FRAMING A PORTRAIT OF
THE ARTIST: EVOLUTION IN
DESIGN

by

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requirements for the degree of

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

............................................................

(Signature)
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SCHEME OF REFERENCES


Abstract

This research attempts to reframe our understanding of James Joyce’s first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in the light of Joyce’s theme of the artistic process, and in relation to the evidence of Joyce’s own artistic development.

The reframing work is based on three operations: firstly, examining Joyce’s development in the light of related texts: Joyce’s early critical writings and antetextes. We trace Joyce’s intellectual and imaginative growth, both prior to the original “inception” point of *Portrait* in 1904, and from that time up to the point where, the original draft of the novel (*Stephen Hero*) having been abandoned, Joyce recast *Portrait*, in September 1907. The growth of Joyce’s ideas about art, creativity and the social responsibility of the artist, into a rich literary chronotope is examined.

Secondly we re-examine the new historical concepts of intention and a work’s inception, from a Bakhtinian perspective: theories of intention, the prosaic imagination and chronotope. The concept of “design” is explored, to encompass the purposive principles, intentions and form of the evolving novel.

Thirdly, a reading of *Portrait* in relation to its chronotopic framing is advanced, using Bakhtin’s concept of “dialogic creative understanding”. *Portrait* is read as the story of the soul of a developing artist who comes, through a series of phases, to an understanding of his vocation in respect of three key chronotopic orientations: a social sense of responsibility; the importance of creativity in the highest service of art; the harnessing of the “plastic powers” of the artist imbued with a deeply rooted but dialogical sense of history.
OVERVIEW

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST IN ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE, LIGHT, AND FRAME

If I were a painter and my book were a picture you would be less ready to condemn me for wrong-headedness if I refused to alter certain details. (James Joyce, Selected Letters 84)

If we were to render Joyce’s first novel as an artwork, what would *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* look like? Naturally the title is suggestive of a painting: Would we seek to capture the “features of infancy” in the adolescent portrait, as Joyce implied in his first self-portrait (Scholes & Kain 60), of 1904? Given the succession of phases of the subject that is represented in the novel, in which guise would we represent him? The isolated Clongowes schoolboy half-heartedly running on a rugby field, or the little hero triumphant in the Rector’s office? The terrified penitent haunted in his bedroom, or the exemplary religious devotee with subconscious doubts? As aesthete semblable, indulging in a fashionable swoon by Sandymount Strand, as peripatetic aesthete in peroration to a surly following of one, or as “applied aesthetician”, sleepy composer of a villanelle (and if the latter, then with or without connotations of the “wet dream” first suggested by Kenner; *Dublin’s Joyce* 123)? For if we take up the suggestion of that 1904 ur-Portrait, “A Portrait of the Artist”—this short, essentially autobiographical essay indicates that
portrayal should proceed not by formulating one phase, one fixed “iron memorial aspect”, nor by defining details such as “beard and inches” but in reference to the succession of phases that make up a life (Scholes & Kain 60).

Unlike reality, Michael Carter points out, “One of the fundamental characteristics of a visual image is that it has an edge, that it stops” (149). Stephen refers to a similar phenomenon in his own aesthetics:

The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn about the object to be apprehended. An esthetic image is presented to us either in space or in time. What is audible is presented in time, what is visible is presented in space. But, temporal or spatial, the esthetic image is first luminously apprehended as selfbounded and selfcontained upon the immeasurable background of space or time which is not it. (P 212)

This is our task too: to apprehend an image of Portrait bounded by space and time; a task we shall address with the aid of Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope: that is, of space-time relations, formally expressed in the form and logical relations of the novel.

Perhaps it will prove difficult to determine the boundaries of our image: where does the image of the subject end and the frame begin? Is our final image of Stephen the sequestered, isolated diarist at the end of the novel, or has the diarist’s imagination sprouted wings, begun a precarious Icarian flight away from those nets that, according to Stephen, are thrown at the soul in his country? We will attempt to guide our perceptions according to what can be divined of the writer’s evolving design for the work. This in turn can be traced roughly by close inspection of those texts associated with Joyce’s development and with the inceptional history of Portrait: this latter period is within the temporal bounds between the January 1904 ur-Portrait to September 1907, when Joyce recast his novel in a new form.

As for genre, in which room of a gallery should it hang? Does it belong with nineteenth century naturalistic works, in the company of the Bildungsroman or Künstlerroman? Or is it a modernist work, cubist perhaps, as Kenner (1976) suggests?¹

¹ Rice (70) qualifies Kenner’s description of cubism: rather than privileging the spatialisation of time, it was an approach to multidimensional spatial effects, and thus the true analogies reside in Joyce’s multiple
And then there is the framing. Would this portrait be framed, after the classic fashion? And if so, then what manner of frame? Would it resemble the highly wrought, handcrafted and intricately designed “artistic supplements” of the aestheticist Pre-Raphaelites? (MacLachlan and Reid 26), or would it indeed be framed in intricate daedal work? Marguerite Harkness (fn 19 p. 45) reminds us of Pater’s comment that this style of wood sculpture of finely wrought intricacy was named for “to work curiously” and was generally religious in nature; appropriately enough for the artist whose own formation appears to be primarily religious in nature? Or rather would this portrait be unframed, to leave the work of creating boundaries of perception up to the work of the perceiver?

As for the title, is it reproduced literally on the frame, or does it bear the perspectival burden of irony, thus: “Portrait of the ‘Artist’ as a young man”? Or is the word “young” underlined in response to Joyce’s famous complaint to the painter Frank Budgen (61) that this aspect of the title had been widely overlooked?

Such are some of the considerations of the artist in conceiving, and realising a work. These and more are elements contributory to the form, aims and qualities of a work that collectively, one might label its design. In his imagination at least, some years prior to this first literary self-portrayal of 1904, Joyce had ruminated on similar matters in an essay on Munkacsy’s painting Ecce Homo: on the means available to the painter to capture the drama and life of the soul: the use of backgrounds, shades, colours, a broad canvas; the drapes of the subject, gesture (Barry 18).

It is not merely the artist who frames a work in various ways; the consumer of a text also frames a work, whether this be explicitly or unconsciously, and the assumptions applied to a text will shape perceptions of it greatly. In the spirit of new historicist enquiry then, against the background of deconstructive insights, it is important to identify one’s assumptions self-reflexively (Kershner, Nightmare 28). The framing of our assumptions is primarily determined by the contexts we apply to a work, in responding to the variety of contextual cues, individually and in combinatory patterns, that shape our interpretation (MacLachlan and Reid) and the reception of a text, and it is the purpose of this overview perspectives and use of a series of narrative “blocks”.

chapter to outline my contextualising approach to Portrait.

As is demonstrated in the following chapter, the considerations of the artist, and the process of art, were themes dear to Joyce, and there are many clues in his works that testify to the endurance of these themes throughout his career. It is the purpose of this thesis to survey the clues about artistic process associated with the history, and the text itself of Portrait, and to use them to provide an in-formed framing of Joyce’s first novel.

Despite the great mass of studies of Joyce, and of Portrait, opinions as to the appropriate framing of Portrait are strongly divided. Probably the most influential essay on this work remains Kenner’s review of Portrait “in perspective” (1955); a perspective however which did shift somewhat in successive papers (Feshbach and Herman 749-50). Views are especially polarised on the question of ironic interpretations of the central character Stephen Dedalus: is he a contrasting “fakesimilar” of Joyce, as Shem is to Shaun in Finnegans Wake (Tindall Reader’s Guide 259), a mere phony prig who happens to bear uncanny resemblance to Joyce, or is he on the contrary in Sultan’s (2001) phrase a virtual “facsimile” of Joyce as a young man? Of course, there is every shade of opinion between these two extremes as well. I crystallise my own perspective on the argument thus: given the undoubted presence of irony, there are different options for framing, and interpreting irony: are the ironies defining, or are they merely contextual ironies that add qualifying richness to the crowded field of representation?

Kershner (“Genius” 373) in an exploration of Stephen’s interpolation into a virtual “panopticon”, the unrelenting imprisonment of surveillance by authorities, cites Joyce’s “interest in frames and contexts” while ruefully noting “the difficulty of disengaging them from what we imagine we can distinguish as the subject of art”. Adopting a too-limiting perspective, while this grants us the power of increased focus, can constrict our own perceptions, create what Stephen might term the “prison gates of the soul” (P 207) and hamper our appreciation of the signifying potential of a given work.

Writing about the extraordinary resonance of the epigraph with which Joyce framed Portrait, (uniquely among his novels, as Senn notes), Fritz Senn (“The challenge” 130) observes that a text changes meaning utterly according to what associations the reader
brings to it, and that of course, the same applies to the perceiver, in Joyce’s own analysis. Indeed, Mahaffey (“Giacomo Joyce” 411-412) suggests that

Art is context for Joyce; it is the activity of anchoring isolated and isolating individual experiences to a larger human context, to a harmonious humanising tradition made up of selected works of art, literature, and philosophy and encompassing a variety of time periods, cultures, religions and points of view.

Kershner notes that it is possible to apply a wide range of framing contexts to the interpretation of Stephen’s portrait (“Genius” 374). Mahaffey adopts the metaphor of framing to produce a reading of *Portrait* according to her theme: Stephen’s primary fault is a pattern of helpless swinging from obedience to defiance of authority, underpinned by his inability to question authority’s “major premise . . . its idealisation of ultimate transcendence” (“Framing” 207).

Referring to Jacques Derrida, MacLachlan and Reid note that once a text is produced, it is “orphaned” from the will of the author; instead, it is prone to the author-ity of social forces (111), which in Joyce’s case were frequently hostile (*Dubliners* and *Ulysses* in particular had torrid publishing histories), and of the critic and the general public. The reception of a work is constructivist, no less than the production of a work is, and no frame is neutral (MacLachlan and Reid 108); hence the importance of being self-reflexively aware of our own framing assumptions.

As Kershner’s comment warns, the identification of framing is not likely to be a transparent or uncomplicated matter. MacLachlan and Reid, quoting Derrida’s aphorism “*Il y’a du cadre mais le cadre n’existe pas*” (Derrida, *La Verite*, in MacLachlan and Reid 6), disavow these material connotations of the metaphor: in their translation, “Framing occurs, but there is no frame”. Firstly, framing is an act, a process, not a fixed reference point. Secondly, where a frame exists, it tends to be “naturalised by the viewer into near oblivion” (6). Thirdly, while a frame may act as a boundary, the decision of what is within the boundary, and what is not, is itself a constructive frame.
Framing Portrait according to the artistic process

It has often been commented that Joyce makes his own artistic process the subject of his work, and therefore integral to an understanding of it (e.g., Groden “Textual History” 71-2). This tendency perhaps climaxes with *Finnegans Wake*, the “writing, method, nature and reception” of which are its chief concern (Tindall, “Reader’s Guide”258). In regard to his first novel *Portrait*, the great volume of research into the concept of epiphany, into Joyce’s (and/or Stephen’s) aesthetics, is a response to clues offered by Joyce about the artistic process. Likewise, Ellmann’s influential reading of *Portrait*’s organising principle in terms of a metaphor of conception, gestation and reproduction (JJ 296-7) clearly is supported by suggestions within *Portrait*, *Ulysses* and within other texts associated with *Portrait*’s development, such as Joyce’s letters.

The present research seeks to synthesise a reappraisal of these clues, together with other material associated with the gradual evolution of *Portrait* and the concurrent artistic development of its author. Throughout this thesis the term “evolution” is applied in a broad sense, derived from Bakhtin: as the unpredictable, unfurling realisation of themes and events in language and form. This is guided by the purposive set of principles and aesthetic considerations that in this thesis is labelled “design” (see Chapter 2 for an enlargement on this conception).

Stephen advises in *Portrait* that the first step in apprehending beauty in art is to approach the process by which beauty is shaped and perceived: the imagination. Likewise, the first step in apprehending truth is understanding the intellective process by which truths are arrived at (P 208). The imagination and the intellect, then, are the twin helical poles that support the gradual, spiralling development of the artistic consciousness, and likewise the work of synthesis that is the artistic process.

Two parallel fields of inquiry are implied by Stephen’s theory, and this research attempts to grapple, at least in broad outline, with both strands: the parallel histories of both creation and creator in process of becoming. Firstly, a broad history of the development of the artist can be attempted, by reference to the evidence of that artist’s intellective and imaginative progress. Secondly, the history of a work’s development; the kind of study
that has been called for by historical criticism in the past couple of decades (McGann, Social 1988). In this thesis, an attempt is made to give some broad account of the earliest phases of Portrait’s development, both in its amorphous molecular origins prior to the onset of that period Joyce has identified as the compositional period (1904-1914), and in the first years of Portrait’s compositional history, up to the point where it was reconceived and recast, in 1907.

While MacLachlan and Reid’s survey of the framing metaphor in a variety of disciplines is valuable, it offers no methodology for engaging with the framing of a given text. Methodologically and theoretically, my chiefest debts are firstly, to some scholarly and historical research into the early Joyce, the most relevant of which is reviewed in the following chapter. The historical critical school seeks to understand works within their sociohistorical context, with reference to the inceptional and receptional history of a work, and to the author’s intentions. Secondly, I derive and develop some theoretical concepts from Mikhail Bakhtin’s studies of the novel. In particular, I pursue Bakhtin’s concept that in order to appraise a work properly, we must find the means to unlock the signifying potential bound up in its form. This is addressed through his concept of the chronotope, the socially contextualised time-space relations and associated logic, forces and motifs of a novel (Holquist 110). This analysis is trained on the portrait of an artist “of becoming” in a series of phases, on that artist’s social, artistic and textual influences and relations. We examine Stephen Dedalus’s shifting relations to society as he matures, in relation to three key chronotopic measures: his consciousness of responsibility, of creativity, and of historicity (Morson and Emerson 369-72), all of which reflect closely on the artist’s process, sensibility and futurity.

The concept of “design” is developed in response to Bakhtin’s challenging conception of intentionality, shaped in response to the known facts of Joyce’s case, in an attempt to gain some point of purchase on an admittedly elusive pursuit—the trail of what Stephen in Stephen Hero calls the “aesthetic instinct”, by examining three elements of design: general aesthetic and philosophical principles held by the artist, specific purposive aims in regard to a work, and the realised form of a work.

Framing then, provides a guiding metaphor for this research, which seeks to frame our understanding of Portrait and of its author, through three complementary investigations
related to artistic process: firstly, devising a Bakhtinian and historical *perspective*, secondly re-examining processive histories of the author and the text, in the reflected *light* of a range of associated texts, and thirdly examining aspects of the formal narrative *framing* of the realised novel.

The structure of this thesis reflects these three framing investigations. Part One, “The Portrait in still another perspective”, outlines a Bakhtinian *perspective* that is applied to some historical critical precepts about studying the compositional history of a work.

Chapter One outlines in greater detail the principal aims and theoretical approaches of this research, and surveys previous research that has helped to reframe our understanding of Joyce, of *Portrait*, or at least Joyce’s reputation, in the sociohistorical context of his time. The theme of “history”, which resounds throughout this thesis, is introduced in relation to three themes: firstly, the developmental history of Joyce and the inceptional history of the novel. Secondly, the key aim of the Irish artist, which Joyce identified as essential to his own project: to engage with and reshape the sorrowful historic and mythic inheritance of his own “race” (CW 82). ² “History” is to be understood broadly: like language, it is “always already ideological” (Kershner, *Popular Culture* 31), and Fairhall’s study borrows Fredric Jameson’s definition of “ideology enacted”. During a crucial period of his development, Joyce’s historiographic reading helped precipitate a change in attitude that cleared the way to portraying a new relationship in the novel between Joyce’s fictional artist Stephen, and Stephen’s own society (see Chapter 9 of this thesis).

This then is the third historical strand: the implicit or explicit theory of history that Bakhtin considers novelistic narrative to somehow embody. Wollaeger (*Casebook* 6) notes that *Portrait*’s “historical dimension” has long been of great importance to Irish writers; we explore this in a chronotopic reading of *Portrait*, where the dimension of historicity is one of three key elements measured in a series of chronotopic shifts in the narrative that mark Stephen’s evolving talent, relationship to art and to society.

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² Kershner examines the “racialist” basis of late nineteenth century “versions of anthropology and sociology”, notes the immanence of this term in contemporary thought and that the term would be considered pejoratively “racist” in contemporary views (1993 378-9).
In Chapter Two the conception of writer’s design is outlined, in answer to some perceived requirements of the McGannian historical critical programme, and in particular to the potentially problematic term of intention, used in Joseph Kelly’s useful reframing study of *Our Joyce* (1998). An outline of Joyce’s design for *Portrait* is then sketched, after a brief survey of some prior Bakhtinian research related to *Portrait*. This is followed by an illustrative textual cross-section demonstrating how one narrative “molecule” developed over time, in succeeding drafts of the novel, in response to evolving authorial design.

Part Two, “The Portrait in another Light”, affords an inceptional history of *Portrait* in the light of texts internal to Joyce’s development, and to the development of the novel itself: from the period prior to the commencement of the work in 1904, through to the initial experiment with a prose “portrait” in 1904, to the first draft novel *Stephen Hero* and up to the point of the reconception of Joyce’s autobiographical novel as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in September 1907. This second critical investigation consists of a dialogical analysis of the growth of Joyce’s imagination and intellect in the light of antecedent and associated texts, particularly Joyce’s critical and creative writings, but also taking into account biographical considerations. These sources of light act as a counterbalance to the sometimes blinding effects of those sources proffered by Joyce himself, as noted by Jacques Aubert (4), in particular the aesthetics and the concept of epiphany.

Chapter Three begins our history of Joyce’s imaginative development, from earliest days up to the time of his graduation from university, based on his early breakthrough with a prose form: the epiphany. Chapter Four treats his intellectual development from the evidence of his critical writings. In Chapter Five the beginnings of his artistic vocation are traced, from his early aesthetics jottings in Paris through to his brief stint as a reviewer; his reviews present valuable clues about some of Joyce’s critical preoccupations in the buildup to the start of his artistic career proper.

Part Two concludes with an account of the progress of Joyce’s first novel from the “blueprint” 1904 essay (Chapter 6), through the rapid composition and eventual abandonment of *Stephen Hero*, and also considers some late critical writings associated with *Portrait*, which illuminate attitudinal changes from 1907.
Part Three, “The Portrait in another Frame” employs some Bakhtinian precepts to afford a chronotopic analysis of *Portrait*, the *framing* of signifying form, in relation to shifting time-space configurations associated with the artist in dialogical relation to society. This reading treats the narrative as a dialogical unfolding of Stephen’s artistic potential as witnessed by his intellectual, moral, social and imaginative development. Other key elements of Joyce’s design for *Portrait* are also addressed here: the Aristotelian definition of “rhythm”, synthesising the classical and the romantic schools, achieving effects of stasis and of joy in a work of art, deep psychological portrayal.

Chapter Seven follows Stephen’s progress from infancy through a series of phases, up to the point where he decides upon his true vocation. Chapter Eight follows Stephen’s self-guided vocational training towards the role of artist, and, having traced his experiments with Romantic temptations, observes his steering a course towards the “prosaic imagination”, a term that contrasts both romantic and classical models of inspiration (Morson and Emerson 243) and which we must add as a supplementary term to the series: Bakhtin’s prosaic intelligence, prosaic wisdom and prosaic vision (see Morson and Emerson 308). Morson and Emerson note that “prosaic” for Bakhtin is essentially synonymous with “novelistic”, but chiefly expresses the novel’s highest realisation of the potential of the prose form.

Chapter Nine seeks to illuminate this reading of *Portrait* further by speculatively elucidating in greater detail, the philosophical change of attitude to history that Joyce is widely acknowledged to have undergone as a result of his Rome sojourn. This is done by extending the frame of intertextual analysis beyond the purely internal context of Joyce’s, and *Portrait*’s development, in reference to two external “texts” associated with Joyce’s attitude shift from reactivity to critical and imaginative engagement with “history”: firstly, Pope St Pius X’s edict against “Modernism”, which illustrates the entrenched historical battle of the Church against some emerging philosophical challenges, and serves to elucidate the importance for Stephen of escaping the “net” of his former faith; that drama which, as we will see, so dominates the narrative of *Portrait*.

Secondly, Nietzsche’s essay on *The Use and Abuse of History*, identified by Robert Spoo as significant for Joyce’s historiographic reading in relation to *Ulysses*, is analysed more closely, in relation to some close textual resonances with Joyce.
Mahaffey (“Framing” 212-3) rightly suggests that a balanced reading of Stephen is essential: overemphasis on ironic readings commits a reader to the same kind of cold indifference that Stephen is often accused of. At the other end of the spectrum, those who sympathise with “Stephen Hero” perhaps share his propensity to identify with superior figures, like Parnell, Byron, Ibsen: a tendency approximating to Nietzsche’s description of the “monumental” use of history.

This risk acknowledged, it is the principal theme of my thesis that not to examine the signifying potential of *Portrait* in terms of Joyce’s themes: the nature of the artist, the artist’s growth, and of the artistic process, is to risk underestimating the power, the artistry, the lovingly crafted realisation of Joyce’s first novel, and of the richness it has to offer.
Part One:

The Portrait in another perspective
CHAPTER ONE:

A PORTRAIT FRAMED IN HISTORY

This chapter establishes contextual background for the thesis: an attempt to reframe our understanding of *Portrait* based on its compositional history and on the history of Joyce’s development. An outline of Joyce’s “clues” about the importance of the writing process is followed by a review of some previous research re-framing our understanding of the early Joyce: historical criticism, a study of Joyce’s historiographic views, Bakhtinian studies of intertextual contexts. Joyce’s Rome sojourn is identified as a defining period in the inceptioonal history of *Portrait*. Bakhtin’s conception of history, and the concept of chronotope, are outlined. The theme of history is capped with a textual cross-section of Stephen’s evolving attitude to history, which demonstrates Joyce’s changing design from *Stephen Hero* to *Portrait*.

Meeting a friend in a corridor, Wittgenstein said: “Tell me, why do people always say it was *natural* for men to assume that the sun went round the earth rather than that the earth was rotating? His friend said, “Well, obviously, because it just *looks* as if the sun is going round the earth.” To which the philosopher replied, “Well, what would it have looked like if it had looked as if the earth was rotating?” (Stoppard 1972, 75).

Since the 1950s we have often assumed a view of the *Portrait*, after Kenner, “in perspective” that “just looks as if” the “indigestibly Byronic” prig, cannot seriously have been intended as the subject of the portrait of an artist (Kenner, *Dublin’s Joyce* 132). ³

³ Kenner’s original paper however, should be seen in the context of a refutation of Wyndham Lewis’ attack on Joyce (Feshbach and Herman 749).
My purpose is not so much to mount a “defence of Stephen”, of some of his character defects and less likeable ways (for more recent enlargements on some of his faults, see Maud Ellmann [137] and Mahaffey [Framing]). Rather, one might paraphrase Wittgenstein’s philosophical question: “What would it have looked like if it had looked as if Stephen were an artist in evolution in turn of the century Dublin? If we change our framing assumptions and explore the possibility that Stephen’s is indeed the portrait of an evolving artist, framing challenges again present themselves: what kind of artist is Stephen? What vision of the artist and his art is conveyed by this novel? What is the nature of this artist’s relationship to society, and to history?

Critical approaches to a reframing

In this chapter, some Joyce criticism that has helped to inform and shape my own research is outlined: primarily, research of an historical or scholarly bent. This is followed by an outline of some Bakhtinian concepts that are applied to my developmental histories of Portrait and of Joyce.

Marvin Keith Booker, in a comparative study of Joyce’s texts against literary paradigms and influences informed by Bakhtinian principles (1997), notes that Joyce’s modernist potency has been unduly downplayed, his reputation framed in terms of bourgeois,apolitical, socially removed disinterestedness. Joseph Kelly, announcing a theme similar to Booker, has sought to reframe the modernist reputation of early Joyce in a political light by employing an historical critical methodology based on study of the writer’s intention, on the work’s inceptional history, and on social, political and historical contexts affecting the production of a text.

My own approach, devised in response to this historical methodology, does not claim to be “historical” per se; yet, as Wollaeger, Luftig and Spoo (1) note, in their introduction to a compendium of history-related research, this is a theme that can take many forms. They note approvingly some renovations and developments beyond the new historical paradigm; Brandon Kershner’s chapter in this volume indeed opens the way towards a genuinely historical criticism informed by Bakhtinian theory (“Nightmare” 30). I adopt a parallel but distinct approach to Kershner, also based on Bakhtin, to demonstrate that for Joyce, history was a force that the budding artist had
to engage with. In common with some nineteenth century thinking about history, such as that of Friedrich Nietzsche, its burden is seen as an oppressive weight on the present, a deadening force on the future. This necessitates a new approach to history, and its everyday force in social discourse: one of dialogical engagement. Stephen’s development in Portrait can be seen to take a parallel path to Joyce. Late in the novel he writes that “The past is consumed in the present and the present is living only because it brings forth the future” (P 251). The key to his artistic mission, and to his own futurity, lies in a renewed relationship to the present, and to Ireland’s melancholy historic inheritance, just as it did for Joyce, as will be demonstrated.

**Sleuthing beauty and truth**

To date, many historical studies of Joyce’s development (e.g. Kelly) have stressed the ideological nature of “history”: this approach is clearly less applicable to Portrait, in regard to which the evidence afforded by Joyce himself, by and large, is not particularly political in nature. Instead, Joyce adopts an approach that can be described as critical engagement with history and its ideological force (this theme is enlarged upon in Chapter 9). As a reference point against which to contrast some of these historical studies, it is worth outlining a theme that is central to Portrait, and indeed throughout Joyce’s oeuvre: the artistic process.

Groden notes that “Joyce built references to his own writings and to his methods of composition into his works, and this has made his career and the process by which the books were produced part of the works’ content” (“Textual History” 71-2). Some staples of Joyce criticism reflect this: the Thomist aesthetics, the concept of epiphany, Stephen’s apparent influences. These are re-examined later, in the context of Joyce’s development (Chapters 3-4); for the present the focus is on some references in Joyce’s oeuvre that are relatively little commented on.

The inceptional history of Portrait, and the parallel developmental history of Joyce on which this thesis is based, are just the kind of investigation invited by Stephen Daedalus in the abandoned novel fragment Stephen Hero:
If you were an aesthetic philosopher you would take note of all my vagaries because here you have the spectacle of the aesthetic instinct in action. The philosophic college should spare a detective for me. (SH 186)

This invitation is repeated by proxy in the “definitive”, author-ised biography of Joyce by Herbert Gorman, who however eschews the biological metaphor to concentrate on the philosophical aspect; Gorman invites the “student of aesthetics” to analyse the “aesthetic reasoning and development of the youthful James Joyce” (135). While this researcher will not claim to represent either an “aesthetic philosopher” or even a “student of aesthetics”, my role can be profitably conceived of in the guise of private investigator on the elusive trail of the “aesthetic instinct”. As will become evident, this trail leads from Dublin across to the Continent: Paris, Pola, Trieste—and culminates in the period of Joyce’s sojourn in Rome where, counter-intuitively perhaps, the flagging novelistic instinct is revived by an encounter with history. Since Ellmann’s biography of Joyce, we have been well aware of the importance of this sojourn for “The Dead” and for *Ulysses*, but as Rice comments, little study has been made of its significance for *Portrait*.

