream of vice" which exudes from him, or "of the squalor of his own mind and home." The same ambient atmosphere is observable as he describes the "squalid quarters

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[49]Levin, p. 57.

[50]Morse, "The Disobedient Artist," p. 135.

[51]Givens, p. 182.

of the brothels," "the squalor and noise and sloth of the city," and the "vision of squalor and insincerity" which encompassed him. The abounding filth and corruption touched most everyone's lives and tainted the everyday existence of many Irish. Much of the cause for the breakdown of this debauched society rests on the shoulders of the spiritual shepherds, as pointed out earlier. In the case of Portrait, an investigation of both Stephen and his friends should offer an appropriate view of this disintegrating social milieu.

Ireland and its priests prided themselves on their chastity. This was one of the chief claims of their "moral" society; however, Stephen is an excellent example of the failure of these claims to hold true. In the days after he left Clongowes, he dreamt of an "unsubstantial image" which he desired to meet in the real world. He fantasized that they would meet quietly and be alone, surrounded by darkness, "and in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured. He would fade into something impalpable under her eyes and then in a momemt, he would be transfigured." (65) This romantic reverie found its consummation in Stephen's sojourn into Nighttown. Realizing that "he wanted to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin," (100) he trundled down its grimy streets, submitting himself body and soul to the lust which consumed his innards. Upon

surrendering to the young woman, he believes he is indeed transfigured, because "in her arms he felt that he had suddenly become strong and fearless and sure of himself." (101) Although he may have felt these things, they were far from true. After all, it was she who embraced him, she who initiated the festivities, while he played a subordinate role. The entire performance "was too much for him" as he gave in to her dark presence. (100)

The difficult thing to understand about this incident is how a good Catholic boy could commit such an atrocity without the slightest twinge of conscience. It speaks clearly for the inadequacy of his supposedly "moral" training. All the wondrous God-like qualities which the priests eschewed are summarily debunked in this apparent debasing of self. The ineptitude of his teachers is ironically supported by the fact that he must go whoring to satisfy his needs. Rather than seeking satisfaction in an ordered, contemplative setting, he seeks his pleasures in "a maze of narrow and dirty streets," (100) populated by "wrangling and drawling" drunks and heavily perfumed, vividly gowned women. This vision of Stephen's entrance into the Irish environment is not a very enchanting one.

As a matter of fact, very few of Joyce's delineations of the Irish milieu are fetching. In chapter two, he describes his aunt Ellen as she steps through an entrance:

"A skull appeared suspended in the gloom of the doorway. A feeble creature like a monkey was there.: (68) Later, in chapter five, a dwarfish man is said to have eyes which were "melancholy as those of a monkey." (22) This little man was also graced with a "blackish monkey puckered face" and "thin shrunken brown" hands. The Darwinian implications of these simian features are obvious, but the narrator throws in a hint that the dwarf might be the product of an incestuous love. The suggestion becomes clear that Ireland is destroying itself from within, from the core. The dwarfish characters become caricatures of Ireland.[52] She is "the old sow that eats her farrow." (203)

Besides the representations of spiritually and physically shriveled people, Joyce depicts his city in various states of dishabile. Stephen is forced to suffer various humiliations at the hands of his father - "the false smiles of the market sellers, the curvetings and oglings of the barmaids with whom his father flirted." (93) He observes "frowsy girls with dank hair," "odours of fish and spirits and wet sawdust," and the "reeking withered right hand" (141) of an old woman who gives him directions. He noticed, also, that even his younger brothers and sisters seemed weary already of life's journey. He heard in their voices an echo "of the recurring note of weariness and pain. All seemed weary of life even before entering upon it."(164)

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[52]William York Tindall, The Literary Symbol, p.84.

He saw in his mind "kind gentlewomen in Covent Garden wooing from their balconies with sucking mouths and the pox fouled wenches of the taverns and young wives that, gaily yielding to their ravisher, clipped and clipped again." (233) There is no doubt left in the reader's mind as to the dimensions of the cultural cataclysm that Joyce attempted to portray. The dismal, gloomy pinpointing of the wretched conditions of so many of the people supports his point.

Along with the environmental breakdown came an intellectual aridity. There was a complete sundering of moral proprieties. Davin reported to Stephen of a young wife, half undressed, who rendered him a most titillating offer. Since her husband would be gone for the night, she invited Davin to spend it with her. He refused, even though he was "all in a fever." (183) Much like Stephen, she had felt the faintest stirrings of her own consciousness and responded to them naturally, although guilelessly. Nonetheless, her lascivious suggestion did place her outside the boundaries of accepted moral behavior; thus, she becomes emblematic of the breakdown.