Gorman obligingly supplies us, apparently, with the necessary clues to the “vagueries” of the instinctual vagaries: study of Joyce’s Aristotle/Aquinas-based aesthetics, and of the sundry aesthetics jottings provided by himself, Gorman, (via Joyce) in the biography: particularly those from the Paris (96-99) and Pola (133-138) notebook. These are valuable “leads”, but any sceptical Sherlock will appreciate the importance of assembling a broad array of evidence, of adopting an open-minded yet critical attitude. This is particularly so when one of the main witnesses, Joyce’s fictional alter ego, has declaredly assumed certain strategic weapons unto himself: silence, exile and cunning. Indeed, one can trace the operation of these weapons in Joyce’s own history.

The Thomist aesthetics, like another critical staple (which is clearly not however “guaranteed” by the author), the epiphany, were doubtlessly an important stage in Joyce’s development, but they must be perceived in the context of Joyce’s broader design. Aubert (4) traces in *Portrait* the *cunning* use of clues with potential to mislead, and finds the use of Aquinas “a particularly bright red” shade of herring.
Indeed, in the young Joyce’s critical writings, as in some of Stephen’s gnomic utterances, one can trace the strategy of intellective self-exile in the use of language and perspective so cryptic, rarefied and remote as to defeat the common understanding, and to forestall the critical (most likely hostile) engagement of others. Such strategies are understandable in the social context of his time, where a mere reference to a banned work of D’Annunzio’s was sufficient to see one of Joyce’s early papers censored.

In respect of other areas, such as Joyce’s aesthetic considerations that led to his renovation of the novel form for his first novel, Joyce is silent, while we do know his views on the drama and on poetry. Stephen likewise is silent on the novel form. And when it comes to artistic gestation and reproduction, Stephen informs Lynch, he requires a “new terminology”, which he promises to reveal some other day. This day does not arrive; at least, not in the form of direct exposition by Stephen himself.

It is important therefore to frame the broad array of clues issuing from Joyce and from Stephen, in context. For this reason we examine Joyce’s earliest intellective and imaginative development (Chapters 3 and 4) in the light of the conception of design (Chapter 2). In reframing Portrait we endeavour to realise the work’s potential to cast light on some central Joycean themes: the nature of art, of the artist, of perceptive apprehension and the artistic process. In Stephen Hero, Stephen Dedalus says:

I don’t believe that beauty is fortuitous. A man might think for seven years at intervals and all at once write a quatrain which would immortalise him seemingly without thought or care—seemingly. Then the groundling will say: “O, he could write poetry”: and if I ask “How was that?” the groundling will answer “Well, he just wrote it, that’s all”. (SH 185)

In Ulysses, Buck Mulligan, like the groundling, is similarly feckless in attitude, uncomprehending and scornful of Stephen’s lofty and arduous aspirations, and the heroic labours they would entail: “Ten years, he said chewing and laughing. He is going to write something in ten years” (U 205). In a reading of Portrait, I demonstrate that Stephen, in contrast, takes a direct interest in the protracted labour of
composition, which he describes as proceeding “slowly and humbly and constantly”. This prosaic formulation is often overshadowed by images of Stephen the overbearing aesthete.

Joyce complained to his friend Frank Budgen that readers liked Buck Mulligan, contrary to his intentions: a crime of which Budgen himself had been guilty. Not only that, but Buck’s dismissive views appear to have given further impetus to what is sometimes referred to as the “Stephen-hating” school. There can be little doubt that Joyce, who himself wrote “something” in ten years, as the concluding inscription of *Portrait* records (Dublin 1904-Trieste 1914), intended readers to at least give due consideration to this suggestive parallel between Stephen and Joyce, and we see the motif of ten years featured in *Portrait* (see Chapter 8).

The role of artist was for Joyce a high, even sacred role, as is outlined in the following chapter, and the bad artist, *qua* artist, is unequivocally given short shrift in his fiction and in his critical writings (for the latter, see Chapter 4). In a late *Dubliners* story, Little Chandler is an aspiring poet with distinctly modest ambitions and a talent to match. The contrast with Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait* could hardly be greater; Chandler is unequivocally destined for the calling of failed poet. Gabriel Conroy in “The Dead” on the other hand is a writer who shares a number of features in common with Joyce himself, including a career in journalism. Unlike Joyce, he has accommodated compromises in his career, and these compromises result in the sapping of his social and matrimonial potency, as evidenced by a series of failures as social figure and as husband, on the night of the Misses Morkans’ ball. Conroy too, ultimately, is no artist. Likewise, Mr Duffy in “A Painful Case” maintains a kind of intellective exile from his native Dublin and always has writing materials prepared on his desk, which he never troubles. What unites these failed scribblers is a series of artistic shortcomings: their lack of artistic temperament, of dedication to art, their lack of reading or critical engagement, their willingness to compromise, and so on. These are the flaws in their character that damn them as artists.

In *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus is frequently considered by critics either to have advanced little over his slightly younger self in *Portrait* or, in the aftermath of his abbreviated Paris flight, ironically treated by Stephen himself, to have proven himself
a poseur and outright failure. And yet, the word “lapwing” with which Stephen reproaches himself in that novel is primarily an emblem of betrayal, that theme dear to Joyce’s heart: the lapwing is a metamorphosis of Daedalus’ nephew, who was flung by his jealous uncle from “Minerva’s sacred citadel”; his own people sought to destroy him, and yet he found wings at the very moment he was plummeting to his death. Indeed, the lapwing is nothing but an “abundant crested plover . . . noted for its slow irregular flapping flight and its shrill wailing cry” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary), the wanton bird which, in Tennyson’s poem “gets himself another crest” in spring when “a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love”? (“Locksley Hall”, lines 17-20). And where better than Paris for such thoughts?

Stephen Dedalus in Ulysses has an original and striking turn of phrase, appears to be deeply immersed in the philosophical and literary tradition, and takes his chosen artistic vocation intensely seriously. His rather extraordinary theory of Hamlet, expounded in the public library, implicitly suggests that the links between a writer’s life, preoccupations, and art are a worthy theme for philosophical exploration. In a development of the earlier Stephen’s expressed interest in the “aesthetic instinct”, his views have now taken on a distinctly psychoanalytical vein, as Kimball (Early Freudians) notes.

Unlike Stephen’s aesthetics, as he indicates to Lynch in Portrait, the artistic process is not the stuff of Aristotelian “dagger definitions”. Rather, art undergoes a long and mysterious process of conception, gestation and reproduction. The Proteus episode explores the poet’s processive dialogical engagement with reality (“Signature of all things I am here to read”), and “Oxen of the Sun” embodies the metaphor of the writing process in terms of gestation and reproduction. Undoubtedly Stephen’s talents, and his attitudes, are as yet immature; that is to say, still in evolution, but in Joyce’s critical and associated writings, clues attest to his belief that art imitates nature, and that the process of achieving the truly artistic “arduous good” (Scholes & Kain 62) is a protracted and uncertain one. Thus we must apply the thesis of the ur-Portrait: that one cannot fix the portrait of an artist in “iron memorial aspect”: rather,

4 Stephen’s reason for returning from Paris is similar to Joyce’s: both received telegrams recalling them with the message: “nother dying come home” (U 35).
one should observe the subject on its developmental trajectory (Scholes & Kain 62; see discussion in Chapter Five).

A writer is also an important figure in Joyce’s last work. In *Finnegans Wake*, Shem the Penman is a “low” and debased figure who, while he was “aboriginally of respectable stemming . . . every honest to goodness man in the land of the space of today knows that his back life will not stand being written about in black and white” (FW 169). This is an observation that could readily be applied to Stephen Dedalus’s reputation: indeed it would be a unique person who could stand their “back life” being written about in uncompromising truth. The premise of unflinching psychological realism was a defining principle of the design of *Portrait* (see Chapter 2).

Part of Joyce’s labour towards the promotion of *Finnegans Wake* was to orchestrate the publication of a series of essays in *Our Exagmination* (Beckett 1972). One “Vladimir Dixon” contributed an introductory litter in support of the *Work in Progress*, extolling the “ supperhumane” nature of its artistic travail.

Dear Mister Germ’s Choice,

.... I am überzeugt that the labour involved in the composition of your work must be almost supper humane and that so much travail from a man of your intellacked must ryeseult in somethink very significophant....or is there really in your work some ass pecked which is Uncle Lear?

Please froggive my t’Emeritus and any inconvince that may have been caused by this litter.

Yours veri tass
Vladimir Dixon (193-4)

“Dixon”, himself sensing critical scepticism, the danger of “inconvince”, of this new work being perceived as absurd and “Uncle Lear”, like Joyce himself stresses the great labours that went into the work, as one pointer to its artistic value. The reader then should seek within this seeming literary “litter” the thread of authorial design that has informed the nature of the “travail”.
Developmental studies

Some major developmental studies of Joyce have been produced, which offer an implicit account of Joyce’s artistic progress in relation to technical developments. Generally they do not address Joyce’s “clues” about the artistic process. Like Gillespie (Reading) after him, Riquelme (Teller and Tale) emphasises Joyce’s use of le style indirect libre in particular as a stylistic breakthrough for the Joycean narrative, one used in Portrait and further developed in later works, and heralds the advent of a Joycean scriptible rather than lisible style. Joyce’s other major breakthrough with Portrait, and for Ulysses also, was his intermingling of first and third person perspectives (48, 94).

Gillespie’s Reading the Book of Himself traces Joyce’s development from the perspective of the reader response paradigm, with some attention to historicist viewpoints (17). The analysis ultimately devolves to a few strategies: chiefly the progressive achievement of textual ambiguity and polyphony, amenable to the readerly work of generating multiple interpretations. Three forces to which Gillespie ascribes the development of Joyce’s style are the influence of other writers, the necessarily vague appellation of general growth in “personal talent” (44) as evidenced by increasingly skilful manipulation of narrative voice and detail, and the more sophisticated use of free indirect discourse.

Related to development studies of Joyce are genetic studies, which are often largely confined to close study of successive manuscripts in a work’s composition. Some genetic critics, like McGann, compare their discipline to the philological tradition. Hayman (9), like McGann, attacks what he calls “immanentist” views of writing. Lernout’s “radical philology” (“Radical Philology” 46) attacks the idea of a “private form of writing” implicit in Derrida as leading to the “ethics-free realm of Paul de Man’s philology”, where there is no voice but language itself, and ecriture.

A further point of commonality with the McGannian approach lies in the aim of some genetic critics to get close to the writer’s original intention. Hayman (6-7) discusses the wealth of “genetic” material available to the textual scholar of Finnegans Wake:
Though they are by no means texts in their own right, we find in these papers indications of Joyce’s interests, evidence of sources, reflections on his personal and creative life, and elements of what might be called a profile of the creative moment, the latter being both fascinating and daunting.

Even where genetic criticism is not theorised, at least it can offer a spirit of objectivity and exploration, an aim that is well sympathetic to the endeavour of reframing Joyce:

> Genetic Criticism is best used not to prove any preconceived truths but rather to disclose by the scrupulous use of evidence and theory what manuscripts have to tell us about the composition process and hence the creative procedures. The critic interrogates the evidence and draws conclusions therefrom which ideally shed fresh light on the author’s methods and perhaps upon the text and on his/her intentions. (Hayman 9)

Such a methodical approach would undoubtedly have appealed to the young Aristotelian Joyce. Rabate (69), responding to Eco’s (1992) distinction between *intentio auctoris* and *intentio lectoris*, would appear to favour the *intentio operis* or “intention of the work” as a means to prohibit private or fanciful constructions by the reader. This doesn’t imply a wholesale return to author’s intentions but rather, paying attention to the work’s internal textual coherence, although this principle does not offer “decisive theoretical rules” (70).

Arguably, it is impossible to approach the *intentio operis* by any means that does not involve a readerly intervention, but Ferrer argues for the “ideal genetic reader” as the best tool to analyse the internal coherence of a work. Ferrer also notes biographical evidence of a self-conscious sense of this kind of paradigmatic design, in that Joyce appears to have seriously contemplated handing over the completion of *Finnegans Wake* to writer James Stephens.

> If he consented to maintain three or four points which I consider essential and I showed him the threads he could finish the design. (Ferrer 51)

In any case, genetic studies of *Portrait* are few, for the very good reason identified in Hans Walter Gabler’s paper on “The Seven Lost Years”: that from the point of the
novel’s recasting as Portrait to its completion in 1914, manuscript evidence is all but completely lost. However, Gabler’s exhaustive studies of the available evidence do afford some valuable insights into the writer’s work in action. His conclusions are, firstly, that Joyce’s chief deliberations were structural, the essential ideas or germs having been roughed out long ago and existing as a kind of “pretext”: that is, in the form of an idea, still to find its proper shape and expression in words. Portrait (like all succeeding works of Joyce) was written in a series of inter-referring drafts. Materials placed in a succeeding chapter would in turn necessitate retrospective changes to a previous chapter; the novel was shaped as a structural whole. In a development on this approach, Ulysses was composed in a “mosaic” fashion.

Portrait was conceived structurally as a whole, as a series of five chapters, and unlike Stephen Hero was not structured around the episodic sequence of events following Joyce’s biographical details. Thus the structure and content of the work became their own operating principles, away from the more strictly mimetic basis of Stephen Hero. The “additive” chronological narration of Stephen Hero was replaced by thoughtful structuration of “conversations or reflections” (“Seven Lost” 42).

Secondly, Gabler concludes that from henceforth all Joyce’s writings would be “work in progress”. The final shape of Portrait took place in a series of waves of transformation rather than in dramatic breakthroughs in style.

Thirdly, there is a shift from dramatisation to psychologistic technique.

Against the foil of the original Stephen Hero incidents and scenes, Joyce searched for a new novelistic technique and new forms of expression through language and style. Increasingly, the narrative was internalized. The hero’s mind and consciousness became a prism through which the novel was refracted. Characters were functionalised as correlative to theme. (38)

These themes form part of the background for the current research: the importance of structural considerations in Portrait, the processive nature of Portrait’s evolution, and increasing stress on psychological depiction. Gabler refers to some kind of logic that binds the work together as it develops over time. This is an analogous conception to
Bakhtin’s suggestive investigation of the novel “living a life that is distinctly its own” (DI 43), which we will approach in relation to the concept of “design”.

In contrast to Riquelme (Teller and Tale), Gillespie attempts to engage with the formal workings of the novel, by use of the term “paradigm”, which term he initially defines as “the elements which define the creative limits of any imaginative representation of the material in the work—imposes constraints by the aesthetic frame it places around possible readings” (7-8; italics mine). In the present research a less fixed, more open-ended and processive model of framing is applied. It can be inferred that Gillespie implicitly assigns “paradigm” to the writer’s sphere of consciousness and to “growth in talent”, rather than to the logic of the individual work, since he effectively applies the same conceptual “paradigm” to the writing of both Dubliners and Stephen Hero, both of which Joyce was writing in 1904-1905. This assignment of paradigm to the writer’s consciousness rather than to the work reaches its culmination with Portrait, after which Gillespie applies to Joyce a description of one “protocol” governing relations between writer, text and reader, which would serve for all subsequent works. In contrast, in this research it is assumed that each individual work embodies a different design, rather than each work expressing the authorial “paradigm”. 5

An approach closer to my own is that described by the neo-Hegelian interpreter Bosanquet’s term “abstract schemes”, to compare differing works:

> And although no such formulae exist, yet undoubtedly there is in every work of art an element of distinct intention, subject moreover, like all our conscious purpose, to limits perfectly obvious to an onlooker though hidden from the author himself, with regard to the species of art to which it is to belong, the sort of subject about which it

5 However, another definition offered by Gillespie does imply the paradigm’s ultimate identification with the artwork itself, at least in relation to the first two works (8). A later definition of the “paradigm” of Ulysses offers little concrete purchase: it is discernible by apprehending the “connecting framework of aesthetic and artistic standards governing the application of intertextuality and of dialectical tension” (149). Still later, paradigm appears to be defined chiefly in structural terms (155), which again would argue for a work-specific understanding of the term.
is to treat, and the sort of point or significance which it is to possess. (Bosanquet 1904 151-2 qtd in Aubert, 39: italics in Aubert.)

For Bosanquet, abstract schemes are processive and aligned to the purposive dimension, whereas Gillespie dismisses “intention” (156).

**Joycean historical criticism**

For each critical approach, certain perspectives are liable to be included, and some excluded from the frame. Developmental and genetic studies offer concrete textual engagement with compositional history, the detailed artistic decisions associated with a work’s evolution in language and form, while broader historical studies foreground valuable sociohistorical context without necessarily illuminating the mysteries of the aesthetic instinct.

The term “history” is interpreted broadly in this thesis, in relation to three strands: a developmental history of Joyce and an inceptional history of *Portrait*; Joyce’s historiographic philosophy; the implicit theory of history that according to Bakhtin is embodied in the narrative of the novel. “History” is not to be understood merely as a chronicle of past events but also in the sense in which some nineteenth century thinkers conceived it, as the oppressive weight of tradition, associated with social ideologies. When Stephen in *Ulysses* (17) complains that he has two masters, one Roman and one British, in some readings this is at the heart of the “nightmare” of history from which he is trying to awake.

**A portrait of the artist as a political young man**

In this section some historical research into the early Joyce is outlined. Much of it can be characterised as sociopolitically oriented. Joseph Kelly’s study affords a reputational history of Joyce. *Our Joyce* offers a survey of canonical views of Joyce and challenges some New Critical perspectives on “Joyce the man” in particular, in order to reframe our understanding of early “Joyce the writer”. Likewise, my reading
of *Portrait* (Chapters 7 and 8) focuses on Stephen the writer rather than Stephen the sometimes unlikeable young man.

Kelly questions the influential image of Joyce the modernist created by Pound, developed by Edmund Wilson and later by New Criticism. He furnishes a strong case for Joyce’s aims with the writing of *Dubliners* as being naturalistic, politically and nationally oriented, in contrast to the image of “Joyce the Genius, the omniscient, omnipotent grand artificer”. Walzl (167-173) goes a long way towards agreeing with this assessment of *Dubliners*, as does Manganiello. Beyond the seminal influence of Pound, Kelly identifies other episodes in Joyce’s reputational history which led to the canonical image of Joyce: the image of the isolated and aloof genius removed from political and social concerns, the writer of instant classics, the “mosaic” writer, the mythologiser, the master aesthetician, the creator of elaborate schemes of symbolism. Ronald Bush refers to both Hugh Kenner and Richard Ellmann, despite their different opinions, alike portraying Joyce as a “modernist master of distance and irony, a writer who is fully the equal of the metaphysical poets that Eliot had praised . . .” and further notes Ellmann’s ahistorical bias.  

Kelly reframes the early Joyce by examining the short stories of *Dubliners* in a sociopolitical light, against a background of Irish cultural, nationalistic and economic conditions. Following the work of Irish critics such as Declan Kiberd and Seamus Deane, Kelly critiques Pound’s championing of a “de-Irished” and depoliticised Joyce. He seeks to reclaim Joyce as the naturalistic writer of *Dubliners*, writing for an Irish audience with intention pregnant with sociopolitical and economic import. He portrays the early Joyce as an (undeclared) political national liberalist (40) in contradistinction to the cultural nationalist movement which was then being pursued in the Gaelic Revival. Joyce perceived this latter movement to be socially and politically regressive, while he was in contrast progressive, modern and liberal (29). Kelly also suggests that Joyce had similar intentions for *Stephen Hero*, which was commenced a few months before *Dubliners* in early 1904, but is reticent as to Joyce’s intentions for the successor *Portrait*.

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6 Ellmann however in later work, did seek to correct this bias somewhat (e.g. 1977, 73).
One way to identify the framing assumptions of one’s own research is to contrast those of previous work. While this research assumes, like Kelly, that we can learn more about Joyce’s intentions from his critical writings than from his aesthetics notebooks, Kelly’s use of the former, similarly to other historical critics, is selective, focusing on the obviously sociohistorical import of Joyce’s “Irish” lectures given in Trieste in 1907 rather than on the key talks given during Joyce’s university years, at the crucial time when he was developing his founding aesthetic viewpoints.

The practice of selective focus on Joyce’s more “politically” oriented critical writings is not uncommon in historical criticism. Cullingford (221) notes, tongue in cheek, that “In the bad old days, when Joyce was an apolitical Modernist, ‘Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages,’ source of the Phoenician genealogy, was rarely cited. Now it is ubiquitous.” Declan Kiberd foregrounds Joyce’s indignant paper on the treatment of one Myles Joyce and his paper on Home Rule (328-334). While Seamus Deane (“Irishman”) in contrast does treat a variety of primary sources, including Joyce’s key paper on Mangan, these are analysed from the defining strategic perspective of “translation” as appropriation, rather than being treated in Joyce’s developmental context. Marian Eide (299) treats Joyce’s aesthetics as grounded in national and sexual politics, but without being politically motivated art per se.

The endeavour to reframe the early Joyce as “political” does not do justice to the wider ambit of Joyce’s art; this is a problem tacitly acknowledged by Kelly in respect of Portrait. Paying too little attention to Joyce’s artistic aims can result in simplistic narratives of Joyce’s development. Apropos of Joyce’s shift from writing poetry to prose, Kelly suggests that: “The years 1903 and 1904, then, saw not only a shift from poetry to fiction, but a maturing of Joyce’s aesthetics. He was done with the ‘lying drivel’ and, instead, tried to put ‘the face of truth’ into his work” (58).

Kelly’s reference to Joyce’s condemnation of lies (actually made in the context of the alleged racial and sexual “purity” of his race) implies that Joyce turned his back on poetry and drama so as to address “truth”. And yet Joyce’s earlier critical writings demonstrate that a focus on realism, the desire to represent “truth”, irrespective of the form of art, was a given of Joyce’s aesthetic philosophy from at least 1900 onwards.
The “Cubist” (Kenner, “Cubist Portrait”) thesis of the 1904 ur-Portrait mounts a critical challenge, to the reader as much as to the artist himself: to attempt to create a longitudinal portrait of the artist, the phases of whose soul should be plotted on the “curve of an emotion” rather than frozen in one static frame. The rhetorical thrust of Kelly’s work however is to replace, or at best supplement, the portrait of Joyce in one “iron memorial aspect” as bourgeois Modernist, for Joyce in another: Joyce the naturalistic writer, the political polemicist and Irish nationalist. Kelly clearly does appreciate that his thesis applies only to the early Joyce: “Chapter 1 sets the stage for these episodes by reconstructing an accurate version of Joyce’s intentions, at least in his early career, which serves as the standard against which I compare subsequent versions of the author” (9).

These “subsequent versions” however are not new developmental phases of the author based on an appraisal of his artistic intentions, but rather critical images of Joyce belonging to the McGannian secondary, reception phase: episodes in his reputational history. It is worth exploring Kelly’s proposition that Stephen Hero, begun in early 1904, was, like the first stories of Dubliners which soon followed, conceived originally as a naturalistic project (albeit no doubt, as Stanislaus noted, for satirical intent). A number of other Joyce critics agree, with qualifications (e.g., Manganiello; Thornton, Antimodernism 54). However, Portrait is clearly a very different proposition to the naturalistic model of Dubliners.

Finally, and most importantly, as the scope of Kelly’s study is mostly contained to political Joyce, his study does not harness the necessary dialectical engagement with Joyce’s aesthetics and broader artistic aims that one might expect of a McGannian approach (e.g., Social Values pp. 63-4. Perhaps in reaction to what he perceives as the “New Critical pseudoscience of Aesthetics” (182), and to the great influence which he notes Joyce’s aesthetic jottings have had on framing Joyce extratextually, Kelly’s reframing overcompensates by not adequately addressing Joyce’s aesthetic aims; surely however, these must be intrinsic to “intention”?

7 Wollaeger (Casebook 11) voices the widely accepted view that this essay’s thesis adumbrates the approach of Portrait. Epstein (“James Augustine” 3) suggests that Joyce took his cue from Aristotle’s definition of life as a curve from birth through maturity and on to death.
Much historical criticism of early Joyce in particular, silently or explicitly invokes Fredric Jameson’s definition of history as “ideology enacted” (Fairhall iii) and thus, focuses on Joyce’s political complexion, based on perceived ideological orientations in his works; for example, Deane (“Irishman”, “Dead ends”), Cheng, Kiberd. On a similar theme to Kelly, Vincent Cheng has complained of the effects of Joyce’s “canonisation” and elevation into the “pantheon of the Modernist greats” (224): in particular, the neutralising of Joyce’s political potency. Noting that postcolonial perspectives of Joyce differ greatly, nonetheless: “What they do all share in common is a view of Joyce’s work as politically engaged and potentially subversive, a subaltern voice attempting to respond to colonial conditions and oppression” (226).

While Cheng queries whether postcolonial research can successfully “de-canonise” Joyce, there is always the concomitant danger of re-canonising Joyce in a guise that does not do justice to his artistic aims. Seamus Deane on the other hand suggests that Joyce was only a “political” writer up to the late stages of *Dubliners*, after which he became just the kind of universalising modernist writer that Cheng decries: seeking complete artistic autonomy and “aestheticis[ing] the political” (“Dead ends” 35).

Focused on *James Joyce and the Question of History*, Fairhall’s study addresses the political and social context of Joyce’s prose works. Likewise he considers Joyce a “political” writer and, in the broad sense of ideological contestation, extends the label to most of his oeuvre. Joyce’s artistry thus is marginalised: Joyce simply rewrites history in his fiction after retreating to the “magic circle” of his art, where he can transform and indeed escape history.

Arguably, the best Joycean scholarship of an historical bent should afford us an understanding of the sociohistorical context of Joyce’s writing in relation to the aesthetics of his practice. An earlier study by Dominic Manganiello provides one of the more satisfactory and convincing studies of the interaction of early Joyce’s political interests and artistic practice. While Manganiello’s study of political themes in *Dubliners* and *Stephen Hero* is quite compelling, he also establishes links between Joyce’s political interests in socialism, anarchism, and his life and art.
A key issue identified by Manganiello can be expressed thus: given the supreme importance for Joyce of individual freedom, what does Joyce feel the artist is impelled to do with it? The answer, clearly, is not political activism. (Here, as in a number of points, Joyce’s stance is supported by Aristotle, as Manganiello notes, referring to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI 3). While Manganiello does not address the question in detail, he points to some suggestive clues which can be found in *Stephen Hero*. He focuses on a passage there where, it is suggested, once the work of “breaking up tradition” is accomplished, a project of affirmation begins, in “centres of vivification” (201).

It is relevant to the current research to speculate on what these curiously abstract terms from *Stephen Hero* may have meant for the aims of the young Joyce and for his subsequent development; Chapter Nine examines the engaged historical sense which Joyce harnessed for the revamping of *Portrait*. For the present, it is adequate for our purposes to note that “freedom” is a cause that frequently is reactively defined: against Catholic conservatism and repression, freedom from the yoke of British imperialism. Joyce’s development must be understood rather, in relation to the affirmative artistic freedoms, the utterances Manganiello hints at. Spurr explores a similar theme. The decay of mimesis, for Spurr, resulted in the freedom to explore greater possibilities beyond the conventions of prose fiction and of language, and he develops this into an account of a Joycean aesthetics of liberation.

*Portrait in a different perspective*

Aspects of Kelly’s reframing project are prefigured in an earlier study by Joseph Buttigieg who, armed with Nietzsche’s suggestion of philosophising “with a hammer”, seeks to demolish some canonical views of Joyce, and New Critical interpretations of *Portrait* in the modernist mainstream, where he sees its reception as having been critically entrenched for much of the time in past decades. He seeks to undertake, by reframing our understanding of the *Portrait*, a “reevaluation of the widespread, orthodox version of Modernism” (xii).

While his work provides a valuable overview of some of the excesses of Joyce criticism, the attribution of exaggerated importance either to Stephen’s Thomist
aesthetics or to the concept of epiphany, his chief means of rebutting such views is by a reading of Portrait similar to so many others, where Stephen Dedalus is ironised in a definitive manner, this time as the victim of the Byzantine and transcendentalist view of art. 8 His attempt to reframe Portrait “in a different perspective” challenges Hugh Kenner’s “A Portrait in perspective” and yet, ultimately Buttigieg employs a similar device to Kenner, in furnishing an ironic perspective on Stephen Dedalus as no kind of artist.

Nor does his reframing contextualise Joyce’s intellectual preoccupations, or those of his time. His view of Portrait parallels that of Kelly in suggesting that the novel, “far from being an affirmation of the other-worldliness of art, is, in fact, a celebration of man-in-the-world” (51) although he falls short of positing a politically and socially engaged Joyce. Somewhat paradoxically, Buttigieg portrays Stephen Dedalus in contrast as no man-in-the-world, not interested in “the particular”, preferring aloofness and “exalted indifference” (88-89).

Buttigieg’s premises are sympathetic to the McGannian tenet of self-reflexive framing awareness: “the reader inevitably approaches a text with certain a priori notions of what he is likely to find in it and of how he should go about finding it” (7). His own framing however provides little contextual evidence for the contemporary influence of the “Byzantine and transcendentalist view of art” that lies at the heart of his argument.

A valuable chapter of Buttigieg’s work looks at the overwhelming influence of the Catholic Church and a Jesuit education on Stephen (and on Joyce presumably), yet he links this to the portrayal of Stephen as failed aesthete, whose theory derives from the Catholic tradition. Thus, Buttigieg’s reframing only results in a new variant on the “Stephen hating” school, for “the connection between religion and aesthetics does not hold” and therefore Stephen’s Thomist theory does not convince (88). By taking account of Stephen’s intellective and imaginative development, one might arrive at a very different perspective however (Chapter 7).

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8 Beja (707) surveys the “incredible influence” of this concept of epiphany as a “concept that Joyce never published at all”.

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Buttigieg (94) suggests that a portrait must be seen, as Joyce intended, “temporally” (a term he prefers against the New Critical view of modernism as spatialising time). Stephen’s image therefore in this view, is not one fixed moment, and yet his own reading of Stephen is effectively fixed to an image of (failed) aesthete. His summation of Lynch’s brutal response to Stephen’s aesthetics peroration as bringing Dedalus “down to earth” becomes a condemnation of Stephen and his views. Lynch’s surly attitude and unshaped temperament, however, are surely a dubious means means to assess the young artist and, as Carens (348) suggests, may more convincingly be taken as symptomatic of Stephen’s hostile environment. If, as Budgen testifies, Joyce had wanted the reader of *Ulysses* to dislike Buck Mulligan, it is likewise quite certain that he would have wished the reader to dislike Lynch, with whose real life counterpart, Cosgrave, Joyce had a major score to settle (according to Costello; 285).

**Historiographic Joyce**

Luftig and Spoo, in an edited volume noting some “promising revisions of New Historicism while clarifying the limits and strengths of earlier historical methodologies”, observe that it is still difficult to know “what Joyce really thought about history” (1). Certainly, Spoo suggests, in his earliest critical writings Joyce shows the imprint of nineteenth century ideas of history, and clearly these views were later superseded (*Language of History* 138). Aubert (7-8) suggests that young Joyce’s view of history was influenced by the dominance of neo-Hegelian philosophy, but also by “the Wagnerian craze” (24). Hegel’s historical progressus, in the view of some, was closely consonant with Aristotle;\(^9\) in addition, Joyce’s project enjoyed kinship with “such contemporary efforts as Nietzsche’s” (119). The Hegelian progressus is a view sharply in contrast to the Viconian cycle of successive ages that Joyce later adapted as a “trellis” for *Finnegans Wake*, but it is not clear that Joyce was exposed to Vico’s philosophy much before 1911—rather late to have much influence on the shape of *Portrait*. Tindall notes that in the Brunian philosophy, opposites are simultaneous whereas in Hegel they follow in sequence (*Interpreting* 86); thus, the former philosophy would bring Joyce closer to a dialogical viewpoint.

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\(^9\) Scholes and Corcoran (694) suggest that Joyce was influenced by Shaw’s championing of Ibsen and Wagner.
Robert Spoo’s scholarly study of *James Joyce and the Language of History* adopts a contextualising approach in examining “the problem of history” in *Ulysses* “within the philosophical and cultural contexts that shaped Joyce’s ideas and generated the discourses of history present in this text” (6). He seeks to balance Bakhtinian studies of the discourses of popular culture in Joyce (discussed below) with “high culture” historiographic sources (inverted commas in the original; 11). Spoo argues that Stephen in *Ulysses*, allied with Joyce’s narrative and related techniques, addresses the “nightmare of history” (8) by adopting (in effect) a contextualising historiographic approach in the fashion described by Hayden White, and that this approach is continued by the text even where Stephen is not present.

This approach, Spoo compares to the distinctly nineteenth-century views of history espoused in Joyce’s earliest extant critical writings, defined in terms of progress, development, teleology, self-realization of Spirit or of the revelation of God’s will in time (x). It is clear, in Spoo’s analysis, that Joyce’s views about history underwent change around 1906 to 1907 as he engaged in wide historiographic reading, and his study offers valuable insights into the period that has long been recognised as a turning point for Joyce: his Rome sojourn of 1906, and some changes in attitude that it appeared to catalyse.

Three separate inputs of Joyce’s reading during this time, in Spoo’s view, contributed to Joyce’s changing historiographic approach and to the development of “The Dead” and *Ulysses*. The first is Nietzsche’s paper on *The Use and Abuse of History for Life* (originally published in 1873), which rails against the then-dominant “great historical movement” (UAH 3). Spoo links the paper to Stephen Dedalus’s expressed attitudes about history and his desire to escape from that nightmare, chiefly in relation to *Ulysses*, and considers that Stephen is “reacting to this pervasive sense of a burdensome historical inheritance, what Nietzsche called ‘the malady of history’” (Spoo 19). My own research responds to Spoo’s with a detailed analysis of this suggestion, but with a contrasting thesis: that Nietzsche’s essay is opposed not to “history” but to its overuse and abuse, that Joyce recasts *Portrait* with Nietzsche’s lessons in mind, and that Stephen in *Portrait* is portrayed as developing a critical consciousness of history (see Chapter 9).
It is suggested that of three chief “uses” for history that Nietzsche identifies, Joyce became drawn to the “critical” approach of critical engagement, contestatory dialogue with history. Stephen shows signs of undergoing a similar shift of attitude. Thus, Stephen in the earlier fragmentary remainder of Joyce’s first novel, *Stephen Hero* (written before this Rome interlude), is engaged only in incidental, reactive skirmishes with various figures of power and, on the whole, seeks strategic isolation from ambient social forces in order to preserve his independent path. In *Portrait*, the deep encounter of Stephen’s soul with social discourses, and in particular that of the Church, is the central and dominant theme of the novel; Stephen is portrayed as locked in an engaged struggle with history, where the desired outcome is neither to escape nor to subjugate history, but rather to come to terms with it creatively, with the ultimate goal of producing an enriched, socially grounded art.

In regard to the second influence on Joyce’s reading in Rome, Lecky’s *History of European Morals*, Spoo argues for a clear influence on Joyce, illustrated in his argument that *Dubliners* was a “moral history” (Lecky’s term) of his country. Likewise, he argues, *Marius the Epicurean*, Pater’s Bildungsroman, made clear reference to Lecky and so, very likely Joyce was exposed to him through this text too. I take a different perspective from Spoo (25) in arguing that Stephen Dedalus is not being contextually ironised or satirised for pronouncing a similar cause to Marius: the forging of the conscience of his race—indeed, Stephen’s mission corresponds closely to Joyce’s purposes (see Chapter 2).

The third major influence, Guglielmo Ferrero, journalist and historian of sorts, Spoo argues convincingly, may have led Joyce towards a view of history that turned its back on “great men”, on heroes, to consider the historical significance of the ordinary person and of the everyday, with obvious implications for *Ulysses*. Equally, of course, Rome offered testimony that it is not merely generals and kings who can claim immortality. In contrast to the witness of ruined glory past, across the Tiber Joyce visited the apparently timeless Roman Empire of the soul, where he encountered the enduring beauty of the plastic arts, and of architecture. In Rome too, Joyce may have been put in mind of Ovid’s own pitch for immortality in the epilogue of *Metamorphoses* (see Senn, “Challenge”140-1); some time later, back in Trieste, he jotted down an inscription from Ovid that would become the epigraph to the novel.
Signifying form

One means of engaging with the framing of a work is to examine the signifying potential of form. A number of critics have followed in the line of MacCabe’s study of Joyce’s *Revolution of the Word* in seeing a political or philosophical purpose embodied in changes that Joyce made to literary language, structure and styles. MacCabe, in the view of Cheng (226), reasons similarly to Seamus Deane, Terry Eagleton and Fredric Jameson in arguing that:

... stylistic and linguistic resistance to narrativity and narrative conventions (the “revolution of the word”), is itself a political act—refusing constrictive colonial and nationalist agendas via a writerly desire that exceeds the limitations of both conventional and narrative representation and nationalism, thus exploding the myth of a unified personal and national identity.

Kiberd has argued similarly, and Fairhall also stresses the significance of destabilisation of the subject and of narrative identity, climaxing in *Finnegans Wake* (228). His chapter on “reforming the wor(l)d” figures Joyce’s response to the “closure of history” by means of language rather than imagination, and in particular by exploiting gaps between signifier and referent, attacking the unitariness of identity (244). Booker also covers some of this ground, relating to Joyce’s subversion of the subject and strategic subversion of language. Spoo (7), on similar lines, quotes Richard Terdiman’s analysis of “discursive subversion” in nineteenth century France as having traced an evolution from counterdiscourse as overt thematic contestation, into “more subtly subversive formal and functional strategies” (italics in original.) Wollaeger contrasts “polarised and polarising arguments” of literature as seducing or dominating the reader, to theories of the novel as subversion, and concludes that both oversimplify: more work is needed, to gauge the relations of “dominant powers and specific cultural practices” (*Subject* 83-84). In a later chapter, Joyce’s innovation in form is analysed in terms of his critical engagement with history (Chapter 9).

The formal analysis pursued in this thesis, however, is focused on Bakhtin’s theories of the novel form, and in particular the chronotope, and used to explore Stephen’s
Reframing Portrait 36

developing engagement with three dominant themes: responsibility, creativity, his sense of historicity.

**Bakhtinian perspectives**

Another branch of Joyce research that examines his work in context is based on Bakhtinian theory, and aims to examine the social situatedness of language in his texts. M. Keith Booker’s review of Bakhtinian studies of Joyce notes the close fit and ready applicability of Bakhtinian concepts to Joyce, although “more extensive Bakhtinian studies of Joyce’s work . . . have not appeared” (9), particularly in relation to his later works, which seem to be in Lodge’s view “paradigmatic of the theories of the novel expounded by Bakhtin” (quoted in Booker, 8). One reason for this curious lack, Booker suggests, is that, so closely tailored is Bakhtinian theory to the analysis of Joyce, that its use becomes virtually redundant, or at least self-evident (10).

Much Bakhtin-informed research into Joyce’s works effectively focuses on their intertextual framing, in relation both to literary texts and to popular cultural genres. Pre-eminent in Bakhtinian research is the work of Brandon Kershner (for example, *Bakhtin and Popular Literature, Popular Culture*). Kershner examines the character of Stephen in terms of intertextual resonance with fictional heroes such as Edmond Dantes, Claude Melnotte and Ingomar (1989), in addition to more contemporary figures such as Yeats’s Owen Aherne and Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes. In exploration of an historical differential between *Portrait* and a later Bildungsroman, he explores the possibilities of tracing the historical consciousness of a work according to textual comparisons (“Nightmare”). My approach in contrast is to analyse succeeding shifts in the chronotopic logic of *Portrait* itself, informed by what we know from related texts, to be Joyce’s overarching design.

M. Keith Booker applies Bakhtinian theory, particularly dialogism, to comparative literary dialogues not only between Joyce’s texts and other literary and social “texts”, but also in comparison to other literary paradigms. Booker’s *Joyce, Bakhtin and the Literary Tradition* juxtaposes observation of Joyce’s “ability to weave commentary on contemporary Irish social and political issues into the most seemingly “aesthetic”
aspects of his work” (5) with his deeper intertextual steeping in some canonical works of the Western tradition: those of Homer, Dante and Shakespeare, while resonating his texts comparatively with the poetics of Rabelais, Goethe and Dostoyevsky. Thus he balances a “geographically localized cultural poetics of new historicism” against a “comparative cultural poetics that can encompass these broader phenomena” (5); like Kelly, he recognises Joyce as politically and socially situated, contrary to canonical accounts of Modernism (201).

Particularly valuable is his discussion of Joyce and history, reflected in the contrary influences of Dante (perhaps Joyce’s greatest literary influence, in Booker’s estimation), and the much less analysed influence of Goethe. Joyce, like Goethe (in Bakhtin’s description of Goethe in his fragment on the Bildungsroman) embodies in his texts an “intense sense of situatedness in place and time”, particularly in *Ulysses*, and Booker notes that this is achieved partly through an awareness of the historical importance of the minute, everyday detail (123).

While Stephen famously declared in *Ulysses* that history was a nightmare from which he was trying to escape, Booker rightly observes both that the attitude need not be taken for Joyce’s and that Joyce’s works embody a vigorous engagement with “history”, broadly conceived (126/7). It can be further argued that we needn’t take Stephen’s quip to be a literal expression of his own complex mind; rather, Stephen Dedalus, like Joyce, seeks a way to engage with the discourses that haunt him, rather than, in Booker’s summation of a common view, an “idealistic escape from temporality” (127).

In the following chapter I enlarge further on my debt to, and some divergences from, prior Bakhtinian research on Joyce. For the present it is helpful to outline two theoretical matters underpinning this thesis: Bakhtin’s conception of history, and the chronotope.

**A Bakhtinian conception of history**

Kershner (“Nightmare”) notes that Joyce evidently took “enormous pains . . . in creating in his fiction what looked like a particular historical situation” and the
unwillingness of New Critical approaches to engage with this historicity. While the weakness of some postmodern theory, such as deconstructionism, is its failure to engage with historicity, some notable approaches to history such as those of Hayden White and Fredric Jameson, clearly have significant shortcomings, in Kershner’s assessment. Clearly a Bakhtinian approach to the novel, steeped in historic sense, has potential if one can find some way of applying it. Kershner’s proposal for an analysis of historical “differential” is promising (32), although beyond the scope of the present study. In the following discussion some considerations underpinning my own approach, are outlined.

Bakhtin’s views of the novel are closely associated with historical conceptions of language and genre; particularly of interest is Bakhtin’s conception that explicit or implicit theories of history shape narrative (Morson and Emerson 43). Historical perspective in the novel can afford a deeper understanding of the complexities of the present, in relation to answerability and ethical choice.

Carens notes of Portrait that: “It was Joyce’s extraordinary achievement in this book, not only to devise a structure that liberated him from the conventionally linear novel and “plot”, but also to fuse with that structure and the action it incorporated a body of allusion, related detail . . . imagery, metaphor, symbol and myth” (298). Carens suggests that “Contemplated, finally, in the totality of the work as one of its elements, the motifs of A Portrait will reveal the work’s essential artistic unity (299). In a chronotopic reading of Portrait (Chapters 7 and 8), motifs and themes are indeed revealed to be significant, but these elements—Stephen’s sense of historicity, motifs of time, death, darkness and light, the mysterious irruptions of human instincts, must be read in relation to the implicit theory of history that Portrait embodies: the history of a life that is a succession of phases “on the curve of an emotion”. A portrait represents a present image informed by the past. As Ellmann phrases it, the theme of Portrait is that “we are what we were” (JJ 295).

History, for Bakhtin, in contrast to the Hegelian progressus is a unique, open narrative, not characterised by inevitability but rather embodying a sense of potentiality (Morson and Emerson 47). This sense should be contrasted to what Spoo (141-2) discusses as turn of the century “profound reliance on the developmental
master narrative of organic growth”, which was imbued with the neo-Hegelian
dialectical view of progress: a view which Joyce himself, it is demonstrated in later
chapters, expressed in his early critical writings. As late as the ur-Portrait, Joyce
adopted a similar view of his own artistic future. The projected accomplishment of
his goals is however an opaque process, something to be achieved by an art “as yet
untabulated” (Scholes and Kain 60) and this prepares the way for the more open-
ended paradigm of the artistic process which Joyce was later to adopt. The aesthetic
principles which he had already devised could guide, but not direct, his artistic
process.

The long history of *Portrait*’s development, with the rejected 1904 “Portrait” and the
abandoned *Stephen Hero*, supports an account of open evolution, a narrative in
becoming. Just as *Portrait*’s epigraph from Ovid is a circumtextual framing device
(MacLachlan and Reid) that suggests themes associated with the artist’s work (Senn,
“Challenge”), so does the postscriptum “Dublin 1904-Trieste 1914” refer us to the
extratextual text of Joyce’s own struggles.

Holquist (*Dialogism* 127) notes the obvious parallels between Bakhtin’s “historical
poetics” and the natural sciences, from which latter Bakhtin first heard the term
“chronotope”. To Bakhtin, the world is an event rather than a structure (Morson and
Emerson 43-47). The compositional history of *Portrait* itself demonstrates an
unpredictable (and, as it happens, from a certain point onwards, unmappable) textual
event changing shape over years. It proves the sense of “design” implied in Morson
and Emerson’s commentary on Bakhtin’s view of history, in which they observe that
Darwin’s theory of evolution should not be taken to imply infallible purpose in its
every step.

In short, biological structures, like social entities, are at once designed, undesigned
and ill-designed—they change in an imperfect way, and they give rise to by-products.
For all these reasons they exhibit the potential for the unforeseen. (Morson and
Emerson 46).

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10 “… in my opinion the modern writer must be an adventurer above all, willing to take every risk . . .
we must write dangerously . . .” (Power 95)
This is the kind of unfinalisable, error-prone model of “evolution in design” that is adopted in this thesis. The earlier novel fragment *Stephen Hero* for example is at the same time designed, underdesigned and ill-designed, as I later demonstrate, in reference to Joyce’s aesthetic aims and principles (see Chapters 3-5). Joyce, like Stephen in *Portrait*, sought to allow himself the creative latitude to make mistakes, even great or lifelong mistakes (P 247).

To these elements of a Bakhtinian approach to history—uniqueness, unfinalisability (one of Bakhtin’s “global concepts”; Morson and Emerson 308), its irreversibility, its evolution of flawed design—we must add the conception of the inextricable links of past, present and future. History and present for Bakhtin are closely related. Essential to the historical work of the novel is conveying a sense of the present, a present replete with potential, a range of possibility rather than fixity or inevitability (Morson and Emerson 47). Stephen’s diary entry notes: “The past is consumed in the present and the present is living only because it brings forth the future” (P 251). The present brings forth, but does not determine or constrict, the future.

**Chronotope**

Bakhtin calls chronotope, time-space relations, the living impulse and form-shaping ideology of the genre, the possibilities of a given genre. Literary genres are modes of thought, based on artistic thinking, and in themselves embody advances in our thinking (Morson and Emerson 366).

Vice offers a useful topology of three levels of chronotopic application: the historic level, general analyses of time and space, and formal features of the novel (201). On this second level, our reading of *Portrait* examines shifting time and space relations within the narrative, associated chronotopic themes and motifs.

In relation to the third level, form, in Vice’s view (202) some texts are more fruitful under chronotopic analysis than others: especially those “which are set at a particularly fraught historical moment, which set out to represent a historical event, or which adopt one of the forms where relations between time and space are especially clear, such as the road movie, or tales of time travel”. Further, chronotopes are
“highly sensitive to historical change” (Holquist, *Dialogism* 112). It is likely that *Portrait* in this regard, as a novel whose long compositional period spans that time when Modernism is generally agreed to have begun, and whose predecessor draft is often remarked as being of a “nineteenth century” form, would prove to be of great interest. It resembles Bakhtin’s description of the fifth form of Bildungsroman, as being “on the cusp” of historical change and combining creativity and social responsibility together with historical sense (Morson and Emerson 409-10, 412-13).

Morson and Emerson identify a series of questions which may be asked in respect of any given chronotope. These include the nature of the self, freedom of action, the environment and context in which acts occur, the personal and the private spheres, exteriority versus interiority, and so on. At the heart of Bakhtin’s concept however, and, they suggest, possibly the motive force for it: “. . . the evaluation of chronotopes was important to his project of understanding what historicity really is, and for his goal of defining the world in such a way that responsibility and creativity could be real” (369).

These then are the essential elements of an artistic rather than, to borrow Joyce’s and Stephen’s catchword, “marketplace” chronotope: engagement with *historicity*, realisable *creativity*, and ethical *responsibility* (Morson and Emerson 372). It is upon these key criteria, the configurations of which shift according to changes in Stephen’s consciousness as the narrative of *Portrait* unfolds, that our chronotopic analysis focuses.

**Old lanterns for new: a textual cross-section**

While it is important to view Joyce in sociohistorical context, it is equally important to see this most individualistic writer’s work in the context of his own evolving aims and views, insofar as these can be identified. It seems likely that Joyce did, indeed, initially entertain a neo-Hegelian conception of history. It is also likely that his historiographic experience of, and reading in Rome, led to developments in his ideas, as Spoo has demonstrated. Some time later, Joyce again found inspiration in a theory of history: Vico’s cycles would strongly influence *Ulysses*, and *Finnegans Wake* in particular.
The following short textual cross-section of the evolution of one theme from *Stephen Hero* to *Portrait* is suggestive of Joyce’s attitude change, from railing against history to critical engagement, as reflected in an altered characterisation of Stephen.

—No aesthetic theory, pursued Stephen relentlessly, is of any value which investigates with the aid of the lantern of tradition. What we symbolise in black the Chinaman may symbolise in yellow: each has his own tradition. Greek beauty laughs at Coptic beauty and the American Indian derides them both. It is almost impossible to reconcile all tradition whereas it is by no means impossible to find the justification of every form of beauty which has ever been adored on the earth by an examination into the mechanism of aesthetic apprehension whether it be dressed in red, white, yellow or black. (SH 212)

In this passage from the first draft novel, the agency of apprehension is for Stephen individually based rather than culturally or societally. History, embodied as “tradition”, is figured as a mere impediment to investigation since it pre-emptively denies the possibility of unmediated perception. Examination of “the mechanism of aesthetic apprehension” then is predicated to afford a philosophical means to circumvent tradition and to approach beauty from first principles, from the individual apprehensory process.

Of course, Stephen’s dismissal of the “lantern of tradition” would seem to contradict his use of the antique lanterns of Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas to guide his aesthetic theory. This anomaly has been addressed in *Portrait*, where Stephen’s gratuitous lecturing of a peer in *Stephen Hero* is now replaced by a dramatic dialogue with a more challenging interlocutor: the Dean of Studies. And Stephen’s views have changed. Now he embraces, in a relativistic way, rather than rejecting, lanterns of tradition:

For my purpose I can work on at present by the light of one or two ideas of Aristotle and Aquinas. . . . I need them only for my own use and guidance until I have done something for myself by their light. If the lamp smokes or smells I shall try to trim it. If it does not give light enough I shall sell it and buy another. (P 187)
In *Portrait*, Stephen’s figurative raising of the “lamps” of Aristotle and Aquinas constitutes a clever strategy, a philosophical weapon in the rhetorical joust of parry and thrust between Stephen’s revolutionary ideas and the Church’s determination to suppress views antithetical to its ideology. (This scene is analysed in some detail in Chapter 7 of this thesis. Further light on the background of this confrontation is afforded in Chapter 9, where the Church’s opposition to relativism is demonstrated.)

Thus, the Stephen of *Stephen Hero* rails against all manner of hostile forces. The Stephen of *Portrait* engages in a critical dialogue with history and tradition. Although he is determined to fly by those nets flung at him, nonetheless he engages with the social discourses that formed him, with the Western philosophical and literary tradition, and with more contemporary artistic movements: aestheticism, the lyrical novel of D’Annunzio, symbolism and so on. The principle of critical engagement with history, very possibly inspired by Nietzsche’s analysis of *The Use and Abuse of History* but at least corresponding to the lines of Nietzsche’s argument, I suggest, lies at the heart of a very different approach to history in *Portrait*, compared to *Stephen Hero*. This new approach is matched by a different form, which is examined chronotopically in Chapters Seven and Eight.

**The disappointed bridge?**

It is sometimes noted that the word “artist” had a specialised meaning in Dublin parlance: a “quaint fellow or a great cod”, a joker or prankster (Gogarty 295); Joyce himself referred to most Irish artists as “vulgar mountebanks” (*Selected Letters* 121). Some proponents of the “irony” reading view Stephen Dedalus as an artist of this kind. Others in effect, render Stephen a human analogy of Stephen’s description of the Kingstown Pier as a “disappointed bridge” (U 21). Stephen Dedalus in this view is a “disappointed Joyce” who will fail to bridge the gulf between mere talent and accession to an artistry that majestically spans space and time.

In this respect my argument is threefold: firstly, that an outrightly ironic portrait would constitute nothing but caricature—a most “improper” form of art, as the young Joyce would have understood immediately. Through application of Bakhtinian theory it is demonstrated that the novel embeds in signifying form, complex representations
of the unfurling actuality of Stephen’s potential in social context. Secondly, the undoubted presence of irony in Portrait should not be taken for “iron memorial” framing—rather, we must differentiate between contextual, tempering irony and defining irony. My reading of Portrait suggests that it is the Church which suffers the brunt of this latter form of irony, but that otherwise, irony in the work is essentially of the former kind. Thirdly, and most significantly of all, to dismiss Stephen’s potential as an artist is to ignore Joyce’s very pointed suggestions that examination of the nature of the artist and of the process of art are a proper study for the aesthetic philosopher.

These then are the “leads” the college gumshoe will follow on the trail of the aesthetic instinct in time and space, following the double coiling paths of Joyce’s intellectual and imaginative development, from his boyhood in the fashionable outskirts of Dublin, moving progressively closer to Dublin city, thence to the Continent. The paper trail of clues on these twin paths: Joyce’s aesthetics and critical writings, his creative outpourings, leads us inexorably towards Rome, the Eternal City, where Joyce resolved to secure his own immortality.

It has been established in this chapter that there is a case to be made for framing our perceptions of an artwork according to clues about the process and history of that work. Given Stephen’s cryptic and hazy description of the “aesthetic instinct”, given the plethora of related clues, we proceed guided by some insights into the novel afforded by Bakhtin, and by an enlarged conception of the historical critical focus on “intention”. The concept of design, based on some principles from Bakhtin, has potential to bring into relation a range of valuable clues, and is the subject of the following chapter.
CHAPTER TWO:

SKETCHING THE "PORTRAIT DESIGN"

The concept of design is advanced as a purposive guide to our framing of the early years of Portrait’s evolution. “Design” attempts to embrace the broader purposive spectrum: Joyce’s philosophical and aesthetic aims, aims particular to a given work, and signifying form. An outline of some central elements of the evolving design of Portrait is sketched. The framing of this thesis’ approach is further sharpened in relation to some Bakhtinian research closely related to Portrait. In particular, the case is argued for applying the Bakhtinian principle of “dialogical creative understanding” to Portrait.