Though she may have misplaced her values, she is not alone. Lynch, for instance, claims not to care about listening to Stephen expound his esthetic philosophy. "I don't even care about women," he growls, "Damn you and damn everything. I want a job of five hundred a year. You can't get me one." (207)

A morality of measurement occurs here. Lynch evidently cares nothing about others or life in general. All he wants is his five hundred a year. The same attitude can be detected in a couple of medical students who have passed their final examinations. Stephen's friends were talking about these two and their chances of getting jobs on ocean liners, of developing poor or rich practices:

> -- That's all a bubble. An Irish country practice is better.
> -- Hynes was two years in Liverpool and he says the same. A frightful hole he said it was. Nothing but midwifery cases.
> --Do you mean to say it is better to have a job here in the country than in a rich city like that: I know a fellow ...
> -- Hynes has no brains. He got through by stewing, pure stewing.
> -- Don't mind him, There's plenty of money to be made in a big commercial city.
> -- Depends on the practice.
> -- Ego credo ut vita pauperum est simpliciter atrox, simpliciter sanguinariou atrox, in Liverpoolio. (216)

Not a single thought was given to anything other than the money-making possibilities of medical practice. From this conversation, it would appear that the ideals of medicine are to find a job that will give ease and comfort, rather than one that will offer the best possibility of performing the healing arts. This disposition would appear to be symptomatic of the nation-wide decomposition.

Undoubtedly, the best example of this far-reaching debility can be seen in the adults pictured in this novel. Stephen's "elders, since they apparently know the meaning of things, must therefore incarnate perfect justice and moral

and intellectual consistency. But the child's real experience is of mad quarrels. . . frivolous cruelty . . . and moral chaos."[53] The priests have already been appraised and are shown to be relatively innocuous. Their influence was ironically perverse in that the order they imposed on their congregations abetted the stagnation of the environment. The prestige they were given by their pliant subordinates could not fail to result in the expunging of any type of progressive movement. Because of this characteristic of easy pliability, the Irish were practically carbon copies of their priests.

This assimilation of clerical traits is displayed in the Christmas dinner scene. Sometimes humorous and sometimes scathing, this holiday dinner is certainly unlike any other. Set in the most joyous of all seasons, this mealtime spectacle presents activities diametrically opposed to the season. Peppered with snide comments and outraged exhalations, this repast ends in voluminous shouting and crying. In contrast to the normally pacific nature of this day, the familial row is a good indicator as to how deep the rift in Irish society has become.

Dante, Stephen's aunt, serves as the bellwether of Catholicism in this case. A staunch supporter of the priests, she places all her trust in any mandates they hand down.

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[53]Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function, p. 270.

Evidently, she had at one time been a supporter of Parnell, whose passing both Simon and Mr. Casey still mourned, but she had no difficulty in abandoning him as "a traitor to his country" (39) when the priests decided to berate him. The argument that developed dealt with the priests' using the pulpit for political reasons, to which the two men objected. Dante, feeling it to be her duty to support the clerics, advised that it was their duty to warn the people, "A priest would not be a priest if he did not tell his flock what is right and what is wrong," (32) she adds. As if she had not made her attitude of blind obedience clear enough, she adds that "the bishops and priests of Ireland have spoken . . . and they must be obeyed." (32) She refers to them as "the' Lord's anointed" and the apples of God's eye. In a final ironic utterance, she admonishes the group that "they were always right!-God and morality and religion come first."(39) Ostensibly, she overlooks the immorality of her own position. Brushing aside the fact that she is a sinner just like everyone else, she makes a special point of condemning Parnell for his having scandalized all of Ireland by being a "public sinner." "It would be better for him that a millstone were tied about his neck and that he were cast into the depth of the sea," (33) she quotes from "the language of the Holy Ghost." (33) In her righteous indignation, she fails to remember those other famous words of the Holy Ghost, "Let he who is not guilty cast the first stone."

As Dante is restricted by her pietistic fervor, Mr. Casey is blinded by the same type of adoration. His filial respect for Parnell precurses his religious adherence. However, he does maintain pride in his Catholic religion. When Dante accuses him of being a renegade, he retorts vehemently:

> "And I may tell you, ma'am, that I, if you mean me, an no renegade catholic. I an a catholic as my father before him again when we gave up our lives rather than sell our faith." (35)

Presumptuous, perhaps, in his assertion that he gave up his life for his faith, nonetheless, this statement is ominous in that it elucidates a great flaw in the Catholic system. Mr. Casey is a Catholic because everyone else in his family was. He did not join the faith by personal choice, and although he feels totally free to lambast the priests, he paradoxically clings tenaciously to his title as a Catholic. In displaying his patriotic mien, he shows just as much ignorance of the facts as did Dante. While arguing with her, he cries out concerning "the language with which the priests and the priests' pawns broke Parnell's heart and hounded him into his grave." (34) From his own admission of his Catholicity and his reluctance to disown it, it appears that he should be included as one of the "priests'pawns" that he so arduously demeans.

The ensuing argument between Mr. Casey and Dante takes on mock heroic proportions. These two family elders have at one another with an unmistakable relish. Casey begins by asking: "Are we not to follow the man that was born to lead us?" (38) which really sets off Dante. He continues to list

other political assininities fostered by the priests, punctuating his roster with blows by his fist on the table. Dante replies to his wrath by screeching, "God and religion before everything! . . .God and religion before the world!" (35) At this point, they come together over the table in a comical scene:

> Dante started across the table, her cheeks shaking. Mr. Casey struggled up from his chair and bent across the table towards her, scraping the air from before his eyes with one hand as though he were tearing aside a cobweb. (39)

These two old crones,hopelessly arguing about an issue long dead, capture fully the absurdity of their ardor. Dante's ineptitude has already been established, and Mr. Casey's feebleness is apparent from his inability to handle this raging woman.

They are both aged and tired. Mr. Casey's adulation of Parnell is reduced to a lowly argument, and Dante frets over the loss of priestly majesty and respect. Perhaps their feelings can be best elicited in two stanzas from Stephen's villanelle, the first summarizing Mr. Casey's argument, the second, Dante's!

> Our broken cries and mournful lays
> Rise in one eucharistic hymn.
> Are you not weary of ardent ways?
>
> While sacrificing hands upraise
> The chalice flowing to the brim,
> Tell no more of enchanted days. (221)

There is one last element of this Christmas dinner which envelopes the whole social dissolution - Mr. Casey's

story about "a very famous spit." He relates how he was in Arklow one day at a meeting, and when it was over, he went to the train station to return home. The place thronged with people booing him, and one old lady in particular was being especially obnoxious. "She kept dancing along beside me in the mud bawling and screaming into my face: Priésthunter! The Paris Funds! Mr. Fox! Kitty O'Shea!" (37) Mr. Casey put up with her antics until she called Kitty O'Shea a foul name, at which point he spat a wad of tobacco directly at her face. "O Jesus, Mary, and Joseph," she howled, "I'm blinded! I'm blinded and drownded! . . .I'm blinded entirely." (37) Certainly it is humorous, yet beyond that level it contains a great truth. Just as the preceding "old harridan" was entirely blinded, so was everyone at this Christmas dinner. Dante is the obvious parallel as she is blinded by her own narrow-minded outlook. She is also drowning beneath the waves of her obstinacy, purposely suffocating her own independence and will. Mr. Casey, too, is blinded by his partisan attitude, and is slowly sinking to the depths of despair and self-pity, drowning in a sea of woe.

The Christmas dinner scene, in general, is an expression of the perversion to which these people have succumbed. Dante and Mr. Casey discarded their own desires and placed their hopes in the hands of someone or something

else. Mrs. Dedalus and Uncle Charles are the real lambs, as they are content to sojourn quietly through life, observing their religious upbringing.However, the last adult at the table, Simon Dedalus, deserves some special consideration.

A perfunctory examination of his character might lead one to see him as a fun-loving jokester, not to be taken very seriously. Before the Christmas dinner is served, he is discovered laughing volubly with Mr. Casey, wondering "if there's any likelihood of dinner." (28) Stephen, seeing and hearing his father as he entertained the rest of the group, laughed. Noticing this, his father was prompted to ask: "What are you laughing at, you little puppy you?" (29) This gentle reproof is an indication of the serious side of Simon's nature. In this way, he was able to keep Stephen in his place. An analogy can be drawn between Simon and the priests who rode herd over Stephen for so many years. Simon is, here, making "an overt attempt to convince Stephen that he is just a child,"[54] even though he has been allowed into the company of adults while the rest of the children are safely stowed in the nursery. Later, during the meal, he reproaches Dante for her authoritarian stance and is reminded again of the boy's presence by Uncle Charles. Simon quickly covers up his indiscretion and offers to fill Stephen's plate for him. This act is supporting evidence of his wont to keep

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[54]Epstein, p. 63.

the boy a boy.