The aim of this thesis has been stated as to survey the clues about artistic process associated with Portrait, and to use them to reframe our understanding of Joyce’s first novel.

It has been demonstrated that perceptual, contextual framing is endemic in all works of interpretation. Framing however is processive, a verb rather than noun, and frequently is overlooked or effectively invisible. One means of recognising our own framing is to compare and contrast the framing of other viewpoints, and in Chapter One, a survey of some contextualising studies affords a series of contrasting perspectives: historical studies with an emphasis on socioeconomic or political themes, technical studies of development, genetic studies of successive manuscripts. To this list of alternative perspectives we might add studies of influence.
The present research attempts to survey the broad range of clues affecting Joyce’s theme of the artistic process, of the “aesthetic instinct”. This survey comprises a developmental history of *Portrait*, and of Joyce’s own development, together with a reading of *Portrait*: certainly an ambitious scope, which however can be justified according to Stephen’s stated view: “The critic is he who is able, by means of the signs which the artist affords, to approach the temper which has made the work and to see what is well done therein and what it signifies” (SH 79). Certain areas, such as Joyce’s and Stephen’s aesthetics, and the epiphany, have already been researched exhaustively. This research reframes them from a developmental perspective, additionally bringing some less-studied areas into the frame: Joyce’s critical writings, his book reviews, and other clues about the artistic process.

**The curve of intention**

Some of the approach of this thesis was suggested by McGann’s methodology for framing a work in its sociohistorical context (*Beauty, Social Values*): largely in relation to a work’s inception, the author’s intention and a work’s reception. The fourth element is to identify the contemporary standpoint from which one evaluates a text. The scope of this thesis extends to the first two points, and additionally addresses the importance of self-reflection upon one’s own critical framing.

It is also important to heed McGann’s approach to the resurrection of philology: that this should be done not wholesale and uncritically, that new historical criticism should be couched in recognition of various theoretical advances since its heyday (*Social Values* 16). The same point of course must be made for the conception of intention, lately re-emerging after years of New Critical banishment.11

Kelly acknowledges that historical and New Historicist readings can effectively employ the concept of “textual intention” as a rhetorical disguise for the critic’s own agenda, “to project their own prejudices into their criticism” (6-8), and observes that while the New Critics theoretically at least did not recognise intention, in effect they

11 An example of strident proselytising for “intention” can be found in Thomas (1992).
often substituted the critic’s intention for that of the author. Thus, while the purposive dimension clearly has great potential to guide our reframing, rather than resuscitating “intention” wholesale, the broader, critically framed term “design” is advanced, by means of some Bakhtinian principles applied to the case of Joyce.

In an uncanny evocation of the thesis of Joyce’s 1904 essay, which sought to portray the artist in a series of phases “on the curve of an emotion” (he never wrote on Joyce), Bakhtin says of the “prosaic image”:

. . . authorial intentions move through it as if along a curve: the distances between discourse and intentions are always changing (in other words, the angle of refraction is always changing); a complete solidarity between the author and his discourse, a fusion of their voices, is only possible at the apexes of the curve. (DI 418)

Just as Stephen Dedalus was obliged to clarify his classroom heresy about “the Creator and the soul”, the view that like an asymptotic curve between our own soul and God we are without a possibility of ever approaching nearer (P 79) it should be noted that while we can expect to approach nearer to the curve of the artistic creator’s intention, we cannot necessarily sustain the expectation of ever reaching. However, we are most likely to see the closest relations between a text and intention, at the two points focused upon in this thesis: inception and final realisation.

Part of Bakhtin’s critique of intentional studies, according to Morson and Emerson (286) is that they are:

. . . not intentional enough. Typically, intentionalists understand only one of two kinds of intention; what they overlook is the author’s “other intention”—to make his work rich in potentials. . . . authors intend their works to mean more than their intended meanings. They deliberately endow their works not only with specified meanings they could paraphrase, but also with “intentional potentials” for future meanings in unforeseen circumstances (DI, p. 421). The most important thing wrong both with the usual intentional criticism and with the most common criticisms of it is an extraordinarily impoverished understanding of intention itself. (286)
The Joyce scholar will immediately recognise the necessity of an enriched conception of intention, self-evidently in relation to *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. In addition to the complexity of their design at inception, both novels are notable for having evolved dramatically during the compositional process. Bowen, for instance (1984 421), notes that Joyce “radically changed his concept and artistic intent” during eight years of writing *Ulysses*. George Bornstein’s conclusion, arising from studies of editorial practice with modernism, is that final authorial intention is problematic (5-6), a conclusion similar to that Ferrer reaches from the standpoint of genetic studies of *Finnegans Wake* (50). Bush notes that textual studies such as Michael Groden’s *Ulysses in Progress* have shown that Joyce’s intentions were by no means unitary or fixed and that, contrary to the “mastery” account of imposing order on the text from without, Joyce was able to respond to the suggestivity of the material itself, to allow it to develop in new ways. Indeed, in conversation with Arthur Power, Joyce said that “In writing one must create an endlessly changing surface, dictated by the mood and current impulse in contrast to the fixed mood of the classical style” (Power 95).

Of course, the task of attempting to understand Joyce’s intentions is also fraught with dangers of misframing. One framing assurance for my own research is the contextualisation and repetition of themes in a variety of sources. A notable example where clues to intention have potential to mislead is the once frequently-invoked description of the stories in *Dubliners* as “*epicleti*”, a mysterious concept gleaned from one of Joyce’s (handwritten) letters: the term had been glossed as an obscure Greek root for “invocation to the spirit”. Although the concept has been used in the service of some highly intelligent criticism (Minsky’s maxim applies here: “any plan is better than none”), a contrary school of thought now strongly suggests that the term is a misreading of “epiclets”, and so the research this term launched cannot be considered to be underwritten by Joyce’s “intention”.

Intention should be viewed as essentially processive and open, rather than the achievement of a set blueprint, and in any case, simplistic, unifying and restricting definitions should be avoided (Morson and Emerson 430).
Refracted direction: a Bakhtinian model of intention

Bakhtin produces a model of intention in beautiful, pregnant imagery:

The way in which the word conceptualises its object is a complex act—all objects, open to dispute and overlain as they are with qualifications, are from one side highlighted while from the other side dimmed by heteroglot social opinion, by an alien word about them. And into this complex play of light and shadow the word enters—it becomes saturated with this play, and must determine within it the boundaries of its own semantic and stylistic contours.

. . . If we imagine the intention of such a word, that is, its directionality toward the object, in the form of a ray of light, then the living and unrepeatable play of colours and light on the facets of the image that it constructs can be examined as the spectral dispersion of the ray-word, not within the object itself . . . but rather as its spectral dispersion in an atmosphere filled with the alien words, value judgements and accents through which the ray passes on its way toward the object; the social atmosphere of the word, the atmosphere that surrounds the object, makes the facets of the image sparkle. (DI 277, italics mine.)

The intentions of the present research are encapsulated in that passage: the endeavour to identify, reframe and re-express an image of Portrait in the contested field of heteroglot critical opinion; to see the work in a new light amid the shadows and illuminations that interpenetrate this critical field, itself already a thick refracting atmosphere of theoretical frames, value judgments, hues and accents.

Intention, for Bakhtin, exists, but should not be understood in a naïve, unitary, self-conscious form (DI 278); it operates in a context of “Galilean language consciousness” (DI 415), not the Ptolemaic consciousness that he critiques. In the former, the writerly self is decentred from the compositional action. According to this model, aims of one kind or another act as shaping forces, whether or not they are fully transparent to the creator, whether or not they have been articulated philosophically by the creator, whether or not that self has indeed a self-conscious sense of purpose.
Bakhtin’s examination of the intentive field is powerfully complicit in its imagery, with Joyce’s account of the creative process in *Portrait* (see discussion of the villanelle in Chapter 8). Indeed, the signifying, oppositional play of light and gloom is a dominant motif in *Portrait* at crucial moments of Stephen’s life: an evocation of the forces encountered by the artist when blindly fumbling towards realisation of an image or design, the hostile forces and immovable social values he encounters. Stephen’s intellect and imagination grow in the socially contested field of formal instruction, which is often represented as the interplay of gloom and shadow with light (see the reading of *Portrait* in Chapters 7 and 8).

We have already seen (Chapter 1) that the symbol of “lanterns” is one symptom of the changed design of *Portrait*, in contrast to *Stephen Hero*. Stephen in *Stephen Hero* rejects the lanterns of tradition, while Stephen in *Portrait* engages with them, albeit in a sceptical and relativist fashion. In philosophical dialogue with the Dean, and referring to his influences of Aristotle and Aquinas, Stephen comments that: “I need them only for my own use and guidance until I have done something for myself by their light. If the lamp smokes or smells I shall try to trim it. If it does not give light enough I shall sell it and buy another” (P 187).

Stephen in *Stephen Hero* had adopted a more simplistic viewpoint, a fairly uncritical acceptance of the light-bearing properties of the modern spirit:

—The modern spirit is vivisective. Vivisection itself is the most modern process one can conceive. The ancient spirit accepted phenomena with a bad grace. The ancient method investigated law with the lantern of justice, morality with the lantern of revelation, art with the lantern of tradition. But all these lanterns have magical properties: they transform and disfigure. The modern method examines its territory by the light of day. Italy has added a science to civilisation by putting out the lantern of justice and considering the criminal in production and in action. (SH 186)

Here, Stephen is clearly referring to a framing mechanism: law is illuminated by the framing lantern of justice, and so on. His apparent approval for a modern method that dispenses with such traditions implies that this new method does not suffer from the same framing effect, a view that is unlikely to be supported today. In *Portrait*,
however, as we have seen, this rejection of history as tradition is replaced by Stephen’s metaphorical picking up of lanterns, of critically engaging with tradition.

Stephen in *Portrait* then is introjected into a socially contestatory field, flickering with conflicting light and shadow, which initially forms, shapes and then resists and refracts Stephen’s utterances (for example his heresy, quoted above, later his aesthetic philosophy). This is a more realistic model of the slow development of the artist’s purposive trajectory than the implied, apparently unproblematic modern world of Daedalus in *Stephen Hero*: methodical, deliberative agency personified in the daylight vivisector.

**Design**

Undoubtedly, central forces in the “atmosphere that surrounds the object” are, in the case of a text, the coercive fields of genre and contestable language. For Bakhtin, just as a word must determine the “boundaries of its own semantic and stylistic contours”, so must the writer pursuing artistic ends frame the novel against similar constraints: socially underpinned forces of genre, readerly expectations, social attitudes and mores—while scrupulously avoiding the trite discourses of “the ‘already uttered’, the ‘already known’ and ‘the common opinion’” (DI 279): a formula that approximates to the narrated view held by Stephen in *Stephen Hero*: “He was determined to fight with every energy of soul and body against any possible consignment to what he now regarded as the hell of hells—the region, otherwise expressed, wherein everything is found to be obvious” (SH 30).

Central to our endeavour of understanding *Portrait*’s success is the attempt to map how Joyce contrived to frame his material in the novel in such a way that each element might be discerned afresh, in the most strategic light, against the shadow of adverse values and with due regard to the relations of “rhythm”: defined in Joyce’s Paris notebook as the relations between part and part, and part and whole (see Chapter 5).

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12 An example of the kind of contestatory rhetoric that Joyce faced, in the form of a papal oath, is analysed in Chapter 9.
In this thesis, the term “design” is advanced as an organising metaphor with which to frame and guide a review of *Portrait*’s inception and evolution. The term may be conceived in two senses: firstly, as a radiating purposive network of aims and principles that guides and informs the compositional process. In this sense it works also as a verb suggestive of the writer’s evolving work of planning and structuration, in dialogue with aesthetics, aims, deliberations and choices.

“Design” is also the achieved final form of the novel. Design as noun is, to reapply Bakhtin’s description of the historic memory embedded in texts, the “sclerotic” product of these processes (Morson and Emerson 141), the resulting structure, a set of formal and stylistic properties, embedded themes and motifs.

“Design” can be usefully divided into three contributory strands, so far as the clues to Joyce’s artistic development can be discerned. Firstly, Joyce developed broad aesthetic and philosophical aims. Secondly, closer to the time of the compositional period of *Portrait*, and during this period, statements of a purposive nature directly pertinent to the novel project, can be discerned. Thirdly, there is the signifying form of the realised work. These three terms are enlarged upon below, and an outline of some of their salient features is offered, in regard to the discernible design of *Portrait*.

Firstly however, it is of value to examine in greater detail, two previous Bakhtin-informed studies of Joyce, further to sharpen comparatively the perceptual framing of this thesis.

**Two Bakhtinian studies of Joyce**

**Boundary writers**

Wallace Martin, in a review of narratological approaches, notes the problem of establishing theoretical boundaries that will hold (174). The works of Riquelme (*Teller and Tale*) and Gillespie (*Reading*), cited in Chapter 1, may be considered studies of the development of Joyce’s style that correspond to the “linguistic” and
Bakhtin’s theory on the other hand notoriously resists the observance of boundaries, and systematisation. Indeed, he stresses the illusory nature of images of territory and boundary. For Bakhtin all cultural effects are intersubjectively pierced and porous boundaries (Morson and Emerson 51-52). Not only does everyday discourse consist of a dynamic of constant dialogue between elements, but these elements themselves are socially defined and unstable, contested. The unified subject itself is a fiction.

We must, therefore, fall back on the observation that “framing exists, but there is no frame” (MacLachlan and Reid), and no fixed border. Some excellent Bakhtinian analysis of Portrait has explored beyond its textual boundaries, particularly its intertextual framing. Historical studies of Portrait, in referring to sociohistorical contexts, are concentrated on extratextual framing. In contrast, my review of associated texts internal to the inceptional history of Portrait (Chapters 3-5) invokes a different form of framing not treated by MacLachlan and Reid: diachronic framing, the relation of contributory or associated texts to the development of a work. We apply the “genetic” notion that “workshop texts” are integral to the literary work itself (Groden, “Textual History” 74), while extending our scope also to other texts reflective of Joyce’s design in some way, such as his critical writings and intensive statements.

In Booker’s survey of some Bakhtinian approaches to Joyce, the concepts of dialogism, carnival, polyphony and discourse types are the dominant critical tools that have been used, while he notes that “critics of Joyce have made virtually no use of Bakhtin’s work to illuminate Joyce’s dialogues with his literary predecessors” (10). Booker’s work makes a strong contribution in addressing this gap.

However, as Morson and Emerson note, Bakhtin’s theory may be divided into two essentially parallel and yet separate fields: the “discursive”/dialogical and the chronotopic (367, 372). The former field is that which has been utilised mostly in studies of Joyce, the latter being only thinly represented. Booker’s study is one exception as it does address some chronotopic aspects of Portrait in passing.
A provisional explanation for this conspicuous lack might be advanced in a few pointers: the fact that Bakhtin applied chronotope chiefly to genres of novel rather than to individual exemplars, the restriction of his discussion to genres prior to the twentieth century, and the unavailability of any systematic methodology for chronotopic analysis.

In contrast to the relatively constricting McGannian call for dialectical appreciation, the theory of dialogism offers an examination of the interplay not merely of dialectical oppositions but also of a wider field of textual forces. According to Morson and Emerson, Bakhtin perceived dialectic to be monological and unduly structured. Dialogue in contrast is more chaotic, fluxional and unpredictable, frequently being depicted analogously to physical forces (Morson and Emerson 55, 51), as we have seen in his figurative evocation of “intention” as the play of light in a charged field. In general, it is argued in this thesis, criticism of Joyce has not been nearly dialogical enough in focus, and this is an important area to redress in relation to Portrait.

It has been noted that Kershner has suggested a way of engaging with a genuinely historical criticism in respect of Bakhtin’s conception of historicity in the novel (1996b 30). However, the project of comparing different historical exemplars of the novel form, such as the Bildungsroman in respect of Portrait, is beyond the scope of this research. Two major Bakhtinian studies of Portrait of direct relevance to my own research are those of David Seed, who provides a detailed dialogical reading of Portrait in relation to social discourses, and of M. Keith Booker, who examines Joyce’s works in relation to likely influences, and offers a comparative study of other cultural paradigms.

**The dialogical Portrait**

David Seed’s contextualising reading of Portrait analyses social and individual discourses in Stephen’s life, relative to the historical and cultural background of Joyce’s Ireland: to religion, nationalism and gender issues, and to the intertextual imbrication of Stephen’s world with literature and literary philosophy. A primary theme is his quest to find his own voice against the many competing, prevailing
voices and languages of society. While Seed does not rule out the possibility of Stephen’s development into an artist, an emphasis on ironic interpretations of Stephen chimes with the conclusions of the “irony” school, and consequently the broader interpretative opportunities afforded by the chronotopic logic of the novel itself, as a portrait of the artist and the artistic process, are not fully embraced.

An important strand of Seed’s reading of the dialogism of Church discourse is analysis of the Church’s influence on the language of the young artist, in an exchange that is from Stephen’s point of view part rejection and part assimilation (80), and the suggestion that the institution against which Stephen finally rebels either determines or at least shapes his ends. Seed also accepts Chester Anderson’s suggestion that Joyce parodies Church ritual later in Portrait and, while Seed does not emphasise this conclusion, it is consistent with a view of Joyce’s writerly practice as maintaining dialogical relations with the Church, even if only in a subversive/parodic, perhaps contestatory fashion.

In his reading of the Artist’s portrayal, Seed rightly acknowledges that Joyce employs in Stephen Hero a Flaubertian evocation of the writer’s work as labour rather than a “bourgeois notion of artistic production”—this latter kind of model being not dissimilar to those modernist images of Joyce which some Joyce critics have sought to overthrow (Chapter 1). Despite this recognition, however, he characterises Stephen’s first attempt at writing poetry in Portrait as overladen with irony, impelled by the insight that the child Stephen fails to find an original voice in the face of overwhelming poetic and liturgical influences. Thus, the potentially valuable developmental significance of such experiments as part of the apprenticeship of the writer, essential to an understanding of the writer’s labour, is overshadowed by irony (85-6). In reality however, the writer’s labour is equally a theme in Portrait, and elsewhere in Joyce’s oeuvre. Stephen stipulates an art whose process is “to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth” (P 207) an image of beauty.

A third strand of Seed’s analysis is his treatment of Stephen’s dialogue with his peers and with authorities at University, where Stephen’s favouring of strategies of speech is stressed. In contrast to the Stephen of Stephen Hero, Seed notes that this Stephen is
rather more sequestered and recessive in his communications, seeking private audiances for his ideas and refusing engagement with public statements. This analysis appears to develop into a critique of Stephen’s moral character, as his essential aloneness and his estrangement from society are stressed. This stance however, tends to ignore the field of resistance that intentive directions encounter, in Bakhtin’s model.

My chronotopic reading of Portrait suggests rather that Stephen’s habits should be viewed in the light of a quiet and monastical writerly labour that seeks artistic distantiation, freedom from vexatious distractions and ideological strife, the better to attain the requisite objective stance and intellective stasis.

Seed’s useful approach in analysing the final, diary sections of the novel as an inner dialogue (Bakhtin prefers a model of consciousness as dialogue in preference to the Freudian model) is put in service of the view that life, and Stephen’s dialogue with Dublin, will go on (174), but that Stephen is not necessarily likely to develop into the artist he aspires to be. Rather, he joins previous readings in finding an ironic ambiguity in Stephen’s ambition to “forge” a conscience: the implication that he lacks originality (165) and is a counterfeit. My own reading of Stephen’s diary entries, however, is consistent with a view of dialogue as synthesising ferment.

*Dialogism of failure*

Bakhtin takes a similar viewpoint to Walter Pater in respect of the soul being born “clothed” (see discussion of the vestiture/textile motif in Spoo 48-49):

“Consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it, and from which it cannot initially separate itself” (DI 345).

However, while Bakhtin posits the individual’s intersubjective agency as relatively empowered to position itself independently, Seed’s reading of Portrait appears to remain focused on an account of the subject as essentially unable to separate itself from preceding discourses. To Seed, even by the end of the novel Stephen still doesn’t have a discourse he can call truly his own.
Thus, when it comes to the key episode where Stephen’s writing of a villanelle is described, Seed’s exploration of the intertextual associations of the scene—the poetry of Dowson, the influence of Symons and of Yeats—serves to shroud the refractions of the emerging poet’s utterance by foregrounding the field of preceding discourses, rather than perceiving the fledgling writer’s tentative, inchoate entry into literary practice.

Seed’s characterisation of Stephen amongst these intertextual influences culminates in his contrasting description of Pater’s autobiographical character Marius, in *Marius the Epicurean*. Unlike Marius, Stephen does not experience one “single moment of realisation”; his sole growth is in awareness of language. Marius reads Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and learns therein the secrets of expression. And yet, Stephen in *Portrait* is portrayed like Marius as reading Ovid, in a passage describing his imaginative, dialogical engagement with texts (P 179). In relation to Seed’s analysis, and considering the circumtextual framing of *Portrait* with an epigraph from *Metamorphoses*, it would be hard not to infer that Joyce sought to emphasise Stephen’s contrasting failure to benefit from his reading, to attain the kind of recondite skills that the epigraph records his namesake Daedalus as having achieved.

Likewise, Seed traces the many intertextual associations of Stephen’s surname and their implications for writerly practice: its roots in sexuality, its maze qualities, intricacy and cunning, only to find that these associations raise “ironic questions about the substance of his flight into exile” (142).

**Joyce’s cultural poetics**

M. Keith Booker has a similar object to Joseph Kelly in seeking to reframe our understanding of Joyce, and likewise addresses some canonical views of Joyce the Modernist, seeking to reframe him in the light of social engagement (43). This approach is a good deal more satisfying than Kelly’s emphasis on Joyce as essentially political, as it engages with Joyce’s broader aesthetic aims, his steeping in the literary tradition and the ideological significance of form. In the steps of Manganiello, Booker demonstrates the applicability of Joyce’s interest in (for example) Bakunin, to his
Reframing Portrait 58

strategic textual attacks on religion and on other manifestations of authority that have the potential to assail individual freedom.

Booker’s employment of Bakhtin follows well-established lines in looking at the dialogical nature of his texts, the dialogical subject, and intertextual dialogism within his texts. The parallel project of comparative cultural poetics is a powerful adjunct, and Booker’s critical triangulation of Joyce, Dante and Bakhtin throws Joyce’s design into relief in areas such as attitudes to history, the historicity of language, political and social engagement. Dante’s project, for example, was essentially monological and devout, whereas Joyce’s was dialogical and secular.

Booker portrays Joyce’s work as sociohistorically engaged and subversive, and thus recognises agency in the writer’s labour. Similarly to many other framings of Stephen, this principle is not extended to Stephen, however, who is frequently seen as neither engaged nor subversive. Stephen can be portrayed as: radically estranged from life because he listens to dead voices (2), seeking to escape history (34) into the ideal realms of poetry (91), and even trying to transcend the mortal/physical realm (114). Further, he is unsure of his identity (180), while at other times his behaviour is that of the prima donna (181). He can be characterised by “bovaryistic submission” to Shakespeare and St Augustine (183) at the same time as he is literally constituted by the discourses of others (196).

Certainly irony abounds in Portrait, but my stated theme questions whether it is necessarily defining irony or, rather, contextual counterpoint refracting, tinting or reframing his representation. In the following discussion of Booker’s analysis I explore alternative framing possibilities in respect of the following matters: Stephen’s relation to religion, the developing subject, and the utterance.

Religion

David Seed (80) acknowledges Stephen’s complex relation to religion: part assimilation, part rejection. In Booker’s reading, Joyce is seen primarily as contesting religious authority, quoting and parodying religious views to subvert them, partly through making associations with madness and sado-masochism (64, 75) while
Stephen himself on the other hand appeals to such authority (32, 28, 34) for support. Stephen thus is seen not so much in dialogical relationship to the Church as submissive to it. In contrast, my chronotopic reading of Portrait examines Joyce’s formal attack on the church, narratively conveyed by representing the chronotopic irreality of the church’s world view and the effects of its dicta on Stephen when he adopts wholesale, and to its logical extreme, its doctrine and practices. In one phase of the young artist’s soul, Stephen is clearly portrayed as a product of the overwhelming Catholic discourse into which he was born and educated, and yet a defining episode in his development is where Stephen’s individuating self emerges against the force of this authority; he finds within himself the determination to break free of its grip on his soul, to first find, and then to be true to his own nature, in defiance of the will of the Church.

A satisfactory reading must address the young poet’s process of becoming, his eventual distancing from and dialogical engagement with, social forces that have indeed dominated, even been formative of, his soul.

The developing subject

My reframing reading of Portrait attempts to address obscured elements of its chronotopic logic: responsibility, agency, and the possibility of creativity, particularly in relation to the protagonist (Morson and Emerson 372). Crucial to the developing subject’s agency, in the face of powerful and repressive social forces, is responsibility, the capability of engaging with these forces. While it is possible to dismiss Stephen’s attempts at self fashioning (Booker 128-9) and self-fathering, a Bakhtinian viewpoint can explore the proposition that individuals are not merely “products” of discourses, but are relatively empowered, dialogically intersubjective agents, the object of their own utterances, and possessed of creative individual potential.

A distorting tendency potentially associated with intertextual analysis and with studies of “influence” is the obscuring of the writer’s shaping agency in selecting and interpreting sources. A countervailing hint is found in Portrait, where the narrative voice explains that Stephen retained “nothing of all he read save that which seemed to him an echo or a prophecy of his own state”. Influence, viewed from Kimball’s
perspective (“Growing up” 30-31) places agentive impetus back with the creative subject.

In respect of creativity, as part of a cultural comparison of prosaics with Goethe, Booker notes Faust’s dismissal of the “scissors and paste” technique he ascribes to his assistant Wagner, while suggesting that it somewhat resembles the later Joyce’s “mosaic” practice. Goethe himself presumably would agree with Faust in extolling the importance of the utterance’s basis in the “heart” (113) and in the early Joyce, at least, a similar line is advanced in Stephen’s reprise of Galvani’s phrase “enchantment of the heart” to describe the state of creative excitement.

Booker clearly acknowledges the Bakhtinian “global concept” (Morson and Emerson) of unfinalizability, in the light of which it is unnecessary to portray the young Stephen, himself a work in process, in finalised “iron memorial aspect”, as a character who could never become Joyce (126). Booker considers that the question of subjectivity is at the heart of Modernism; surely Joyce has not missed the opportunity in *Portrait* for a portrayal of the modern artist in that light?

Stephen’s crucial flaw, in various readings, lies in his unwillingness to embrace history and to engage with society: Stephen is portrayed as seeking to escape history (Booker 224), in contrast to Joyce himself, who sought to engage with it. This criticism of course is attributable in significant part to retrospective reframing of *Portrait* from readings of *Ulysses*. However, a chronotopic reading of *Portrait* reveals Stephen as embracing history from an early age, albeit in changing ways (Chapters 7 and 8).

*The chronotope of Portrait*

In one chapter, Booker touches on the chronotope of *Portrait*, illuminated in relation to Bakhtin’s fragmentary essay on the Bildungsroman, which in turn focuses chiefly on Goethe. Booker finds in Joyce, similarly to Goethe, an acute sense of historical time having invaded the novel, an acute “chronotopicity” in awareness of situated time and space. The two authors are contrasted in respect of their point of view towards the hero of the novel, and in respect of form. The form and style of Goethe’s
*Wilhelm Meister* are stable, the young poet clearly being depicted as growing into a subject who is integrated into society, whereas Stephen in Booker’s reading attempts to escape both society and history. This comparison achieves a critical peak in respect of Wilhelm and Stephen’s contrasting attitudes to the question of compromise. Wilhelm is praised for his willingness to find a balance between art and business, whereas Stephen can be damned for his refusal to compromise (136-137).

Here however, if we apply the standard of Joyce’s own actions and expressed views, clearly Joyce would favour Stephen’s refusal to compromise. Indeed, so much of the difficulty he experienced throughout his career, from *Dubliners* through to *Finnegans Wake*, stemmed from his unwillingness to compromise his artistic vision. In a letter to Grant Richards he refuses to make various changes: they would have cost him a thousand “little regrets and self-reproaches” (*Selected Letters* 84, 74). Such views are also consonant with Joyce’s later dismissal of Goethe as a bourgeois, “boring civil servant”.

Thus, where the Dean of Studies commends the example of one Simon Moonan, Stephen might equally say ironically of Wilhelm as he did of the chameleonic and distinctly compromised Moonan: “I may not have his talent” (P 190). Particularly when one considers the high value placed on the profession of artist among writers and thinkers in turn of the century Europe, the point of view in this passage of *Portrait*, at least, appears singularly clear and uncompromising. (Also see Joyce’s private views on the importance of the artistic vocation, discussed below.)

Stephen is seen to be not only aloof and arrogant but also at the same time, lost and impuissant, prone to supporting himself morally by means of appeal to various authorities or heroes: Jesuits, St Francis Xavier, Parnell, Daedalus. Joyce in contrast subverts authority, by addressing history, contesting literary “authority” such as the canonical (but English, and therefore oppressive) Shakespeare, and by undermining the language that is wielded by authority (144, 156).

Also of interest is that both in the Bildungsroman, Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* and in *Portrait*, Booker finds an increased ironic distance between the author’s relation to the (essentially autobiographical) protagonist between the first
version of that work and the final work (*Wilhelm Meister’s Theatrical Mission* and *Stephen Hero* respectively; 117, 119.) He applies Bakhtin’s ideas about the multiplicity of chronotope, to suggest that Stephen himself, and *Portrait*, constitute separate chronotopes (128). Thus, in a work which is admittedly devoted to explicating the consciousness of Stephen, while the novel itself embodies a chronotope of the Bildungsroman, the novel of formation or in Bakhtin’s terms, the novel of “emergence”, Stephen himself in this account would be viewed on a separate chronotopic curve to crushing oblivion.

**The design of *Portrait***

In this section, an initial, not comprehensive impression of the design of *Portrait* is furnished in relation to a survey of three strands: some of Joyce’s early aesthetic and philosophical principles, specific purposive statements, and realised form. Chronologically speaking, the first two elements relate to the inceptional end of a work’s compositional history, the latter, naturally, to its completion.

**Aesthetic and philosophical aims**

As demonstrated in the following two chapters, Joyce first developed a set of critical ideas, and then, based on his readings of Aristotle, a series of aesthetic principles similar to those presented as Stephen’s aesthetic philosophy in *Stephen Hero* and in *Portrait*. These ideas are analysed in some detail in later Chapters (3-6), and for the present it is sufficient to outline some of the defining features.

An assumption implicit in the concept of “design” is that even if a writer’s philosophical viewpoint remains the same, the writer’s intentions are liable to differ from work to work. It is not my purpose to seek a single, unified intention in Joyce’s oeuvre but rather to map the purposive terrain in relation to *Portrait*. In the following two chapters, from the evidence of his critical writings and early creative writings, it is demonstrated that Joyce, far from cherishing some single purpose, such as “politics”, had begun developing a broad platform for his art, encompassing a
spectrum of artistic and social aims, long before the particular projects of *Dubliners* and of *Portrait* began in 1904.

To summarise the chiefest of Joyce’s early considerations, he sought the synthesis of the classical and the romantic tempers, the uncompromising, detailed and analytical representation of “real life”, fused with imaginative realisation. The modern project he embraced, entailed the casting off of old values, and yet Joyce clearly appreciated the importance of engaging with the philosophical and literary tradition in the service of modern ends; he would not “cast away belief” and throw precision after it (CW 101). The classical temper can be, must be reinvented in each age: it does not entail slavish adherence to past attitudes. Recent movements of an unduly romantic flavour, symbolism and aestheticism among them, produce work that does not stand up to detailed analysis. The fruits of Mangan’s fevered and generally admirable imagination likewise lacked the classical discipline and insight necessary to greatness. In the aesthetics jottings that followed Joyce’s first critical writings, we see some of his “purest” aesthetic aims: chiefly, producing an apprehensory and charged imaginative stasis; creating the emotion of joy.

**Intentive rays**

If we take the conventional view of the 1904 “Portrait” as the blueprint for *Portrait*, then Joyce in a sense announced his intentions for the novel in its thesis and themes (discussed in details in Chapter 6): *Portrait* should be read as a narrative of related, differentiating phases on the path of Stephen’s road to individuation and self-expression.

In this section I examine three purposive statements with strong resonance for the novel project; these statements are compatible also with the “blueprint”. Notably, they were all made quite some time after the onset of the project, at a time when it had foundered with the “becalming” of *Stephen Hero* in mid 1906. These are by no means critical commonplaces. In contrast, a few key authorial statements are frequently quoted in summary of *Dubliners*: the aims of exposing the theme of paralysis, employing “scrupulous meanness” (*Selected Letters* 83), making a naturalistic, “nicely polished looking-glass” wherein his fellow-Dubliners might seek
their reflection, taking “the first step towards the spiritual liberation of my country” 
(Selected Letters 88-90).

1. Expression of self

The most central intensional statement, noted by Ellmann and by some other Joyce critics, was uttered in a letter to Stanislaus on or about March 1 1907, near the end of the failed “experiment” of Rome, in the context of the very uncertain future he was facing back in Trieste, the recent history of a prolonged period of setbacks regarding the publication of Dubliners and in an uncharacteristic mood of self-doubt:

Nothing of my former mind seems to have remained except a heightened emotiveness . . . Yet I have certain ideas I would like to give form to: not as a doctrine but as the continuation of the expression of myself which I now see I began in Chamber Music. These ideas or instincts or intuitions or impulses may be purely personal. I have no wish to codify myself as anarchist or socialist or reactionary. (Selected Letters 151-2)

Joyce is writing some six months before he would reconceive Portrait. Stripped for now of the props of aesthetic philosophy, of the grand scope of his youthful lofty goals and heroic ideals, reduced to the kernel of his creative impulses, Joyce has no scientific theorem, no firebrand mission: nothing more programmatic than expression of himself. Even this aim appears to be a largely unformed cluster of germs, possibilities: “certain ideas I would like to give form to”, the seminal product of instincts, intuitions, impulses.

Seed (87) notes that Joyce read Arthur Symons’ The Symbolist Movement in 1900 with great attention, and suggests that Joyce may have been influenced by an account of the compositional process that he found there. Symons describes composition as beginning with a sensation, which is then concentrated upon in thought, after which “words present themselves”. In Chapter Eight, it is demonstrated that Joyce follows analogous lines in his account of the compositional process.
What may also have been of great interest to him is Symons’ use of Aristotle, which perhaps prompted Joyce’s reading of *De Anima* and the *Poetics* on his Paris trip of 1902/3, and his description of the concept of “rhythm”. Describing the “desecration” performed by these emerging words, which push the original sensation ever back, Symons writes: “But, guided always by the rhythm, which is the executive soul (as, in Aristotle’s definition, the soul is the form of the body), words come slowly, one by one, shaping the message” (Symons, *Symbolist Movement* pp. 71-2, qted in Seed 87).

A chronotopic reading of *Portrait* echoes Aristotle’s definition of soul as *form* to explore *Portrait* as an *in-formed* expression of the growth of Stephen’s soul. The shortcomings of the form of *Stephen Hero*, which at some point became evident to Joyce, presented him with the challenge to find means of better exploiting the signifying potential of the novel genre, to reinvent the form according to his purposes.

Although this first intensitive utterance does not refer to the autobiographical novel by name, *Dubliners* was now all but complete, and while *Stephen Hero* had been temporarily at least abandoned, probably around June 1906 (Groden, “Textual History” 84) Joyce continued to make references to “my novel”, indicating that he had abandoned perhaps the form but not the project (*Selected Letters* 143).

Richard Ellmann states a thesis at the start of his biography of Joyce, on the intertwining of Joyce’s life and art: “This book enters Joyce’s life to reflect his complex, incessant joining of event and composition. The life of an artist, but particularly that of Joyce, differs from the lives of other persons in that its events are becoming sources even as they command his present attention” (JJ 3). However, Joyce’s stated intention refers to expression of *himself* rather than of the mere *events* of his life. The project is a representation of his “soul”, which term should not be understood purely in Christian spiritual terms but also in the broader sense of Aristotle’s investigations into the psyche. Joyce in “Drama and Life” insisted on discerning divisions between the comedic circumstances of immediate reality, and the underlying great truths that can be discerned beyond actuality (CW 38-46).

Joyce’s intention for *Stephen Hero* appears to have been parallel to that for *Portrait*. Within months of having begun the first novel, he wrote to Stanislaus, in November
1904 (Selected Letters 44): “I am afraid I cannot finish my novel for a long time. I am discontented with a great deal of it and yet how is Stephen’s nature to be expressed otherwise. Eh?” The logic of the fragment Stephen Hero resembles Ellmann’s equation of “event” and composition closely; seemingly every significant event of Stephen’s young life is described, in no particular shaping order. After reading the manuscript, Curran commented that he was afraid Joyce, who had planned 63 chapters, would run out of autobiographical material (JJ 194). In the upshot, however, the novel failed comprehensively to meet his aims, and Portrait was designed according to a far more intricate pattern than mere “events” converted to creative material.

It is also of interest that in this intentive passage, Joyce should have been moved to speak about politics in the same context as his artistic aims: “These ideas or instincts or intuitions or impulses may be purely personal. I have no wish to codify myself as anarchist or socialist or reactionary”. Despite the tenor of disavowal, clearly the two elements had at one time been strongly linked in his mind, very likely with Ibsen as primary inspiration. The revolutionary tenor of the closing passages of the 1904 “blueprint” suggests that the political aspect was a recurring consideration for Joyce, certainly up to the time of his renewed interest in socialism during the Rome sojourn, which Manganiello has documented. Another philosophical strand discernible in this intentive schema is the use of the term “reactionary”—very possibly an echo of Nietzsche’s railing against the forces of reactivity, in favour of an affirmative revaluation of all values. Evidence of Joyce’s early interest in Nietzsche is in his jocular gesture of signing a letter as “James Overman” (Letters I 56), the testimony of his brother Stanislaus (MBK), a reference to Nietzsche’s theory of “The Birth of Tragedy” (1872) in “Drama and Life” and, possibly, his use of the term “vivisection” as a model of the modern process (Aubert 26). Caulfield also observes that those aspects of Stephen’s theory which most resemble Hegel, show the even greater influence of Schopenhauer (1998); who in turn greatly influenced the early Nietzsche.

One final strand of this intentive statement is worth singling out: the verses of Chamber Music being identified as that part of his career where the project of expressing himself began. Chamber Music, like Stephen Hero, at the time he was about to recast Stephen Hero as Portrait, gave him little pleasure.
I don’t like the book but I wish it were published and be damned to it. However, it is a young man’s book. I felt like that. It is not a book of love verses at all, I perceive. But some of them are pretty enough to be put to music. . . . Besides they are not pretentious and have a certain grace. I will keep a copy myself and (so far as I can remember) at the top of each page I will put an address, or a street so that when I open the book I can revisit the places where I wrote the different songs. (Selected Letters 153)

Four matters are worth noting in this assessment: firstly, the objective and dispassionate manner in which he can appraise his own work. Secondly, his objective assessment of the poems’ worth in expressing a period of his life. Thirdly, what one might term a chronotope of composition. Chamber Music has for Joyce value as a marker and expression of the writerly self he once was, one phase in the “curve of an emotion” that is a person’s life, according to the 1904 essay: the time dimension of his composition. Likewise, he speaks of the work as a unified book but also separately relates each of the component poems that contributes to the “individuating rhythm” of the whole, to the actual place of abode where a work happened to be composed. In contrast to the preacher’s imaginative, meditative exercise exploring hell, the “composition of place” (see discussion in Chapter 7), Joyce is intrigued by the time and place of composition.

Finally, despite his objectivity and misgivings, Joyce in this letter regards former phases of his artistic self with a degree of nostalgia, similarly to those beautiful passages of Portrait where Stephen notes the passing of his childhood and boyhood respectively. Stephen’s own early artistic phases have not always been treated so indulgently by critics.

2. The well-made mirror

A second intentive statement relatively little referred to in the context of Joyce’s design for Portrait is buried in a profound metaphorical extension of that same project of self-expression: in November of 1906, several months into his Rome sojourn, Joyce writes to his brother that “inter alia” in his novel he will cast a bucket deep into
the well of his soul, “sexual department”, and find there the lie of pure Irish
gentlefolk; by representing the sexual depths of his own soul he will by means of this
mirror, confront each of his countrymen with this lying rhetoric of moral and physical
“purity” (Letters II 191-2: quoted below). The theme of “revelation” would appear to
continue a theme that for Joyce was already evident with the epiphany (see following
chapter).

Stephen in Stephen Hero confirms Joyce’s theme, with perhaps a more gremial
motivation, in perceiving sensuality behind Emma’s apparent piety: “But he could not
so stultify himself as to misread the gleam in her eyes as holy or to interpret the rise
and fall of her bosom as a movement of sacred intention.” (SH 156)

This theme of Joyce’s is discussed further, below. For the present it is sufficient to
note Joyce’s implied broader aim: deep exploration of his soul and frank self-
revelation, the fruit of his scientific labours. In relation to his book reviews, we will
note a nexus in Joyce’s thoughts between this deep dipping into the well of
consciousness and his fashioning out of the reflections he brings up, a well-made
mirror wherein every soul of his race might see their own image; and there perhaps
find the glimmerings of a new conscience.

3. Forging a conscience

A third statement of intention, while not directly contextualised to any given work,
clearly has very direct relevance to the thematic preoccupations of Portrait. Joyce
wrote to Nora at a mature stage of Portrait’s realisation, on 22 August 1912, from
Dublin, where he was attempting to finalise details of the publication of Dubliners.
He recounted how the publisher Roberts had asked him to complete the novel too, and
proclaimed: “If only my book is published then I will plunge into my novel and finish
it” (Selected Letters 204).

He looks forward to meeting up with Nora in Dublin and to going to the theatre with
her. The Abbey Theatre is mentioned, that development that had been such a
disappointment to him some some years back: “The Abbey Theatre will be open and
they will give plays of Yeats and Synge. You have a right to be there because you are
my bride: and I am one of the writers of this generation who are perhaps creating at last a conscience in the soul of this wretched race. Addio!” (Selected Letters 204.)

The creation of a conscience for his race is, of course, famously the mission of Stephen in a late diary entry of Portrait. The quote suggests a closer link between Stephen and the mature author of Portrait (now aged thirty) than many critics would countenance.

Taken together, these three statements constitute a cohesive, purposive platform: self-expression, and self-revelation as a means of casting a mirror up to his countryfolk, and by this to challenge them, like himself, to re-evaluate and cast away those values into which they had all been socialised. In this way he might show the power of a strong spirit to meet the challenge of history, which Mangan for one had been unable to meet (Joyce’s paper on “James Clarence Mangan” is discussed in Chapter 4).

**Intentive motifs**

Joyce’s eschewing of the omniscient narrator in Portrait has frequently been commented upon. As a consequence, his broad aim of conveying philosophical import had to find new means of expression in form: intention’s directive rays can be refracted through treatment of central themes and motifs. In this section, some associated themes in Joyce’s design are surveyed.

**The soul**

The principle of realistic representation of “real life” which had been for Joyce a given at least since his enthusiasm for Ibsen, develops in the design of Portrait into a project of unsparing self-revelation, all the more so because psychological analysis is another outstanding claim of Ibsen’s achievement. If drama, like poetry, was to prove not the most congenial medium to accommodate Joyce’s talents and aims, at least, as Bakhtin notes, the novel is uniquely well suited to psychological depth and precision (Morson and Emerson 263-4).
Given Joyce’s purpose, unsurprisingly, the “soul” is a frequently used term in Joyce’s texts and letters. Joyce’s usage is a shifting signifier, pointing to a spiritual entity that is not purely spiritual but that, in Aristotelian fashion, also partakes of material form, as well as at times approximating to the terms “psyche”, “consciousness”, “conscience” and “self”. Late during the Rome sojourn, indeed, he senses his “spiritual barque” is on the rocks (Letters II 215).

In the 1904 “blueprint”, this usage corresponds to Pater’s in “The Child in the House”, which is the autobiographical story of the “gradual expansion of his soul” (Miscellaneous 173). Joyce of course dedicated what was intended as his first true work, *A Brilliant Career*, to his own soul. The soul is in one sense the self, and yet at other times he writes of the soul from a distanced viewpoint: referring to the future of his artistic career, Joyce writes that he will avoid whatever is suicidal to his soul (Selected Letters 74), and very late in the Rome sojourn (February 1907) his soul is figured as full of decayed ambitions as his mouth is full of decayed teeth (Letters II 216). Independently of Freud, Joyce has adopted what Bakhtin would call a Copernican view of consciousness.

The soul also resembles a depth model of the psyche, and sometimes it has Iggdrasil-like commonality with Freudian conceptions: the tree with roots deep in the instinctual soil but with branches extending to the heavens; a figure Joyce himself evoked in his first major talk (Chapter 4). In a letter dated 13 November 1906 he wrote:

Anyway my opinion is that if I put a bucket down into my own soul’s well, sexual department, I draw up Griffith’s and Ibsen’s and Skeffington’s and . . . St Aloysius’s . . . water along with my own. And I am going to do that in my novel (inter alia) and plank the bucket down before the shades and substances above mentioned to see how they like it: and if they don’t like it I can’t help them. I am nauseated by their lying drivel about pure men and pure women and spiritual love and love for ever: blatant lying in the face of truth. (Selected Letters 129)
After the scarifying Cosgrave affair of 1909, a crisis in their relationship, he expresses the change in himself in terms of gemmological crystallisation, in a letter to Nora:

> Do you know what a pearl is and what an opal is? My soul when you came sauntering to me first through those sweet summer evenings was beautiful but with the pale passionless beauty of a pearl. Your love has passed through me and now I feel my mind something like an opal, that is, full of strange uncertain hues and colours, of warm lights and quick shadows and of broken music. (*Selected Letters* 161)

We know from Ellmann’s biography that this particular episode in Joyce’s life was most painful. Joyce’s life gives testimony to the character-building force of experience on the artist’s soul. Experience is also central to Stephen’s development; not merely in his childhood where he looks forward to a new time when inexperience would fall from him (P 65), but later when experience reframes his understanding of the “horrible reality” of that only vaguely understood presentiment (99), and again when he reflects upon his life’s experience in the light of his faith: “It was his own soul going forth to experience, unfolding itself sin by sin” (103). Equally, experience is integral to his art, for “When we come to the phenomena of artistic conception, artistic gestation, and artistic reproduction I require a new terminology and a new personal experience” (209). Crucially, in the climactic statement of the novel, Stephen links his artistic vocation, the unlocking of his potential, to dialogical engagement: “Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” (253). At the core of Stephen’s artistic endeavour is the soul, not solipsism.

The soul, in Joyce’s conception, similarly to Aristotle, clearly is an organic, living form and, like the physical form, it grows. Pater’s story “The Child in the House”, an autobiographical piece with more than casual similarities to Joyce’s, thematically and stylistically, is one likely influence on *Portrait*. Florian Delial sets to musing on the “story of his spirit” in a “process of brainbuilding” from childhood, the “gradual expansion of his soul” (Pater, *Miscellaneous* 173).
In keeping with Aristotle, Joyce’s soul is not merely spirit but is also distinctly corporeal, and informed by the senses; “brainbuilding” is only one curve of its development. A point of divergence from Pater is that the developing portrait of his aesthete is centred on the beauty of the home of Florian’s childhood, rendered in a dream which raised the natural beauty of the place “a little above itself”. This is in contrast to the grim realism with which the increasing squalor of Stephen’s family circumstances are portrayed. For Joyce, reality is not to be glossed over in the rosy reveries of beautiful lies. His portrayal of the soul will be uncompromisingly true, however unpalatable the results to the common taste.

*The nature of the artist*

Some striking letters between 1905 and the first half of 1907 cast powerful light on Joyce’s speculations on the nature of the artist, which clearly was a central theme of his novel. In September 1905 he wrote to Stanislaus that his delusions about his power as a writer may be killed, but not his “delusion” that he is an “artist by temperament” (*Letters II* 110). He enlarges on this central distinction between writers and artists. Of the great mass of writers, including a number whose work and/or style he admired or at least liked in some way, only some would meet his criteria as artists. Rimbaud for instance is an artist but barely a writer in Joyce’s estimation (*Selected Letters* 77). Those who exhibit the artistic temperament may be affected by a discipline or discourse that shapes or subjugates that talent. Renan is an artist but his artistic temperament is “balanced by the temperament of a philologist” whereas Newman, who must have an artistic temperament too, is tempered by “the temperament of the theologian” (77).

Rimbaud has the exotic imagination of a Mangan but not the classical temper to portray reality, to convey great truths. Renan and Newman have artistic temperaments which presumably have been *subjugated* to the service of a discipline or a philosophy rather than having been trained towards the service of art. Joyce concludes this passage by commenting that he himself is “neither *savant* nor saint” (italics in original; 77). That is, he has neither the unfettered imagination of a

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13 The centrality of the subjugation theme for Joyce is explored in Chapter 4.
Rimbaud or a Mangan, nor the attitude of obedience to serve a particular discipline or ideology like Aquinas or Newman; rather, he will express himself according to his self-understanding. Nor presumably, would he allow his art to be subjugated to the service of a political doctrine.

Measured by Joyce’s own criteria, Stephen as portrayed in Portrait appears to have the artist’s temperament, and is already a writer of sorts. His “impatient temper” is evidenced by, for example, his riotous sensual episodes, and equally by his imaginative dialogical engagement with, and reinterpretation of, social discourses—with the Church during his reprised phase of piety, with aestheticism and romanticism during his later experiment with the villanelle. This impatient temper, also evidenced by his rich perceptions of the world, is also the key to a vivid apprehension of art and beauty. Instances include Stephen’s “symbolist” experiment on the train to Cork (discussed in Chapter Seven), his embracing of the artist’s vocation in a joyful vision of his own destiny, the joyful epiphany of the wading girl; equally, small details such as the fact that the Dean of Studies’ use of the word “jupe” excites his sensual imagination are further evidence. At the same time, his studious recourse to the “classical temper” through Aristotle and Aquinas shows that Stephen has the discipline and attitude, the potential to achieve one day the synthesis of the classical and the romantic that we see in the highest art, since their “unrest is the condition of all achievement” (CW 74).

In other letters, Joyce’s high esteem for the vocation of artist is made manifest: a journalist is castigated for daring to try to match his intellect with Tolstoy’s (Selected Letters 73); the artist is praised for being a serious writer who will NOT compromise (Selected Letters 74; cf. discussion of Booker above) and who follows up on his convictions; separately, he is incredulous that Nora can perceive him as being like other men when in fact he is an artist (81).

**The individual**

An often-noted key progression in Joyce’s development, according to Ellmann’s biography, was his gradual distancing from the concept of heroism. If Joyce perceives himself as neither savant nor saint, nor does he aspire to be that object of Nietzsche’s
scorn, the “man of action”; rather, he seeks to make an exemplar of individual passion and commitment. In a letter of 7 February 1905, from Pola (all letters quoted are to Stanislaus unless otherwise noted) he comments: “I am sure however that the whole structure of heroism is, and always was, a damned lie and that there cannot be any substitute for the individual passion as the motive power of everything—art and philosophy included” (Selected Letters 54).

Joyce’s is primarily an individual battle. He claims that the “struggle against conventions in which I am at present involved was not entered into by me so much as a protest against these conventions as with the intention of living in conformity with my moral nature”. Rather than allowing his soul to become reactively entwined in the nets of political discourse, he responds to the wisdom of the Delphic oracle echoed in Nietzsche’s essay: “know thyself” (UAH 72). To this principle he effectively adds a second and a third: “be thyself; express thyself”.

Approximately a year and a half after writing the above letter, and at the end of his troubled Rome sojourn, some of Joyce’s earlier enthusiasms, aired in the 1904 essay, are waning. His interest in “socialism and the rest” has left him (Letters II 217) at least for the present, his enthusiasm for anti-clericalism and the heresies of “the Nolan” at present leaves him cold (152). This new indifference, he complains, should demonstrate his temperament of artist but, since he is too weary, for the nonce it does not. While it is possible that these former enthusiasms returned to him once he had left fulltime employment at the bank, it can be perceived in this letter of March 1907 that Joyce begins to sense true individual heroism as intrinsic to the artist’s work, not a separate battlefront. In a revised spirit of heroism he will soon attempt to emulate Ibsen’s own tremendous battle, to create an artistic form of his own within which to find realisation of his still-evolving ideas, instincts, intuitions, impulses (an idea Joyce expresses in his review of Ibsen’s Catilina: see Chapter 6). Some six months later, this bears fruit in the reconception of Portrait in a new form. Stephen in Portrait likewise suffers failures and setbacks, unlike the cockier “Stephen Hero”; his struggle otherwise, with social forces and with art, would hardly be worth recording.

14 Stanislaus Joyce also refers to this oracle in his Dublin Diary (33), in April 1904.
Richard Ellmann influentially depicted Joyce’s method of composition as the absorption of stray material: a method not imaginative enough to please Joyce himself (JJ 250). No source is cited by Ellman; rather he implicitly substantiates the claim with an illustrative enlargement: how Joyce had effectively reworked George Moore’s *Vain Fortune* in “The Dead” (JJ 250). However, when Stephen in *Portrait* advises that the first step in understanding art and beauty is to understand the imagination (see Chapter 3), we need not assume that he has in mind a purely intertextual imagination that consists of reworking the texts of others. On the contrary, the key lies in Stephen’s responses to his reading: “retaining nothing of all he read save that which seemed to him an echo or a prophecy of his own state” (P 155). Crudely put, Stephen chooses to engage with those texts which echo or stimulate his imagination, and thus agency resides within Stephen’s creative instinct, rather than within external texts.

A review of Joyce’s critical writings shows that as early as 1903 he was preoccupied with the imagination. This obsession seems to have remained with him. Eugene Jolas notes that much later in Joyce’s life, in Zurich, Joyce “became increasingly absorbed by the problem of imaginative creation. He read Coleridge again, and discussed with me the romantic poet’s distinction between imagination and fancy. His approach was quite humble and he even asked himself if he really possessed imagination” (Jolas 20). While Joyce very likely felt he could not match a Yeats or a Mangan in that regard, the 1902 paper on Mangan (see Chapter 4) strongly implies that he can by compensation offer the tempering, Apollonian virtues of his Jesuit-trained orderly mind, and synthesise the classical and the romantic.