Although Simon's intentions seem to be the same as the priest's, he is not detered from stating his point of view. In the midst of the Parnell controversy carrying on at the dinner, he interjects the following: "Sons of bitches! . . . When he was down they turned on him to betray him and rend him like rats in a sewer. Low lived dogs! And they look it! By Christ, they look it!" (34) Besides the recurring rat image, Simon's toxic denunciation belies his true nature, also. He was just as stifled by his religion as were the other family members, and he seemed equally as incapable of logical judgment as the rest. Perhaps the one attribute he owned that the others did not was his complete indiscretion. For instance, his job at the meal was to slice up the turkey. While doing so, Dante and Mr. Casey were trading a few preliminary maledictions which upset Dante considerably. As she was stewing:

> Mr. Dedalus rooted with the carvers at the end of the dish and said:
>
> --There's a tasty bit here we call the pope's nose. If any lady or gentleman . . .
>
> He held a piece of fowl up on the prong of the carcing-fork. Nobody spoke. He put it on his own plate, saying:
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> --Well, you can't say but you were asked. I think I had better eat it myself because I'm not well in my health lately. (33)

This scurrilous comment was greeted with humiliating silence which eventually upset his querulous nature.

This dichotomous personality is further compounded when he takes Stephen to Cork to visit Queen's College. While making the rounds at his favorite pubs, with Stephen in tow,

one of his cronies attempted to ascertain Stephen's opinion' of which were prettier, Dublin or Cork girls. "--He's not that way built," said Mr. Dedalus. "Leave him alone. He's a levelheaded thinking boy who doesn't bother his head about that kind of nonsense." (94) Once again, Simon attempts to marshall Stephen's existence, as though he feared his own son's maturity.[55] The insinuation in this type of conduct is that Simon hopes his son will prove to be more successful than he, thus previewing "the revolt against father that every son must undertake in order to become something like him."[56] However, only a few moments later, he says "I hope he'll be as good a man as his father," (95) followed by the ironic understatement, "And thanks be to God . . . that we lived so long and did so little harm." Such myosis is what brought Ireland to her present state. Simon's impercipient manner, just like all the other adults', was the overriding manifestation of the condition of the country. Although they may have done little harm, they had done less good.

It is the same paralysis which Joyce sketched in Dubliners, that is again found here. The adults, set in their leaden ways, seem content to endeavor to retard their children's growth as much as they have their own. The internal cancerous development that threatens to disjoint this society stems from the church and its basic precepts. The priests,

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[55]Epstein, p. 64.

[56]Tindall, Reader's Guide, p. 52.

as inadequate spiritual and civic leaders, have arrested the system through their sluggish methods. Demanding obedience and servility to themselves and God, they have aided in creating a race of people unable to perform the simplest acts of volition. Hence, they are destined to plod through life, passively and ignominiously.

Stephen, alert to this danger, resolves to rupture his connection with this inorganic existence, and by asserting his own individuality, will tresspass "the gates of all the ways of error and glory." (172) He will disavow the voices that beckon him to be a "gentleman . . . a good catholic . . . true to his country . . . to raise up his father's fallen state . . . to be a decent fellow."(84) He will not bow before a God, nor subjugate his will to any man, but instead will proceed "to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race." (253) It is through this procedure that he will combat the loss of individuality and the dissipation of society in his homeland.

Chapter V

AMEN

With the advent of Vatican II in the 1960's, the Catholic Church underwent a series of philosophical changes. Nothing new came from these papers, only clarifications of what had always been, plus a shift in emphasis in which the individual was asked to take a greater part in the role of salvation. Also, in "Lumen Gentium," the Church constitution, the Church shed its image of "oppressive leader" in favor of the milder image of "servant of the people." However, these adaptations do not negate the Church's intent that man must offer "the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals . . ."[57] This is the same basic command for faith in God and the acceptance of unknown elements as the Church has always espoused.