Nonetheless, his early letters testify that Joyce did consider himself to have this quality. From Rome he writes of his imagination being “starved at present” due to his tiredness and overwork (*Selected Letters* 121). Later, complaining of a condition where the imagination is weak, he notes that he has ideas he can hardly give realisation to: “My imagination is so weak that I am afraid all the things I was going to write about have become uncaprurable images” (140); he is “too cold” to write some “three or four immortal stories” (142). This implies a processive view of art: originating “ideas, intuitions and instincts” are *realised* slowly through the
imagination. Imagination in Joyce’s conception, then, is not the exceptional, romantic “inspiration” model exemplified in the composition of the villanelle in Portrait, but rather a prosaic labour, close to Bakhtin’s conception of prosaic creativity. Stephen Hero in contrast was not imaginative enough (see Chapter 6).

A couple of other references cast further light on his conception of the imagination: in conventional terms personified as a muse, but also in terms of the reproductive metaphor that Ellmann emphasises. In a letter to Nora on 31 August 1909, not long back from his visit to Nora’s childhood territory, Galway, he asks:

You understand now your strange erring wilful jealous lover, do you not, dearest? . . .
You have been to my manhood what the idea of the Blessed Virgin Mary was to my boyhood. O tell me, my sweet love, that you are satisfied with me now. One word of praise from you fills me with joy, a soft rose-like joy. (Letters II 242)

This passage prefigures a number of elements from the villanelle passage of Portrait, as Ellmann notes: wilfulness, rose-like, joy. etc. While the figure of the muse is a conventional one, and pre-eminent in Dante, it appears to have been an entirely sincere experience for Joyce, even featuring in the 1904 blueprint, purely in the symbolic realm, since the corporeal muse had not as yet chanced into his life.

On 21 August 1912 he wrote to Nora in despair upon receiving the news that Dubliners would not after all be published, and spoke of “the book I have written, the child which I have carried for years and years in the womb of my imagination as you carried in your womb the children you love, and of how I had fed it day after day out of my brain and my memory” (Selected Letters 202-3). Partly of course, the appeal is tailored to elicit sympathy from Nora in terms she cannot fail to empathise with. Joyce however was pleased enough with this metaphor of the imagination to have employed it broadly in Portrait, and again in the Oxen of the Sun episode of Ulysses.
(Im)Mortality

Finally, another theme in Joyce’s letters relates to the frustrations of being a writer, the incessant mundane problems of subsistence, and the saga of his efforts to get published (Dubliners) without censorship: survival as an artist, and ensuring one’s immortality.

Towards the end of his Rome sojourn, Joyce speaks of the need for a definitive decision: should he become a writer or a “patient Cousins” (Letters II 217). He fears “mental extinction” and decries the parlous state of his energy and enthusiasms. Another form of extinction, however, since it would divert him from the immortality he craved, would be to lower himself to engage in less worthy projects. Dismissing a number of novels that he has read lately, he comments that: “If I had a phonograph or a clever stenographist I could certainly write any of the novels I have read lately in seven or eight hours”. That, of course, is not the kind of “arduous good” that the 1904 essay’s subject sought. The rigorous nature of his artistic aims is echoed in his eventual disappointment with Chamber Music (Letters II 219). One reference to his writing methods, couched about a year after commencing Stephen Hero (February 1905), is of close interest:

It seems to me that what astonishes most people in the length of the novel is the extraordinary energy in the writer and his extraordinary patience. It would be easy for me to do short novels if I chose but what I want to wear away in this novel cannot be worn away except by constant dropping. Gogarty used to pipe ‘63’ in treble when I told him the number of the chapters. (Selected Letters 56).

Joyce’s later practice provides in sharp relief, a clear measure of the development of his methods. The later Joyce still seeks to “wear away” at resistant material but in a very different way: attention and intention focused sharply on imaginative realisation of germinal material, not the relatively crude approach of “wearing away” at a subject with the buildup of details. The first step, as Stephen realises in Portrait, is to strip away all non-essential details, to apprehend the essence of the image before working to give it expression: “During this process all those elements which he deemed common and insignificant fell out of the scene” (P 70).
The analogy between the artist’s life and practice is complete. To preoccupy oneself with mortal concerns of money and security is to be enchained to the path of grinding extinction, as he learnt in Rome. To strip away the non-essentials of one’s art and concentrate on the realisation of the image is the path to immortality. In Portrait, Stephen consistently stares down images of death and chooses the path of art (Chapters 7 and 8).

**Chronotopic form**

The third element of the concept of “design”, in addition to aesthetics and intention, is form. It is with this element perhaps that we approach closer to the heart of the artistic process, to the “aesthetic instinct”, and yet Joyce’s considerations in regard to this aspect are little known: we are aware of Joyce’s general aims and principles, we know something about his early passion for the drama, and for lyric poetry, and we know about two typologies he explored: the tragedy versus comedy, and what he called the three forms: the lyric, epic and the dramatic (see Chapter 4).

About the novel form, however, Joyce wrote next to nothing. Beyond the fact that he engaged in a review of the novel in English, and read short stories and old Italian novellas during the Rome sojourn (Melchiori), we know little about the deliberations that resulted in his revamping the novel form of *Stephen Hero* drastically, in what would evolve into *Portrait*. There are no apparent breakthroughs in aesthetics or other critical pronouncements. It is, therefore, left to us to infer what we can from the available evidence.

The broad differences in form between *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait* are self-evident: the projected 63 chapters of the former become five. *Stephen Hero* is comprehensive, apparently covering every episode in Stephen’s life, *Portrait* compressed and elliptical. The narrative of *Stephen Hero* is diffuse and sluggish, that of *Portrait* marked by discontinuities without explanation. *Stephen Hero* is generally referred to as a “nineteenth century” form, or as a picaresque (Kenner: *Dublin’s Joyce* 109); *Portrait* is often described as modernist, or as a Bildungsroman.
The form of *Portrait* therefore, is examined with the aid of some Bakhtinian principles. Bakhtin notes that a problem with traditional literary criticism is that it is based on classical “poetics”, which do not address the novel form, and his concept of prosaics stands to address this issue.

From a Bakhtinian perspective, “there are three broad ways in which works can be interpreted” (Morson and Emerson 286): according to author’s intention, by means of modern interpretations from our own perspective, or by dialogic creative understanding. The former concept is for Bakhtin, as we have observed, problematic. Readings which enclose a work “within an epoch”, according to a writer’s intentions or according to meanings found by contemporaries, severely constrict the reader’s creativity (Morson and Emerson 286). The second approach, of making modern interpretations from our own perspective is however in Bakhtin’s view much worse, since it effectively marginalises the writer’s aims altogether, while the third way is clearly one that he most favours, and the path by which I attempt to pursue a chronotopic reading of *Portrait*.

Just as, for Bakhtin, the individual has untapped potential, so too does a text, and part of the critic’s job is to engage with the inexhaustible potential of a work, to “develop or exploit the potentials actually present in it” (Morson and Emerson 287). Great writers engage with the past to create potential for the future, and much of this cultural knowledge is bound up in genre itself (286). One might deduce that it is also open to the reader to examine a given work in the light of this cultural legacy of genre. Chronotopic motifs: words, scenes, tropes of a particular genre, evoke the memory sense of that genre (374) and are markers of it.

Importantly, a dialogical creative understanding of the writerly subject’s intersubjectivity, entails neither subjugation to nor being controlled by, socially constrained discourses. Thus, for Stephen’s consciousness in *Portrait* to reflect the language of aestheticism does not necessarily indicate Stephen’s being portrayed as an aesthete, but only suggests his dialogical engagement with a recent literary movement. Dialogical creative understanding relies upon a “double and dialogic” activity from a position of outsideness (Morson and Emerson 289).
As noted in Chapter One, for Bakhtin a superior chronotope embodies a conjunction of creativity, responsibility and history (120). The “irony school” of Portrait readings in effect strips all three elements away from its subject and filtering consciousness—Stephen—and thus from the novel itself. Stephen can be viewed in a postmodern way as a mere function of preceding discourses; the Bakhtinian model, however, offers the intersubjective, dialogical agent (176) as the hero of a work.

The novel has great potential as an arena for acute, precise ethical deliberation. In addition, “various literary genres may be best at understanding different realms of existence” (Morson and Emerson 366). How this might apply to a novel like Portrait is hinted at in Bakhtin’s discussion of Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister, where the emergence of historical time in the Bildungsroman is emphasised as a defining feature of its formal power. In respect of Portrait, we find Stephen going through a series of defining relationships to history (Chapters 7 & 8).

It would be most surprising if Joyce, given his career-long interest in the artistic process, had not taken advantage of the evolutionary properties of the novel to find a form reflective of the consciousness of an evolving artist in a series of phases, particularly in the one novel which declares its subject to be precisely that.
Part Two:

The *Portrait* in another light
CHAPTER THREE:

THE FRAME AND SCOPE OF THE IMAGINATION

In Part Two of this thesis we examine Portrait in the “light” of associated texts internal to Joyce’s development, and bearing on the eventual development of Portrait, by giving witness to two primary elements of design: Joyce’s general aesthetic aims and principles, and emerging purposes specific to his first novel. In this chapter, firstly, a textual cross section is furnished, which affords some insights into the evolution of Joyce’s design from the 1904 “blueprint” essay, through Stephen Hero to Portrait. We then retrace the earliest beginnings of Joyce’s imaginative growth chronologically from his earliest days up to the completion of his formal education. This strand climaxes in his early artistic breakthrough with the epiphany form, and it is argued that the “epiphany” should be viewed in the developmental context of an early, albeit incomplete realisation of Joyce’s aesthetic aims, rather than as an integral part of Stephen’s aesthetics.

The first step in the direction of truth is to understand the frame and scope of the intellect itself, to comprehend the act itself of intellection. Aristotle’s entire system of philosophy rests upon his book of psychology and that, I think, rests on his statement that the same attribute cannot at the same time and in the same connexion belong to and not belong to the same subject. The first step in the direction of beauty is to understand the frame and scope of the imagination, to comprehend the act itself of esthetic apprehension. Is that clear? (P 208)
The double helix

In this and in the following chapter Stephen’s often-neglected invitation to sleuth the 
aesthetic instinct (SH 186) is taken up in an attempt to retrace the steps of Joyce’s 
intellective and imaginative progress. Throughout this developmental history, we 
explore Joyce’s understanding of Aristotle’s doctrine: *ars imitatur naturam in sua operatione*, “meaning by this that art reproduces nature by the imitation of its 
formative processes and therefore becomes an equivalent of nature” (Eco, *Middle 
Ages* 41-2). One way Joyce expressed this view was in the metaphor of artistic 
conception, gestation and reproduction, which he employed repeatedly.15

Mahaffey (“Giacomo Joyce” 390) suggests that one might plot Joyce’s artistic 
development over “more than one set of axes”, among them “biographical co- 
dordinates” and the progress of his imaginative and mythifying responses to life. With 
a similar aim, and taking a leaf from Bakhtin’s approach of finding guiding analogies 
in science (Holquist, *Dialogism* 127), we might apply to the process of Joyce’s artistic 
“reproduction”, the appropriate molecular metaphor of DNA synthesis and the double 
helix.16 Stephen, in the passage reproduced at the head of this chapter, obligingly 
supplies the identity of those twisting spirals that form the twin uprights of the genetic 
ladder: the intellect and the imagination.17 In the following chapter it is demonstrated 
that Joyce in 1902 set his goal as the synthesis of the classical and the romantic: when 
the two strands of the imagination and the intellect combine powerfully, as they begin 
to do for Joyce in 1904, the work of creative synthesis begins (see discussion of 
“James Clarence Mangan” in the following chapter). The classical, intellective helix 
supports and restrains the romantic, imaginative helix and prevents it from collapsing

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15 Likewise, Coleridge’s theory of the imagination is imbued with the metaphor of biological growth (Abrams 124). Shelley draws a similar metaphor in his *Defence of Poetry*, emphasising that the 
creating mind can have no control over or cognisance of the process, as Abrams (192) notes.

16 Joyce’s attendance at a Natural Philosophy (physics) lecture in 1899 demonstrated his own “interest 
in a new scientific vocabulary” (Curran 24; see also Rice) on Stephen’s apparent interest in science, in 
*Portrait*.

17 Bowen notes that the creative process is also metaphorised throughout Joyce’s books as one of 
ingestion, or in an alchemical metaphor (426). Still another metaphor is found in Joyce’s 
excrementitious description of the creation of indelible ink in *Finnegans Wake* (McCarthy 602).
into anarchy: in the view of Joyce’s early essay on “Subjugation”, an imagination left too wild becomes formless (see Chapter 4). The romantic helix offers a wild enchanting beauty: it enriches and enlivens the classical helix, feeding it unexpected images, emotions and senses through the horizontal rungs of the ladder, conveying quasi electrical signals that stimulate the “enchantment of the heart” that the artist senses “when the esthetic image is first conceived in his imagination”.

The helix (from the Greek words *helix*, a spiral, and *helissein*, to turn around; *Chambers Dictionary*) is in mathematics a “curve on a developable surface”. A portrait, we recall in *Portrait’s* 1904 thesis, likewise should be a succession of images of the subject on a “curve” of development (Scholes and Kain 60). The coil is screw-shaped, *Chambers* tells us; thus it is fashioned to penetrate resistant surfaces, just as Joyce decreed the intellective task of the drama is to penetrate surface reality to secure the great truths that can be found beyond it (“Drama and Life”; CW 40).

The twisting spiral of the helix is suggestive of propulsion, as it acts like a propellor: The French word *hélice* is defined as an “*Appareil de propulsion ou de traction, dont la forme rappelle celle d’une vis; helice de bateau, d’avion*” (*Nouveau Petit Larousse Illustré* 1938). Just so, Stephen’s development is propelled by the growth of his imagination and intellect, intricately intertwined.

In this chapter, we trace the spiral of Joyce’s imaginative helix from earliest times up to the end of his formal education. The evidence is very sketchy, until the climactic evolution of the epiphany. Prior to this, to afford a contextualising glimpse of Joyce’s evolving artistic skill throughout the earliest years of the compositional history of *Portrait*, a textual cross-section of one small incident’s reframing changes through succeeding versions of the novel is provided.

**Reframing antextextes: a textual cross-section**

It is characteristic of Joyce’s compositional methods that he frequently referred back to antecedent texts: for example, he trawled through *Stephen Hero* in composing *Portrait* and struck out passages he had reused, with a crayon. At the same time, he would generally attempt to improve on them: thus, the successive refinements of one
small incident such as the “Malahide” story are suggestive of the evolving design of Joyce’s intentions.

In a prior, small textual cross section (Chapter 1), two different versions of one fragment were used to measure changes in Stephen’s attitude to history. In this cross-section, changes in representation of a period of the subject’s profound religiosity (Joyce himself in the 1904 portrait, Stephen Dedalus in *Stephen Hero* and then in *Portrait*) are examined to compare successive versions of Stephen’s relations with this most profound of socially discursive “nets”: the Church.

The original rendition (assuming that it was not also, prior to this, the subject of one of the lost Epiphanies) illustrates a period of great devotional piety in the life of the subject of the 1904 essay:

Use of reason is by popular judgement antedated by some seven years and so it is not easy to set down the exact age at which the natural sensibility of the subject of this portrait awoke to the ideas of eternal damnation, the necessity of penitence and the efficacy of prayer. . . . He ran through his measure like a spendthrift saint, astonishing many by ejaculatory fervours, offending many by airs of the cloister. One day in a wood near Malahide a labourer had marvelled to see a boy of fifteen praying in an ecstasy of Oriental posture. (Scholes and Kain 60)

The Malahide incident in the essay is followed by narrative exposition ironically contrasting the boy’s profound religious zeal to the “marketable goodness” practised by others, which “makes it possible to give comfortable assent to propositions without ordering one’s life in accordance with them” (60). This is clearly a defining irony; Stephen’s profound, uncompromising religiosity shows up mere semblance on the part of others. Joyce goes on to satirise further the “digestive value of religion” and those confessors who aspire to be “in theory at least, a man of the world” (60). The circumstances of the incident are portrayed in the barest, most unambiguous detail as Joyce concentrates on the rhetorical point.

In *Stephen Hero*, the incident is used to make the same point, but in a more ambitious scope. It is used in a scene related to Stephen’s pursuit of Emma Clery, and thus the
primary focus is no longer on the Malahide incident itself. Indeed, whether or not Joyce intended this theme, it becomes apparent that Stephen’s habit of worship has transferred from religiosity to worshipping at her feet: for “He remembered almost every word she had said from the first time he had met her”. As part of his devotion, at her request he sings her “one of the few Irish melodies which he knew, “My love was born in the North Countree”, which would appear to be a hymn of love.

Emma’s pro-Irish revival, pro-Church attitude distresses him, and in disappointment he turns critical scrutiny onto her soul, where he perceives very little in the way of “the presence of a spiritual principle in her worthy of so significant a name”. We must, of course, frame our view of Stephen’s perceptions cautiously as there is a sardonic reference to Stephen, as Emma-worshipper, being “no more than half-conscious under the influence of her charm”.

Besides, the clean lines and simple depiction of Joyce’s devoutness in the 1904 essay are now confused and complicated with a countervailing strand, of sensuality:

He submitted himself to the perfumes of her body and strove to locate a spiritual principle in it: but he could not. . . . By all outward signs he was compelled to esteem her holy. But he could not so stultify himself as to misread the gleam in her eyes as holy or to interpret the rise and fall of her bosom as a movement of a sacred intention. (SH 156)

In this second framing of the incident, the depth of Stephen’s former devoutness has been drawn into parallel with the narrative of his fascination with her, and his dual prowess with deep worship, his “spendthrift religiousness” is contrasted to Emma’s mere show of virtue. The narrative continues to reproduce the satirical discussion of the “marketable goodness” and the “digestive value” of the sacraments, of the 1904 version. However, the original theme has been diluted, as it confounds Emma’s conventionally “proper” and repressive attitude to her own desires, with the essentially separate matter of religious faith. To suggest that Emma has a sensual nature is not to imply that her faith is not genuine. The ensuing contrasting of Stephen’s devoutness in Malahide against the generalised social attitude of a faith
based on mere accommodating semblance of all matters religious, is therefore logically misrelated to the central object of the narrative.

While the parallels between Stephen’s religious worship and his amatory worship are intriguing, the latter undercuts the former by contaminating the self-righteous scorn and criticism with his own excitable impulses. While *Stephen Hero* is a more ambitious reframing, and has the benefit of dramatic interest in reflecting on Stephen’s preoccupation with Emma, it also loses some of the clarity and sharp focus of the original utterance, owing to the interference of an undisciplined design that embraces comic parallels, repetition, overt narrative point of view (characterised by Rice as “Cartesian”, and contrary to Joyce’s praise of a work which is not “stupidly explained” (CW 55), in a tone approaching the kinetic effects of sarcasm: “he wondered whether the God of the Roman Catholics would put him into hell because he had failed to understand that most marketable goodness which makes it possible to give comfortable assent to propositions without in the least ordering one’s life in accordance with them” (SH 156).

Thus, the first framing of the Malahide incident is relatively simple: the devoutness of the subject is illustrated by his gestures, and underscored by the reaction of a labourer who had chanced upon him. The framing in *Stephen Hero* is more ambitious in drawing an implied parallel between a former phase of Stephen’s devotion, and its current object, although Joyce attempts too much, and fails, by bringing Emma’s perceived sensuality also into the equation. Like the first framing, however, it still draws a rather simplistic moral fable: Stephen is genuinely a deep worshipper, while others are shallow or dissemblers.

*Portrait’s* is a far more sophisticated framing, which recalls Bakhtin’s view that the novel is a form uniquely suited to precise ethical deliberation. This is achieved, however, not by overt narratorial sarcasm and irony, but rather in a dramatic event where the Malahide incident is used not only to evoke the former apostate, to depict present phases of his consciousness and his relations with others, but also to draw implicit lines for his futurity. The “cheap shot” of crude comparisons between the subject and society has been replaced by detailed psychological analysis that also indicates aspects of Stephen’s relationship to society.
In *Stephen Hero* the incident is recalled in memory (possibly it had also been recounted earlier, in a lost part of the manuscript, but the wording suggests otherwise). In *Portrait* that same device is used, and again it is embroiled in a narrative involving Emma. (Contrary to a popular assumption, the word “Emma” is indeed used, three times, in *Portrait*.) This time Joyce has improved the dyadic relationship with Emma to employ the Ibsenian staple of the triangle: for Ibsen, Joyce noted, is a writer who “writes a play about three people” (CW 99). This time the incident that triggers Stephen’s memory of Malahide is a perceived slight by Emma, and a possible betrayal by his friend Cranly, as Cranly salutes her and she bows across Stephen to him. The moral certitude of *Stephen Hero* and the essay, where an obvious and pointed comparison is drawn between Stephen’s devotion and the general public’s semblance, has been replaced with ambiguity, uncertainty, and a fair-minded comparison between Cranly’s remembered rudeness and his own.

Did that explain his friend’s listless silence, his harsh comments, the sudden intrusions of rude speech with which he had shattered so often Stephen’s ardent wayward confessions? Stephen had forgiven freely for he had found this rudeness also in himself. (P 232)

The passage goes on to illustrate this point in relation to the Malahide incident, reframed considerably. Notably, the cockily self-righteous attitude of Stephen, implied by the narrator, has been replaced with a more objective viewpoint, where Stephen reasonably considers that he has done little better than others, in relation to himself.

The novel, Bakhtin notes, has a unique capacity to treat detailed ethical considerations and Joyce exploits that in *Portrait* far better than in the former draft. In contrast to the simplistic certainties of the previous framings, in *Portrait* the dominant tone expresses ethical complexity and incertitude, the desire to penetrate to the realm of truth through the clues offered by small details. Stephen’s artistic eye observes Emma’s demeanour, Cranly’s distracted attention, a possible flush on his cheek. If it is a flush, was it occasioned by Emma or by the preceding crude word uttered by Wells? (“Ballocks”). The real conclusion is conveyed in a detail rather than in omniscient narration: “The light had waned. He could not see.” Stephen’s mind thus refers to
memories, seeking to comprehend Cranly’s behaviour from clues in the history of their relationship.

The Malahide incident is now reframed with extra circumstantial detail, in what is effectively a potted parody of a pilgrimage:

> And he remembered an evening when he had dismounted from a borrowed creaking bicycle to pray to God in a wood near Malahide. He had lifted up his arms and spoken in ecstasy to the sombre nave of the trees, knowing that he stood on holy ground and in a holy hour. And when two constabulary men had come into sight round a bend in the gloomy road he had broken off his prayer to whistle loudly an air from the last pantomime. (P 232)

The first two sentences heighten the depiction of his devotion with the achieving of a lyrical effect, the “verbal vesture of an emotion” in Joyce’s Aristotle-inspired definition, conveyed in concrete details of his deeds and thoughts. The reader is made directly privy to Stephen’s subjective experience, in preference to the exterior narrative framing that had defined the description of the “Oriental posture” of the subject in the previous two versions. At the heart of Bakhtin’s dialogism, according to Holquist (Dialogism 20-21), is a duality of vision: one’s vision of self (always infinite and open) is always of a very different nature to one’s view of the other: it is invariably closed. This insight has strong resonance for the 1904 self-portrait, which in effect argues that portraiture of the other in closed “iron memorial aspect” should be substituted for a view consonant with the subject’s own processive view of self, in a succession of phases. Stephen in this flashback is initially depicted in the original, “pure” sense of the incident, as being at one with his faith. This sense is conveyed chronotopically, according to the interior time-space relation expressed in his consciousness: he is “on holy ground and in a holy hour”.

> And yet this heightened, immediate and lyrical moment is immediately undercut, in an echo of that rhythm of exaltation and undercutting that Kenner has noted as a structural principle of the novel at the chapter level (Dublin’s Joyce 129). In my dialogical reading, however, this is not an entropic pattern that reduces Stephen after every triumph; rather, this rhythm is the dialogical pulsation of the character’s
development. The Malahide incident rapidly descends to bathos, the comical anti-climax where Stephen suddenly switches to whistling pantomime. At first glance this is more fuel for the irony school; in retrospect the creaky bike, the florid gestures and words seem to reframe the entire incident as a farce illustrating Stephen’s essential ridiculousness.

However, the rhetorical point illustrated by the anecdote has developed beyond the obvious finger-pointing of the earlier versions, to create a subtler and more complex framing that is deeply revelatory of Stephen’s experience and inner life. Now, the memory is recalled as an incident where Stephen was rude to himself. In other words, he had allowed his genuinely deep devotions to be interrupted by the weakness of self-consciousness, which in reality is consciousness of the gaze of the other. The Malahide incident becomes a compressed yet highly developed vignette expressing the kind of social nets that are flung at young souls, that enclose the young boy even in his most private, vivid, heightened moments.

While one might expect the devout Stephen’s behaviour to have been strongly approved of in this Church-obsessed society, Stephen is clearly aware of social constraints and mores, unspoken rules about what is acceptable and appropriate behaviour. There is no narrative exposition about the rules of “marketable goodness”, but the narrative itself demonstrates Stephen’s awareness that the restrained, conventional, limited practice of outward forms of religion is preferred to actual devotion. His conviction and passion are in fact astonishing and perhaps even offensive, rather than approved of. Stephen breaks off his devotions because he is perfectly well aware of the perceptions of others.

Not insignificantly perhaps, his priestly devotions in Portrait are interrupted by another form of authority, the policeman, rather than by a labourer as in the two previous versions; and yet it is Stephen who, in self-policing role, to paraphrase the terms of his own aesthetics, apprehends and arrests himself: albeit not in a condition of stasis. Here in silent form we witness an association that is made frequently and overtly in Stephen Hero, but otherwise only faintly in Portrait: the equivalence of policeman and priest. Stephen makes the initial sally to his friends:
How faithful all you fellows are to Mother Church! Why would you not be as faithful to the tradition of the helmet as to that of the tonsure?

— We remain true to the Church because it is our national Church, the Church our people have suffered for and would suffer for again. The police are different. We look upon them as aliens, traitors, oppressors of the people.

— The old peasant down the country does not seem to be of your opinion when he counts over his greasy notes and says, “I’ll put the priest on Tom an’ I’ll put the polisman on Mickey”. . . .

— No no, it is Irish peasant wisdom: he balances the priest against the polisman and a very nice balance it is for they are both of good girth. A compensative system! (SH 64)

This association and juxtaposition also occurs elsewhere in the earlier novel (e.g. 50, 229, 231: where Christian Brother substitutes for “priest”), and the logic of this intermingling of sacred and secular authority is perhaps best expressed in the following narrative exposition of Stephen’s thoughts: “. . . an island in which all the power and riches are in the keeping of those whose kingdom is not of this world, an island in which Caesar confesses Christ and Christ confesses Caesar” (SH 146).

The Malahide incident in its final incarnation in Portrait of course evokes Kershner’s analysis of the “Panopticon” (1993), the all-seeing punitive social gaze to which Stephen is subjected (see Chapter 2). The fact that Stephen rebukes himself for being “rude” to himself in repressing his own nature is a clear sign that he takes responsibility for self-expression. Here then is an earlier phase of Stephen’s development where we witness the kind of intersubjective net of self-consciousness and abashedness that a morally courageous artist must cast off in order to be free to self-express. The incident is so framed as to suggest that Stephen, who has not forgotten, will not make that kind of compromise in the future.

Ultimately, it is himself, not the priest nor the policeman, who will determine his moral attitudes. This is an excellent prognosis for Stephen’s future intentive agency. This does not mean that Stephen seeks absolute freedom from society and history, only that he will seek his own direction in the kind of contestatory intentive field that, Bakhtin implies, surrounds every utterance.
The matter of artistic freedom is clearly important to the progress of the artist, as the triangulation between priest, policeman and the artist’s vocation is completed elsewhere in Stephen Hero:

For it cannot be urged too strongly on the public mind that the tradition of art is with the artists and that even if they do not make it their invariable practice to outrage these limits of decency the public mind has no right to conclude therefrom that they do not arrogate for themselves an entire liberty to do so if they choose. It is as absurd, wrote the fiery-hearted revolutionary, for a criticism itself established upon homilies to prohibit the elective courses of the artist in his revelation of the beautiful as it would be for a police-magistrate to prohibit the sum of any two sides of a triangle from being together greater than the third side. (SH 80)

This textual cross-section has revealed the increasing subtlety and complexity of the depiction of Stephen’s mind. The framing of the earliest text, demonstrates a subject who is apparently ironical and superior to his society and peers. In Stephen Hero, Stephen is in a similar mode, albeit with complications and with a more ambitious scope. Nonetheless, the achieved form falls well short of the moral complexity and subtlety of the final version. The vignette in Stephen Hero engenders a negative, kinetic emotion rather than joy (the importance of these qualities is enlarged upon in discussion of the Paris notebook, Chapter 4). As an expression of Stephen’s soul and conscience (Emma’s too) it is simplistic and self-congratulatory. It fails to cast light on Stephen as an artist.

The passage in Stephen Hero that we have commented upon, occurs well over halfway in the fragment, and was probably composed in 1905 or early 1906. The final version of the parallel passage in Portrait may have been composed as late as 1912, according to Hans Walter Gabler’s investigations (“Seven Lost Years”). Clearly Joyce’s finely evolved artistic process was not achieved overnight. In order to view its origins, we now retrace the first steps towards Joyce’s image of beauty, his imaginative curve, back into the late nineteenth century.
Early imaginings

The developmental research bearing closest resemblance to my own is that of Jacques Aubert in *The Aesthetics of James Joyce* (1992: *Introduction à l’Esthétique de James Joyce* 1973), who likewise examines Joyce’s early creative aspirations, and his intellectual development from the evidence of his critical writings. Aubert’s psychoanalytical history of Joyce’s development focuses on the epiphany and its role in Joyce’s ultimately failed (in Aubert’s view) aesthetics. From a Lacanian perspective, Aubert traces two conditions of artistic enunciation: self-assertion, and recognition not of the Ego but of a divided Subject, in relation to the Desire of the Other (57). While the frame and scope of the current research are quite different, one concurs with Aubert, whose view must be contrasted to the historical critical approaches outlined in the previous chapter, that Joyce, as early as 1900 was: “. . . less intent on fighting ambient ideologies, whether political or ethical, . . . than on delineating—beyond even the obvious seduction exercised by contemporary artists, philosophers or writers—the major aspects and conditions of his own artistic enunciation” (56).

In relation to Bakhtin’s contestatory field of intentionality, however, it must be noted that these “ambient ideologies”, metaphorised as “nets” in *Portrait*, impel the narrative climaxes of *Portrait* as Stephen struggles for (relative, intersubjective) individual freedom, particularly with the Catholic Church (see Chapters 7 and 8).

While not a great deal is known about Joyce’s creative writings prior to the period when he began *Portrait*, and little has survived beyond some fragments—poems and epiphanies—the following brief review of his earliest experiments demonstrates that Joyce’s artistic soul was a long time in gestation, and passed through a series of phases. Early patterns of artistic and intellective striving are replicated and developed in greater elaboration: the shadowy prose experiment, the “silhouette”, becomes an illumination of the obscure regions of the mind, or of actuality, in the epiphany. Joyce’s early schoolboy discussion of the theme of “subjugation” develops into a complicated paradigm of the incorporation and “subjugation” of the romantic into the classical. His juvenile exploration of the theme “Trust not appearances” becomes a
key to analysis of the underlying work of art: beyond the mere semblance of drama, poetry, and prose, Joyce assesses true art according to the philosophical weight it imparts, its ability to represent actuality and at the same time to pierce it, so as to convey philosophical truth.

**Juvenile imaginings**

Joyce’s earliest recorded creative productions illustrate the immanent influence on the young boy of two discourses: religion and politics, precisely the kind of “nets” that Stephen in *Portrait* later decides he must fly by. The first reference to young Joyce’s creative productions is to a rather primal, biblical drama mounted with his siblings, featuring Adam and Eve, where Joyce took upon himself the role of the serpent. For balance, while at Clongowes Joyce wrote a hymn to the Virgin Mary (JJ 30). Secondly, Joyce wrote a politically inspired poem somewhere between his eighth and ninth years (MBK 46) that was published by his father. In later years he wrote a number of other creative items which also have not been preserved: a juvenile novel in collaboration with a neighbouring boy (MBK 45), a prose vignette form called “Silhouettes” a collection of poems called *Moods* and later, one called *Shine and Dark*.

The evidence, while slight, offers support to the account of a slow evolution of the artist, from earliest days, and early evidence of Joyce’s artistic leanings. While Ellmann for one is dismissive of a good deal of Joyce’s earliest outpourings, clearly these early experiments did not determine Joyce’s ultimate failure as a writer.

The first known published writing of Joyce’s was his poem “Et tu Healy”, written upon the death of Parnell. The proud father had his young son’s poem printed, and distributed it to friends and associates. No copy of the poem is extant but Joyce’s brother Stanislaus recalls the poem’s ending in an image of Parnell perched on lofty heights, eagle-like, looking down on “the grovelling mass of politicians” (JJ 33). Ellmann detects a “faintly premonitory” note here resembling Joyce’s self-depiction as a hunted stag in his broadside “The Holy Office”. Even more germane however is the striking resemblance of this figure to similar imagery in the 1904 portrait, which
portrays the artist as a hunted figure running proud on elevated ground, flinging disdain from “flashing antlers” (Scholes and Kain 61).

A related replicated pattern is the “hero” motif derived from Parnell’s example as martyr, one that recurs at important stages of Joyce’s life, as Ellmann demonstrates, and one that Joyce consciously re-evaluated during his crucial Rome sojourn of 1906-7 (see Ellmann’s chapter on “The backgrounds of ‘The Dead’”: Chapter XV in JJ, and Spoo). The title, “Et tu Healy” also demonstrates that even at such an early age, Joyce had learnt the technique of intertextual association, with Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. He chooses an historical Roman theme, just as Stephen in Chapter One of *Portrait* is spurred to ethical action by a reference to the Roman senate, in a “use” of history that resembles Nietzsche’s description of the “monumental” (see Chapters 7 & 9).

**Belvedere days**

After the Clongowes years, Joyce continued to experiment with writing: some “florid poems” and a collaborative novel with a neighbouring boy. Of greater interest in the spiralling progress of Joyce’s aesthetic instincts is his development of the prose sketch form he called “Silhouettes”. Ellmann traces the outline of one such sketch and dismisses it: “This is avante-garde writing of the school of General Booth” (JJ 50). His unstated criterion for the value and interest of Joyce’s early works seemingly is whether or not they appear to be directly contributory to, or traceable in germ in, a later published text. However, examination of the form, from the sketchy details available, appears significant on three counts: firstly, as a very early experiment in prose; secondly, as evidence of Joyce’s early interest in social realism; and thirdly perhaps as a precursor of the epiphany.

The suggestion of the form’s name, as a mere shadowy outline, is supported by the example based on Stanislaus’ account of the story which gave the form its name (MBK 90-92). The story is couched in first-person and based on the limited perceptions of one observer in the street, watching dramatic, anonymous events in a window. Extraordinarily, this example appears to have been a precocious (if unwitting) prose experiment in controlling point of view, akin to the approach of Henry James.
In this piece, the observer is an outsider, not privy to information beyond the limited spectacle he can observe: a useful counter to the traditional omniscient narrator. In the silhouette form, so much of the literary work must consist of the narrator’s efforts to piece together the available clues and to interpret them, between the gaps in both spatial and time “frames”, as figures appear, disappear and reappear in the window. The observer’s perceptions are literally constrained by a frame, just as Portrait too is frequently constrained closely within the frame of Stephen’s consciousness.

Ellmann’s ironic reference to “General Booth” ignores Joyce’s interest in unflinchingly portraying true life, and the fact that in his own home Joyce came to witness increasingly stressed and ignominious circumstances, increasing poverty and occasional outbreaks of drunken violence. Joyce’s interest in social realism is not mere, affected middle class indulgence: details such as the distressing cry of a child—“don’t beat me Pa and I’ll say a hail Mary for you” (DD 37) —recorded in Dubliners, came from real life in the extended Joyce circle. Stanislaus records an horrific incident of domestic violence in relation to Joyce’s own home (MBK 56), and that similar incidents occurred in households known to the Joyces.

If the silhouette form was trained on piercing shadows and gloom, the later epiphany form served to work a different effect of the light. Stanislaus Joyce records that his brother detested “literature” as insincere, a parody of life, plot being a “meretricious literary interest” (MBK 91-2) and contented himself to work on the unpromising material which presented itself to him. Despite Joyce’s increasing interest in style in later life, which Stanislaus deplores (89-90), this pattern of uncompromising attention to truth and focus on minute details is replicated in the epiphany, in Dubliners, in Portrait and in Ulysses.

Also during his Belvedere College years, Joyce wrote his first collection of poems. Ellmann finds in the title, “Moods”, a strong influence of Yeats. Like the silhouette, the mood is rather abstract and intangible, seated within interior consciousness rather than in social reality; an early indication of his interest in portraying shadowy psychological and emotional states.
Still at Belvedere, he wrote some verse, and a plotty story (to borrow Virginia Woolf’s term) called “Matcham’s masterstroke”, intended for publication in a magazine. Ellmann records that “Three or four years later James rewrote the story simply as a burlesque” (50). The story is also referred to parodically in *Ulysses*. At the same time as Joyce’s maturing evinces considerable powers of self-criticism and objectivity, he continues to take a close interest in the phenomenology of his own development, engaging with this history and reframing it, sometimes parodically or ironically.

Joyce was now reading novelists such as Meredith and Hardy, and, more significantly, Ibsen. The drama soon became his obsession and his thinking about writing and his writerly ambitions would then be chiefly focused on drama for some time. The novel, in comparison, did not at this time offer Joyce examples of the kind of art he wished to create.

**University years**

Ellmann records that with his review of Ibsen, Joyce became a European and read very widely in European literature. “Like everyone else in 1902, Joyce was eager to find a style”, for which, according to Ellmann, inspired by Symons’s work on *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, he turned to Verlaine (JJ 76). Two different elements he sought in his reading were naturalistic detail and lyricism, nascent forms of the synthesising elements he was later to announce as being at the heart of the artistic project (see discussion of “James Clarence Mangan”, Chapter 4). This also further demonstrates Joyce looking beyond the literary confines of his own country for inspiration.

Joyce’s inflamed enthusiasm for Ibsen was soon translated into an attempt at writing drama. He wrote the “first true work of my life”, *A Brilliant Career* (not extant) while on a trip to Mullingar with his father in the summer of 1900. In Ellmann’s account of the play, it appears to be much in emulation of Ibsen, while the obliging comments of Ibsen’s English translator William Archer do not suggest that the work had any great potential or practicality for production.
Similarly to the seminal 1904 “portrait”, Joyce’s theme is a career; similarly to *Portrait*, the work of art is meant as a memorial to his own soul, to which he dedicated “the first true work of my life” (JJ 78). A conversation between James and his brother Stanislaus reveals a theme that must have come to figure largely in Joyce’s ruminations later: Stanislaus records that he criticised a climactic scene between the main character Paul, and his spurned love object Angela. Stanislaus finds the scene unconvincing as he knows it has no relation to Joyce’s own life, whereas Archer had found it “curiously strong and telling” (MBK 117). In reply to Stanislaus’ protest that this scene was a “plastic creation of the imagination with no basis in actual experience”, Joyce retorts that “there are realities of the imagination, too” (119-20). In comparison to Stanislaus’ clearly prejudiced critical framing, Archer’s more objective, distanced perspective, singled out uniquely the product of imagination for praise. Before long (in 1902), Joyce had decided that reconciling the contradictory claims of realism and imagination was a primary aim and, indeed, it can be argued that it is the quality of imagination which affords one defining comparative factor between the juvenile *Stephen Hero* and the powerfully compressed *Portrait*. The beginnings of this breakthrough however took him some five and a half years to achieve from this point.

By the turn of the century Joyce’s writerly ambitions clearly are escalating, as he busies himself with several projects. A second drama, in verse, incorporates his other chief ambition of the time: poetry. Only one stanza has been “accidentally preserved” (JJ 80) and Ellmann is again somewhat scathing in his appraisal. A third project was a group of poems called *Shine and Dark*, fragments of which were preserved by his brother Stanislaus. Ellmann detects in them perhaps some element of self-fashioning amidst the “Byronic posturing”, and the strong compositional influence of Yeats (81). His tone is a little contemptuous of the “silly” extant fragments, but this is also consistent with his dismissive treatment of Joyce’s undoubtedly very real, amorous aspirations. 18 Joyce’s developmental career adequately demonstrates that the final

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18 Costello (1992) has demonstrated that the shadowy figure of Emma Clery in *Portrait* was most likely based primarily on one Mary Cleary, rather than on a hybrid of Mary Sheehy and the Daniels sisters, as Ellmann suggests.
prognosis for an artist cannot be made in regard to their earliest pieces, nor to random phases of their immaturity.

In the late summer of 1901 Joyce sent a collection of poems to Archer (83), and Archer was again helpful but unimpressed, criticising Joyce’s lack of content and finding in him so far little more than “temperament”. Joyce the poet remains a writer without a theme, due in part no doubt to his youth and lack of experience. Stanislaus’ account of a period when Joyce set about destroying the majority of his juvenile poetry is most revelatory of his strict criteria: Joyce had always “animadverted upon that class of poets for whom only what is imaginary possesses poetic value” (MBK 160). And yet, now he rejects all poems which attempt to express a poetic thought, in favour of those without thought, the most rarefied form, which takes years to achieve distinction in. There is an apparent contradiction here between Joyce’s aims in prose, his preoccupation with the telling minute details of everyday life and his preference in poetry for “the indefinable suggestion of word, phrase and rhythm” (160-161) beyond any literal referent. Joyce would shortly address this contradiction in his important paper on James Clarence Mangan.

The Epiphany

Up to this point, our review of Joyce’s artistic progress attests to experiments with verse, drama and prose which enjoyed limited success both in the views of his readers (principally Archer), and ultimately in his own judgment. This changes with the epiphany, however, “the major labour” of Joyce’s early career according to Gorman (92), since Joyce made an arranged collection of these prose vignettes, showed them to friends and to other writers and reused these materials in later works: Dubliners, Stephen Hero, Portrait and Ulysses.

In this thesis it is argued that it is important to differentiate between three incarnations of the epiphany. The form focused on in this thesis is the epiphany as compositional practice, an important breakthrough that provisionally achieved some of the developing artist’s aims. The Epiphany as content (approximately 71 prose vignettes were composed) also remained of enduring significance to Joyce long after he had
abandoned the epiphany as concept: the experimental adaptation of this form to the aesthetic of Stephen Dedalus, years after developing the prose form.\textsuperscript{19}

The 71 or so Epiphanies (some forty of them are still extant) were composed between 1900 and 1903. By the end of 1902 they had attained the status of a manuscript collection, were numbered, re-arranged in order and shown to friends and literary figures including George Russell and Yeats. Joyce probably tried different “arrangements” of these Epiphanies, “organised according to their aesthetic relevance” (Scholes and Kain 31). They were effectively his first independent creative publication since “Et tu Healy”. According to Ellmann, Joyce originally thought of forming these epiphanies into a small book. In 1904 he decided to insert them instead in *Stephen Hero* to aid in the “exposures and illuminations of that novel” (JJ 85). Most or all of them apparently had been intended for use in *Stephen Hero*, and many or most were probably used in earlier manuscript phases of *Portrait*.

The epiphany as concept is found only in the abandoned manuscript of *Stephen Hero* and there is otherwise little or no evidence that the concept ever formed part of Joyce’s personal attempt at an aesthetic; yet the concept of “epiphany” has enjoyed much greater success and longevity in Joyce criticism than it did in Joyce’s own career. As for the practice, he effectively stopped collecting epiphanies some time in 1903.\textsuperscript{20}

In this chapter it is argued that the epiphany, viewed from a developmental perspective as practice, showed Joyce a way of exploring both outer reality and psychological reality in an initially satisfying prose form. Over time the limitations of the form would become increasingly evident to him, and Joyce would seek a more satisfactory, extended prose form. By 1904, the year after abandoning the form, he

\textsuperscript{19} Cf. Feshbach’s typology of the epiphany as concept, “epiphany-process” and published manuscript, quoted in Beja (1984 721 fn 2).

\textsuperscript{20} Mahaffey (“Giacomo Joyce” 390), however, agrees with Gabler (Archive 2: xxx: quoted in Groden, “Textual History” 90) that *Giacomo Joyce* can be interpreted as a renewal of the epiphany as form, and suggests that this episode in Joyce’s life should be viewed as a chapter in Joyce’s writing progress, characterised by a new delving into fantasy and imagination, linked in particular to the play of images and sounds. Mahaffey’s emphasis on Joyce’s preoccupation with the imagination is consonant with this thesis, but as *Giacomo Joyce* postdates our cutoff point of September 1907, it is not discussed here.
experimented with three creative prose forms in short order: firstly the dense 1904 “Portrait” essay, followed by beginning his first serious attempt at the novel form, and then by the tentative first short story of *Dubliners* (in its original, unfleshed version), “The Sisters”. While Joyce quickly found a means of extending the epiphanic technique into the short story form, he failed to adapt the design aims and principles of *Portrait* to the novel form with immediate success.

In the following sections the form’s nature and genesis are outlined, before the significance of this development for Joyce, and the shortcomings of the epiphany as practice and as content, are examined.

**Definition and origins of the epiphany**

Aubert’s survey of the young Joyce’s development, influenced by neo-Hegelian conceptions of art and aesthetics, his attempt to synthesise an aesthetic of his own, and his early creative aspirations, focuses on the epiphany as concept, and nominates it as Joyce’s sole contribution to critical theory (1992 xii), while ultimately noting that the term itself was a failure. He considers that in 1900 Joyce’s aesthetics are based on Cartesian lines rather than on Aristotle or Aquinas, and notes that Joyce’s preoccupations have close parallels to Freud (44-45).

And yet, the *concept* of epiphany does not occur in the extant fragments of his aesthetics notebooks. It is not part of Stephen’s aesthetics in *Portrait*, does not feature in Joyce’s critical writings, and in its first mention in Joyce’s fiction (excluding the abandoned *Stephen Hero*), the epiphany’s importance for the young Stephen is remembered with strong irony, in the context of other outdated experiments:

> Reading two pages apiece of seven books every night, eh? I was young. You bowed to yourself in the mirror, stepping forward to applause earnestly, striking face. Hurray for the Goddamned idiot! Hray! No-one saw: tell no-one. Books you were going to write with letters for titles. Have you read his F? O yes, but I prefer Q. Yes, but W is wonderful. O yes, W. Remember your epiphanies written on green oval leaves,
deeply deep, copies to be sent if you died to all the great libraries of the world, including Alexandria? (U 34)\textsuperscript{21}

Upon the eventual publication of the abandoned *Stephen Hero*, an event that displeased Joyce (Curran 20), some critics seized upon the definition of epiphany virtually as a lost key to Joyce. Given Joyce’s earlier ambition to create an aesthetic system (from Paris he had written to his mother that he would create a major work of aesthetics in ten years) and his often-noted “parsimony” in reusing everything of value from past manuscripts, it seems unlikely that the highly retentive Joyce would have overlooked this unique individual contribution to an aesthetics, had he believed it to be of enduring value.\textsuperscript{22}

The first recorded mention of the epiphany comes from Stanislaus Joyce:

Another experimental form which his literary urge took while we were living at this address consisted in the noting of what he called “epiphanies”—manifestations or revelations. Jim always had a contempt for secrecy, and these notes were in the beginning ironical observations of slips, and little errors and gestures ... by which people betrayed the very things they were most careful to conceal. Epiphanies were always brief sketches, hardly ever more than some dozen lines in length, but always very accurately observed and noted, the matter being so slight. (MBK 124-5)

In this earliest recorded incarnation then, the epiphany expresses Joyce’s detective instincts, exposing what one might term the “Joycean slip”, a manifestation of truth behind surface appearance, psychological observation parallel in tenor and in chronology to Freud’s exploration of the unconscious, for example in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (Early Freudians 2003). Joyce takes what may be the most casual observation of reality, analyses it and makes of it a satisfying prose vignette. The original use of the term is clearly an ironic inversion from the Catholic feast of the Epiphany, which celebrates the manifestation of Christ to the Magi, the

\textsuperscript{21} Beja however takes issue with Schole’s dismissal of the epiphany as essentially a juvenile form (717).

\textsuperscript{22} Crayoned marks on the manuscript of *Stephen Hero* bear testimony to Joyce’s scrupulous trawling of that text, crossing out passages which he had recopied and reused.
divinity of the human child of humble birth. Joyce’s epiphany manifests in comparison all-too-human failings in contrast to loftier pretensions.

This early meaning of “epiphany” corresponds in tenor to Ellmann’s account of the young Joyce’s collected notes entitled “Memorabilia”: a collection of other people’s solecisms, extending even to the likes of Yeats (and see Gorman 89). We might take the existence of this notebook to indicate Joyce’s need to define and shape himself intersubjectively amongst his peers and writerly influences, a form of psychological bolstering consonant with Aubert’s diagnosis of the fear of aphanisis (51-2), and perhaps a defensive response to what Harold Bloom refers to as the “anxiety of influence”.

This research does not extend to a study of Joyce’s influences. We can take it literally as read that Joyce was aware of worthy predecessors, whether or not he “discovered” the form independently for himself. Pater’s description of “privileged moments” is one likely predecessor, as is Wordsworth’s “spots of time”, while the coinage of the term could well have been inspired by D’Annunzio’s *epifania*, a word featured in Il Fuoco, a book that Ellmann records Joyce as having read (circa 1900) and liked very much (also see Jackson Cope). Beja notes that Aristotl’s term *anagnorisis*, a rational and explicable illumination, is also related (718).

In *Stephen Hero* the epiphany is defined as:

. . . a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments. (SH 188)

This later definition, while retaining Joyce’s interest in the revelation of prosaic reality, also encapsulates the young artist’s quest not only for romantic beauty but also for psychological depth. In contrast to Pater’s and to Wordsworth’s focus on moments of revelation of beauty, in the estimation of Stanislaus Joyce:
My brother’s purpose was different and his angle of vision new. The revelation and importance of the subconscious had caught his interest. The epiphanies became more frequently subjective and included dreams which he considered in some way revelatory. (MBK 125)

One can also trace in Pater, as in Blake, a questing after the “spiritual form” of phenomena rather than the corporeal. Contrasting the “born romanticists” to the “born classicists” he claims the former:

...start with an original, untried matter, still in fusion; who conceive this vividly, and hold by it as the essence of their work; who, by the very vividness and heat of their conception, purge away, sooner or later, all that is not organically appropriate to it, till the whole effect adjusts itself in clear, orderly, proportionate form; which form, after a very little time, becomes classical in its turn. (Pater, *Appreciations* 260)

In Joyce’s central paper on “James Clarence Mangan”, a Paterian rebuke is issued against those who portray the romantic temper as the classical grown old (CW 74) and yet, upon the first depicted occasion of Stephen’s writing a poem in *Portrait*, he learns to apply a similar technique in advancing from the original matter, vividly conceived, to a vastly simplified romantic image which can in turn achieve a classic balance and simplicity:

... by dint of brooding on the incident, he thought himself into confidence. During this process all those elements which he deemed common and insignificant fell out of the scene ... The verses told only of the night and the balmy breeze and the maiden lustre of the moon. (P 72)

It should not be taken as coincidental that Joyce chose this particular incident as an illustration, for it had been the subject of one of Joyce’s own Epiphanies (Number Three), an Epiphany that in *Portrait* is associated with Emma. The recording of this epiphany (most likely years after the event it describes) represents the rendering of a treasured memory down to its essence. An exciting episode (meeting “Emma Clery” at a party at Harold’s Cross) is boiled down to one meaningful scene where the two part company. Stephen in *Portrait* endures a period of ten years before his initial attempt to record this fond memory in a poem is followed by a second, more
satisfying attempt. For Joyce in real life, perhaps the recording of this epiphany was a first intimation that he could achieve his aims satisfactorily in a prose form.

**Evaluation of the epiphany**

A detailed study of the epiphany’s place in Joyce’s oeuvre is beyond the scope of this study. It has of course been the subject of a great deal of Joyce scholarship, since as early as Levin’s study (716). Chayes for example considers that “Joyce’s work is a tissue of epiphanies” (162), his technique “revelation through distillation”. Stephen in *Stephen Hero* appears to believe that any object can be “epiphanised” (see discussion of clock dial below). *Stephen Hero* however offers a good demonstration of how the prosaic detail, unleavened by imaginative treatment, not framed adequately in novelistic form and style, becomes mere clutter, and lacks the qualities of a greater art. Nor could the “scrupulous meanness” of *Dubliners*, its attention to minute detail, automatically translate well to the design of *Portrait*.

The greatest contribution of the epiphany to Joyce’s development, arguably, was in providing him with the realisation that he had the perceptual and analytical power to fashion the stuff of actuality into satisfying prose with a degree of philosophical import. In Bloom’s judgment, Pater’s aims with the epiphany paved the way for a synthesis, which can be considered parallel to that sought by Joyce.

> Pater’s strange achievement is to have assimilated Wordsworth to Lucretius, to have compounded an idealistic naturalism with a corrective materialism. By de-idealising the epiphany, he makes it available to the coming age, when the mind will know neither itself nor the object but only the dumbfoundering abyss that comes between. (Bloom xv)

For idealistic naturalism and corrective materialism, one can substitute Joyce’s interest in fusing the romantic and the classical, the imaginative and the actual.

A key aim of Joyce’s, we have seen, was detailed psychological analysis, and certainly the epiphany served this purpose well for him. Just before the turn of the twentieth century Freud had discovered his “royal road to the unconscious” with the
dream. Joyce’s path to the “subconscious” came through the epiphany, while he soon took up an interest in the rich world of dream as well (see, for example Epiphanies 6, 8, 16: Scholes and Kain 16-26). Unlike Yeats, Joyce’s interest in the dream was not in exploiting its imagery and symbolism (JJ 85), but rather as a key to the psyche. Joyce, sometimes referred to by his peers as “dreamy Jimmy” or the “dreamy one of Nola” (JJ p. 90, 89), like Freud, employed the dream as one path to the revelation of the soul, but framed it within a dream vignette rather than in an interpretative analysis.

Piercing to the significant heart of certain observations, alike to introspective “memorable phases of the mind”, the epiphany’s scope straddles both the classical realm of concrete social reality, and the romantic realm of interior subjective reality. In due course Joyce would move beyond the original form of the epiphany as “received knowledge”, the product of a privileged and unique moment, extending it into a generalised habit of observation, analysis and reframing. Portrait in one sense is epiphanial, insofar as it is largely predicated on depicting “memorable phases of the mind”, to the exclusion of non-essential material which does not serve to frame or enrich Stephen’s thoughts, memories or perceiving consciousness, while a shortcoming of Stephen Hero is that it was not designed as a vehicle for the refined depiction of the mind’s phases, for the portrait of an evolving soul that was key to the design of the eventual novel.