So no matter how you examine it, the Catholic Church is still the same enormous organization that it has ever been. Even with all its updated ceremonies and ideas, it still purveys an image of total envelopment. Though individual needs may be spotlighted more than in Joyce's day, the actual ideal lies in the "community" of the church. To become one with everyone else, to share in their common hope or distress is the functional goal through which heavenly

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[57] William M. Abbott, S.J. ed., The Documents of Vatican II, p. 113.

bliss may be attained. The essence of all this is that each single person still must abase himself before the image of God. The cornerstone is, in fact, intellectual obedience; and this was what Joyce would never yield to, whether it be in God or in man.[58] Obviously, then, the loss of personal initiative would be coequal to an act of emasculation. Without some internal driving force man becomes a mechanical carcass able to contribute only the offal his body normally dispenses. It was against this castration of self-determination that he blustered. The priests whom he delineates in his early works are striking proof of this theory. Pictured in various states of dishabile, some dead, some absent, some perverted, they become vivid proof of his theory. Joyce's view of the Catholic Church may have been slanted; nonetheless, there is a factual basis in the decay he saw around him. His priests are terribly unequal to the task given them. As a matter of fact, in most cases they manufacture results distinctly opposed to those they were supposed to instil. Fr. Dolan and his pandybat, for instance, set Stephen on the road to intellectual freedom. Fr. Butt was at wit's end with Stephen, and Fr. Keon ("Ivy Day in the Committeeroom") was a "black sheep" and a castoff. Much of the difficulty which these clerics underwent sprouted from their abstemious attitudes toward life. Cowed by their own obedience and submission, they rarely made an effort to understand the

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[58]Morse, Sympathetic Alien, p. 68.

human condition. For them, all answers were to be found in what they believed to be God. Humanity had nothing to offer that was not already posited by scripture. By dismissing themselves as organic entities, they could proceed through their days on earth unruffled by anything so testy as their fellow man.

As has been noted earlier, this attitude was not without its carryover values. It lent itself peculiarly well to the subjugation of others. Although Joyce depicted a society teeming in irreligious activity, people were even so mired in the morass of non-thinking abeyance to the Word. Seemingly suspended in a state of dulcet immorality, the populace was evidently content to continue living in this restricted manner. "Paralysis of the will," having crept into their system via the priests, threatened to annihilate them. Placing their fondest wishes and dreams on days or events long gone, as Simon Dedalus did, are lucid examples of the self-restrictive, unnatural taint that their inhibited mode of existence placed on their lives. As is obvious from Joyce's portrayal, the church and its oblates become enemies of true spiritual life and impediments to personal growth.[59]

Essentially noxious, it could only be a matter of time before this element of duplicity infected everyone and everything. The self-delusive sacrifices made by the common people served as the detonating device which created the moral paralysis so prevalent in Dublin. People set in their ways,

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[59]Morse, Sympathetic Alien, p. 16.

whether those ways be drunken, lascivious, or otherwise, perpetually populate the scene. Even the rebellious among them are paralyzed. Temple, a member of Stephen's clique, is so persistent with his constant droning that "I believe this" or "I believe that," that his depth of belief appears suspect. Davin signs an anti-war petition, yet prepares for the day of Irish revolution. Perhaps, an insight to the futility and implausibility of any of these people escaping this toxic environment can be seen in Davin's revolution preparations. He carries his hurley stick, proffering it as a weapon in battle against British guns. Training for war on athletic fields, he disdains taking advantage of the free military training to be had by enlisting in the British service. Deeming such an act unpatriotic, he proposes to enter the skirmish relatively untrained to battle disciplined British troops. The discrepancy is obvious, but not to the deep rooted "wearer of the green." This example of the obstinancy of their ignorance and their entrenched thought points up the enormous capacity for self-delusion of these folks.

The nonsense of Temple and Davin is symptomatic of the society as a whole. Having been denuded of their individuality by the obstreperous exigencies of their clerics and church, they must then fall back on their own intuitive drives, which have been practically snuffed out by the over-

powering presence of that church. Thus, the practices of this institution subtract the essential quality necessary to spark men to any kind of development.

In substance, Joyce saw the church as a pirate of each man's autonomy including its own clerical members'. And just as the rowdy buccaneers used to destroy their enemy's ships after plundering them, the church, after dessicating mankind, ravaged and floundered its own ship of state. With the gem of man's conscience stolen, the possibility of integral internal progress became nonexistent. For Joyce, this was the most heinous of crimes and one worthy of his most sneering dissatisfaction.

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