Those examples which have endured (some forty in number) had been powerfully exciting to Joyce’s imagination, supported by the weight of his own contextualising memory. To the casual reader, however, removed in time and space from Joyce’s private perceptions and memories, the epiphany as content is insubstantial, unframed, while in some cases perhaps curiously evocative. In time Joyce must have come to appreciate that these products of received inspiration were not satisfying works in their own right, but raw material with rich potential. They would not reach their potential unless they were developed into a more satisfying form.

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23 Beja (710), citing Stanislaus’s early evaluation, similarly concludes that Joyce came to recognise the limitations of the form.
An important difference between Joyce’s and Pater’s approach to epiphanic moments is that Joyce’s experience appears to consist of passively received inspirations, which are then treasured almost as if they are divine received knowledge. Pater’s approach on the contrary relates to perceptual work on:

... some special situation, which lifts or glorifies a character, in itself not poetical. To realise this situation, to define, in a chill and empty atmosphere, the focus where rays, in themselves pale and impotent, unite and begin to burn. (in Bloom xiv).

Pater’s is a paradigm of active intentive work on resistant material, not greatly unlike Stephen’s later artistic aspiration to work on the “sluggish matter” of actuality, and incidentally, in metaphorical agreement both with Bakhtin’s description of intentive design (Chapter 2) and with the intentive rays of the poetic process in the writing of the villanelle (see Chapter 8). Stephen’s account of the process in Stephen Hero indeed attempts a more agentive methodology and, like Pater, employs a metaphor of “focus”.

He told Cranly that the clock of the Ballast Office was capable of an epiphany. Cranly questioned the inscrutable dial of the Ballast Office with his no less inscrutable countenance.

—Yes, said Stephen. I will pass it time after time, allude to it, refer to it, catch a glimpse of it. It is only an item in the catalogue of Dublin’s street furniture. Then all at once I see it and I know at once what it is: epiphany.

—What?

—Imagine my glimpses at that clock as the gropings of a spiritual eye which seeks to adjust its vision to an exact focus. The moment the focus is reached the object is epiphanised. (SH 211)

This attempt to move from the passive, “received inspiration” model of the epiphany is however a failure. For it becomes a perfectly commonplace event, indeed the mere product of the apprehensory process. Its key character as a unique manifestation of knowledge or beauty that was at the heart of the term is lost: for once the clock is “epiphanised” what does it convey to us? What satisfaction does Stephen derive from knowing “at once what it is?” How is the effect meaningful or artistic? In Portrait, Stephen again describes the apprehensory procession of an object, according to
Aquinas’s description of the three requisites for beauty: wholeness, harmony, and radiance, and the definition of epiphany (certainly not derived from Aquinas) is now both superfluous and meaningless.

Joyce’s developmental progress from the passively received, “inspirationally” modelled epiphany to the prosaic labour of composition, of working with the dull gross materials of the earth, reflects a maturing of his artistic process, and of his conception of the nature of the artist. Elsewhere in *Stephen Hero*, Stephen is already working towards a more inspiring model than epiphanisation: one that is a repeat of Joyce’s own views (“James Clarence Mangan”):

> The poet is the intense centre of the life of his age to which he stands in a relation than which none can be more vital. He alone is capable of absorbing in himself the life that surrounds him and of flinging it abroad again amid planetary music.
> (SH 80)

In the last chapter of *Portrait* a similar progression can be seen. Although Stephen in the writing of the villanelle is, in part, working off received inspiration, by the end of the novel he is actively working on all sorts of material that present themselves to him, as an artist of the prosaic imagination.

For Joyce at least, one thing that helped him on the path to beauty, to break through from the passive and inspiration-based model of artistic creation, was employing the classical rigours of a trained intellect. In the following chapter we retrace the first steps Joyce took toward artistic truth.
CHAPTER FOUR:

HELIX OF THE INTELLECT

In this chapter, we follow the spiralling “helix” of Joyce’s early intellective growth, chronologically rather than thematically, from Joyce’s earliest days up to the completion of his formal education. The intellective strand in this chapter climaxes with the important paper on “James Clarence Mangan”, which sets his aims for an art synthesising the classical and the romantic tendencies; the philosophical exploration of reality together with the riches of the imagination. This paper also figures the central question of the artist’s relation to society as being historically implicated; a question which in a later chapter, it is suggested, is finally resolved in the aftermath of his Rome sojourn.

Yet, here they undoubtedly are, critics to whom art means a theory, a belief, a science; the Ibsenites, the Realists, the Romanticists; people who, when you offer them a rose, say, yes, but it is not a violet. . . .

Arthur Symons (Studies). Dedication to George Moore, Rome, March 19th, 1897.

Critical writings

Prior to the epiphany, we have little documentation of the early progress of Joyce’s imagination. In respect of Joyce’s intellectual growth prior to 1904, his “annus mirabilis” (Stephen Hero, the first stories of Dubliners), there is considerably more evidence. Even in some schoolboy essays, one gleans a sense that they express the germ of ideas that are later expanded upon and developed. The intellective helix climaxes in this chapter with two talks Joyce gave at University College, and particularly with the second, “James Clarence Mangan”, in 1902.
The 1904 Portrait “blueprint” is generally referred to as an “essay”. In Portrait it is recorded that Stephen excelled at these compositions in school, just as Joyce’s teacher George Dempsey noted Joyce’s skill in this area, and it is perhaps significant that the genesis of his first novel, and much of its “argument” is found in a narrative essay rather than (say) a short story: for here Joyce found a form with which to create a preliminary synthesis of the classical and the romantic. (Ulysses in contrast, was conceived as a short story during Joyce’s Rome stay, while the inspiration for most Dubliners stories was drawn either from incidents from life, or from other stories). Joyce’s poems had proved technically proficient “experiments” in rhythm and abstract expression. His dramas had proved ambitious but unworkable. From this point, however, Joyce finds a means to allow the imaginative and intellective helices to begin their work of artistic synthesis, meshing together.

Schoolboy essays

As with the creative pieces, Ellmann’s criterion of worth for Joyce’s critical works appears to be the announcement of a theme or other element that is echoed in a mature work. Joyce’s having written an essay on “My Favourite Hero” in 1894, at the age of twelve, is worthy of note because Joyce chose Ulysses (JJ 47). An English composition from Joyce’s Belvedere days, “Trust not appearances”, is dismissed as not indicative of future immortality (JJ 36). And yet, this late schoolboy essay constitutes an early exploration of the perception process, which in Portrait he considers to be the first step in understanding the imagination. The theme of the labour of the apprehensory work in this schoolboy essay, where “the real worth has to be searched for”, of course voices something similar to the painstaking pursuit of an artistic “arduous good” in the “Portrait” essay of 1904, and the labours of the artist that are emphasised in Portrait itself.

(27 September 1898, Belvedere College) “Subjugation”

The essay referred to in Ellmann’s biography as an essay on “Force” is dismissed under the general comment that “His early papers in English are at once perfunctory and pretentious” (JJ 67). The former adjective however is a very large claim against this most aware of writers, who early set his canon against the debased language of
the marketplace. Aubert on the other hand notes that “Subjugation” is a more appropriate title for the essay and considers the piece conceptually preparatory for, an early statement of, the theme of that paper which (in my thesis) best encapsulates Joyce’s early artistic platform: the 1902 paper on Mangan.

“Subjugation” is an incomplete essay, believed to have been part of Joyce’s matriculation examination (Barry). In reality it presents, beyond the ornate style and the poetic passages, an argument of some subtlety. Barry (293 fn 11, fn 15, fn 17, fn 18) agrees with Aubert that much of Joyce’s argument derives from Wagner’s influence. Both Barry and Aubert note that Joyce’s early ideas are closely consonant with Hegel’s philosophy of art, Aubert citing two particular sources of commentary on Hegel which are very likely to have influenced Joyce directly or indirectly during his university years or earlier. Certainly this essay has a dialectical flavour: the incomplete paragraph with which the extant fragment commences, concludes by noting that “subjugation” is not merely a “positive power” of force, but often functions more in the sense of “influence”, thus implicitly paving the way for dialectical, even dialogical play between terms.

Aubert interprets the essay as figuring the problem of the artist’s autonomy:

Not so much from his social environment (as is commonly believed after a superficial reading of Stephen Hero and Portrait) as from possible alienation into the interpretative symbolic framework in which he had been brought up, which had shaped—and threatened to paralyse—him. (21)

In my reading of Portrait (Chapters 7 & 8) it is suggested that the “nets” which Stephen vows to fly by are in fact of a socially discursive order, and that the artist’s agency is portrayed as situated in dialogical relation to such discourses: the effects of language and world views on his soul, particularly discourses of the Church and of history.

It is worth examining two instances of “subjugation” in this essay which have specific reference to the writer, and which are suggestive of significant, even precocious, creative insights. In the first instance Joyce figures the scenario where a writer
“embarked upon a topic” is engulfed by the topic itself. The subject “dwarfs the writer”. At the other end of the creative problem, the overly imaginative writer produces works that are ultimately “vague and misty”. In creative works, “a too-prolific imagination literally flys (sic) away with the author”. Characteristically for the later Joyce, the solution lies in a synthesis of the two extremes:

When however the gift—great and wonderful—of a poetic sense, in sight and sense and feeling, has been subdued by vigilance and care and has been prevented from running to extremes, the true and superior spirit, . . . . interprets, without mysticism, for men the great things that are hidden from their eyes. (Barry 8)

Thus, the quality of imagination is essential to the writer in order to prevent the intellect being subjugated by the topic. On the other hand, this essential creative quality itself needs to be tamed, harnessed and channelled appropriately. Only then will a writer achieve his or her true potential, in the synthesis of art.

Some other examples with which the matriculating schoolboy fleshed out his theme also display insights into the workings of the creative mind. Tilling a field and pruning, transparent processes against essentially static, passive objects, come under his definition of subjugation. The artistic process is distinctly more elusive, however, and so Joyce examines the analogy of sailing.

Joyce notes that the sailor’s way can only consist of a shifting series of strategies in answer to the “fiat” of Aeolus. The sailor attempts to harness the energy of the winds, but can in no way subjugate it. The sailor must tack a course between using the wind and, at dangerous times, being overwhelmed by it. Likewise, Joyce scrutinises other unpredictable, uncontrollable forces: the miller tames the stream and harnesses its power, turning a torrent into a productive force. Animals are tamed and put into service, or otherwise nullified as a threat. The artist too must find strategies for grappling with the ungraspable aesthetic “instinct”, must capture inspiration in imaginative sails without becoming overwhelmed or being blown off-course.
University years

In his university years, Joyce was exposed to new influences, Dante and D’Annunzio among them, through his language studies. His Italian instructor Fr Ghezzi also did Joyce the service of encouraging him to “formulate theories” about aesthetics. By his second year at university he gave a paper, an event which figures very large in *Stephen Hero*, although the paper described there is based on Joyce’s later paper on Mangan (further support for the emphasis placed on that particular paper, in this thesis).

Some of his thinking for this first paper emerged in an assignment he had written a few months earlier, notably the definition of drama, and Hegel’s philosophy on dramatic poetry (Aubert 30).

*(September 1899, Belvedere College) “Ecce Homo”*

This paper was written about Munkacsy’s portrait of Christ’s passion, lately exhibited in Dublin. Some four years before committing a first draft prose self-portrait to paper, Joyce reflects on the nature of portraiture, approves the great realism of the painting, in contrast to the implied metaphysics of the religious subject, and notes that it is essentially dramatic rather than “an execution of faultless forms, or a canvas reproduction of psychology”. In a proleptic echo of the 1904 essay he implicitly criticises portraiture in “iron memorial aspect”.

Also of interest for Joyce’s later development is his discussion of drama in terms that Aubert suggests are neo-Platonic in tenor: any given incarnation of a dramatic form is not necessarily a true manifestation of the drama. Joyce explores the tension between a true essence or image of art, and the differing, imperfect forms it may adopt. A bad drama is not true drama, any more than the “marketplace” value of language is commensurate with the literary tradition. True drama must penetrate the mere comedic circumstances of everyday reality to portray the realm of truth. Later, Joyce

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24 Barry (291 fn 1) notes that Joyce may have also been thinking of a controversial essay of that name, by John Seeley (1866). It is also possible he was familiar with Nietzsche’s essay of the same title.
would apply this principle to other forms of art, This theme he enlarges on in his first paper to the Literary and Historical Society. Much later, he will seek to find a truly artistic form of the novel that reflects his aims.

**(January 20 1900) Literary and Historical Society, University College: “Drama and Life”**

Towards the end of his Belvedere schooldays, Joyce’s intellect and imagination had been fired by his reading of Ibsen’s works, rapidly developing into a passion which propelled his artistic ambitions towards the writing of drama. At the time of meeting with “AE” in 1902, Joyce said he was engaged in writing a “comedy”, which he expected to occupy him for some five years yet (JJ 100), and he also told Yeats he would produce a drama in five years. Ellmann considers that Joyce soon extended the ambition to ten years; that is, until not long after *Exiles* was actually written, in 1911 (104). The “power of ten”, or its factors, would prove to be a characteristic self-prophetic motif in Joyce’s artistic development (see discussion of the villanelle in Chapter 8).

The drama then is the focus of his first talk, given to the Literary and Historical Society at University College. Essentially the paper is a passionate defence of what he calls the “new school” of drama, against moral condemnation, entrenched attitudes and “habit”, convention. Joyce does not define the new school nor does he discuss it in any great detail, beyond hinting that it portrays “real life” and that it supersedes the Greek and the Elizabethan theatre. (Here, as elsewhere in Joyce’s writings, Aubert notes the influence of the neo-Hegelian principle of the progression of art.)

Of particular interest to our study of Joyce’s intellectual growth is his identification of the aims of the drama. Joyce rules out the aims of instruction and elevation, romanticisation or the treatment of mere beauty. Instead, in portraying real life, in reference to the “universal laws” of human relations, “the interplay of passions to portray truth”, it should offer accession to unmediated truth beyond the merely comedic circumstances of everyday reality: a project with some parallels to the work of the epiphany.
In a most telling passage near the end of the paper he produces a striking metaphor: the drama *Ghosts*, like the mythical tree Iggdrasil, has its roots in the earth yet its branches reach up to the stars. Its roots reach into the “animal instincts” of the human being and yet aspire to the heavens. Art too, in Joyce’s view, should span from the instinctual base of the human condition to the elevated realm of the spirit. These aims resemble the project of *Portrait*, from the portrayal of the depths of consciousness to the construction of a conscience for his race (Chapter 2).

A hint of Joyce’s early engagement with “form” can be found in this paper. Following the suggestions of Bosanquet’s commentary, Aubert considers that Dante was for Joyce a “much more acceptable paradigm” than Shakespeare because he had “at a single blow created a new form as well as given full expression to the poet’s soul”, while at the same time using fantastic visions for allegorical or symbolical effect (39-40). Like Dante, and like Ibsen, Joyce would with *Portrait* eventually create his own form: a poetic, naturalistic and symbolistic novel of self-portraiture, imbued with the temptations of the romantic.

Aubert has demonstrated that the chief thematic advance of “Drama and Life” over “Ecce Homo” was the emergence of the theme of the “spirit”, which Aubert attributes to an Hegelian construct. The “spirit” in this sense is individual and present rather than historical and abstract, “an experience that verges on pantheism” and tinged with a cachet of mysticism, with the emergence of the Ideal. In addition, Joyce may have derived from Dante “a lesson in applied mysticism” (40-42). As will be seen in the following chapter, this is a “lesson” that grew larger in Joyce’s imagination in the months just prior to the commencement of his artistic career proper.

(April 1 1900, Fortnightly Review) “Ibsen’s New Drama”

Two other noteworthy events of 1900, still on the dramatic theme, were the publication of Joyce’s precocious review of Ibsen, and the unexpected letter of thanks from Ibsen himself. The review is most laudatory of the play *When we Dead Awaken*  

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25 Aubert (147) suggests this reference is inspired by Wagner.
and is of interest chiefly for the qualities Joyce singles out for praise, and for the extreme level of praise.

In common with many Joyce critics, we might fruitfully assume that these views are an accurate indicator of his own aims and preoccupations at the time. Such a work, he suggests, as a realistic depiction of life, is above criticism. We can only appreciate such drama as we might appreciate life itself. Its chief virtues are its profound psychological complexity, the imparting of great truths, its sympathy for people and a philosophy of life that may lead to an awakening. The plays are “packed with thought” and leavened with the qualities of insight, restraint and sympathy. A third major claim is for Ibsen’s “analytic method”; the unexplained reference perhaps extends beyond Ibsen’s psychological probing, to address the social and political contexts of the drama. There is little doubt that Ibsen piqued Joyce’s political conscience, the enduring influence of which in his earliest fiction, *Dubliners* and *Stephen Hero*, has been observed by Manganiello, Kelly and others.

Joyce is especially impressed that Ibsen has managed to compress the entire lives of his characters into a dramatic action taking place over only two days. Joyce employs an analogous technique as a structural principle in *Dubliners*.

In this first major statement on an aesthetic theme, Joyce thus propounds some key principles that would continue to guide him during his earliest works: the importance of realism, art’s transcendence of mere social mores and moral expectations, the key aims of philosophical insight and psychological analysis. So far, his stated interests appear to be focused primarily on the intellective helix, and to reside in the classical treatment of social actuality. By the end of his university years, Joyce would add to these concerns, a renewed interest in the imagination, in the romantic; and his subject would be a poet rather than a dramatist.

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26 Aubert (45) for instance suggests that where Joyce praises Ibsen’s great knowledge of women, and sees in this virile man nonetheless a “curious admixture” of womanliness, Joyce is talking about himself.
With Joyce’s artistic ambitions fixed upon the progressive drama, he had great hopes for the Irish Literary Theatre, founded in 1899, and his own attempts at translating Hauptmann reflected an ambition to have European drama staged in Dublin, taking advantage of Ireland’s partial exemption from England’s censorship, which would have allowed the theatre to stage Ibsen’s *Ghosts* for example, or a banned play of Tolstoy’s. In October 1901, affronted by the recent decision to mount what he considered parochial drama, Joyce wrote and self-published “Day of the Rabblement”, a stinging attack on the Theatre, particularly Yeats, and the authors of the offending play, using a lofty Ibsenian rhetoric railing against the “trolls”.

A measure of the repressive tenor of the times can be taken in the fact that the article was censored by the new College literary publication *St Stephens* on the grounds that it mentioned D’Annunzio’s banned *Il Fuoco*, which was on the Vatican Index of Prohibited Books. The article is notable equally for the extraordinary courage with which Joyce insolently appraises Yeats and George Moore, and for its rather unrealistic ambitions: few stage managers would welcome the advice of the opening paragraphs to “abhor the multitude” when contemplating the need to fill theatre seats. Yeats has the “floating will” of the aesthete and a “treacherous instinct of adaptability”. Moore has not kept up with the evolution of the novel from Flaubert through to D’Annunzio.

Joyce’s theme is the “radical principle of artistic economy”, that the artist must isolate himself, particularly at a time of “crisis” (CW 69). This crisis is the preservation of the “highest form of art”, lately only just preserved by “desperate sacrifices” holding at bay the sterile and false contemporary stage, against prejudice, misinterpretation and ridicule. A revealing comment is that “A nation which never advanced so far as a miracle play affords no literary model to the artist, and he must look abroad” (CW 70), a claim upon which he later enlarges in “James Clarence Mangan”. The young Joyce then appears to have considered necessary the kind of strategic aloofness for which Stephen has been so criticised.
The thrust of the piece then is twofold: the Irish artist must take inspiration from the progressive tradition of Continental art, as the local tradition has little to offer; secondly, any artist must free him or herself from servitude to “the mean influences about him”, and must not be “broken by doubt” or seduced by hate.

The broadside also gives evidence of Joyce’s individuating progress as he defines himself against local predecessors and rivals. Yeats lacks the discipline that Joyce possesses, and this offers him the chance to better Yeats in some respects; most likely not as a lyric poet, but perhaps, then, as a dramatist with the rigor and psychological definition of an Ibsen.

Aubert sees at this point a divergence in Joyce from the Hegelian progressus to Nietzschean self-affirmation (57-58); in my thesis, this constitutes the first notes of a theme that will ultimately reach a crescendo with Joyce’s crucial change in historical attitude, inspired by his Roman sojourn (Chapter 9). Bound up in this position is “the idea of heroism” (italics in original) and a restatement of an early theme (“Subjugation”): the destructive forces that beset an artist, particularly internal weakness such as doubt or a weak will. Aubert sees at the heart of this piece a self-positioning of the subject against the very real threat of obliteration of the self, the fate of many promising talents who yet lack the moral courage necessary to the calling. He suggests that the artist’s fight ultimately resides not with society nor with others, but with oneself: confronting “one’s weakness, physical and moral”.

“Day of the Rabblement” is an heroic gesture: the public declaration of Joyce’s authorial self, a determined self-positioning, intertextually allying himself with heretical and shocking figures—here, Bruno “the Nolan”, D’Annunzio and others, against convention and his artistic peers. Ellmann concludes that with this broadside Joyce had “found his private mountain top”. The struggle for artistic self-expression is profoundly intersubjective, and to some extent Joyce played this drama out in the public sphere, thereby choosing to foreground his artistic image in relation to society. Stephen of course is marked by similar traits.
Joyce gave this key paper in the last year of his university studies, at a time when he could soon expect to begin his artistic career proper. He had continued to produce lyric poetry and had written two dramas, in both endeavours receiving discouraging feedback from Ibsen’s obliging translator, William Archer. Together with his disappointments with The Irish Theatre, Joyce is ready to explore avenues of creativity other than the new drama.

In this thesis it is argued that this 1902 paper established some key aims that would inform the design of Portrait: in particular, synthesising the romantic and the classical schools, harnessing the power of the imagination, and mustering a new response to Ireland’s mythical and historical legacy, one where the artist, far from shunning society, is responsible for providing moral leadership. (*Dubliners*, of course, clearly pursued a very different design.) Other themes close to the design of Portrait are also announced here: the theme of interiority, which is a structural principle of his novel, the creation of a new beauty hitherto unknown to the world, an interest in the exotic, and the revolt against actuality.

With “James Clarence Mangan”, Joyce, having not long ago suffered the loss of his brother George, sought to create a beauty in prose to help transcend the “hopeless distortion of the life that surrounded him” (MBK 163). The paper is indeed powerful. Joyce quotes and collates some jewels from his personal literary treasury as if to make an offering to his own muse, a sacrifice to summon up his own powers. Aestheticians and stylists like Pater, imaginative poets like Shelley, Leopardi, Poe, Novalis, Browning, Blake, Verlaine and so on (Aubert 70), appear, with Mangan, to have been the vessels of his creative aspirations.

Some critics have found the paper uncharacteristically messy, unclear or poorly structured. However, it can be argued that the key to understanding the work is in relation to the central theme, which is easily overlooked: the synthesis of the classical and the romantic, on which my analysis is based.
Nominally, Ellmann suggests, Joyce had two conflicting aims in the paper: to describe the artistic needs of Ireland, and to describe Mangan’s career, and the argument is “not easy to follow” (JJ 95). Aubert notes that while the lecture is paraphrased in *Stephen Hero*, it is there retitled “Drama and Life” and omits Mangan altogether. He suggests that this raises doubts about the talk’s significance in Joyce’s canon and *Weltanschauung*, and further notes that it is “a puzzling piece in many ways, especially as a rhetorical structure” (63). Aubert sees a disjunction between the composite parts: firstly a (lopsided) discussion of classicism and romanticism, then defining literature and poetry before outlining Mangan’s life and works, followed by a long conclusion discussing poetry and beauty without “linking up with the opening pages”.

I suggest rather, that the talk marks an early turning point in Joyce’s critical thinking. What Aubert refers to as the “incidental, cryptic definition of imagination” is in reality central to Joyce’s preoccupations, to the artistic programme that he announces here in broad. Faced by early failures, seeking his own way towards his vocation, of which, like Stephen, he may have still only a vague apprehension (P 62), Joyce turns his analytical method not only onto art but also onto the nature of the artistic process, speculatively examines the aesthetic instinct in action, in particular the imagination, and reviews both the powerful legacy and the shortcomings of a local hero he affects to discover: Mangan.

**Synthesis**

Joyce’s preliminary comments on the strife between the classical and romantic schools (bearing significant resemblance to Pater’s discussion in his postscriptum “Romanticism” in *Appreciations*) are not, as they may appear, a non-sequitur; rather, they constitute a thesis statement that affords the key to the piece’s “highly adorned style” (JJ 195) and which we may take to be part of Joyce’s growing endeavour to meld imagination with intellect.

Though the dispute has been often ungentle (to say no more) . . . each school advancing to the borders of the other and busy with internal strife, the classical school fighting the materialism which attends it, and the romantic school to preserve
coherence, yet as this unrest is the condition of all achievement, it is so far good, and presses slowly towards a deeper insight which will make the schools at one. (CW 74; italics mine.)

An observation of Pater’s that could hardly have escaped exciting Joyce’s attention in regard to his ambitious aims is found in his *Appreciations*:

> But explain the terms as we may, in application to particular epochs, there are always these two elements always recognizable; united in perfect art—in Sophocles, in Dante, in the highest work of Goethe, though not always absolutely balanced there; and these two elements may be not inappropriately termed the classical and romantic tendencies. (Pater 263)

Joyce presses for “a deeper insight”, a higher form of art that will resolve this ages-long dispute of the two schools, recognise them as “constant states of mind” and create a synthesising third term. Joyce may also have been inspired by Blake’s precept that “without contraries is no progression” (Abrams 216).

While Joyce critically appraises the Romantic temper, and in particular some of Mangan’s shortcomings, his primary interest is in understanding the magic of Mangan’s achievements, the tenor of his artistic temper and character. Of the Classical temper, the second term of his thesis, Joyce has very little to say: it is likely that the Jesuit-educated Joyce felt he understood this world quite intimately.

*Stephen Hero* offers a valuable clue to Joyce’s likely thinking, in its fictional account of this paper. The distinctly modern, freethinking Stephen Daedalus has been accused by Fr Dillon of not valuing the classical drama. In reply:

> — But, allow me, sir, said Stephen. My entire esteem is for the classical temper in art. Surely you must remember that I said — (SH 96)

Stephen’s attitude is genuine. By “classical”, he understands this temper in a timeless sense, beyond form or fashion.\(^{27}\) A progressive art can aspire to the classical temper

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\(^{27}\) Aubert (12) suggests that Joyce “enlists” Hegel in this championing of the classical.
without being tied to the classical canon, and for Joyce both the Greek drama and Shakespeare are “all played out” (CW 39). Of Stephen in Stephen Hero it is recorded that “A great contempt devoured him for the critics who considered “Greek” and “classical” interchangeable terms” (SH 33). To Fr Dillon he protests that:

— I use the word “classical” in a certain sense, with a certain definite meaning, that is all.
— But you cannot use any terminology you like.
— I have not changed the terms. I have explained them. By “classical” I mean the slow elaborate patience of the art of satisfaction. The heroic, the fabulous, I call romantic. (SH 97)

There is no sense that Joyce has abandoned, or contemplates abandoning, those matters he has extolled so firmly in Ibsen: the uncompromising portrayal, the slow elaboration of real life, according to the timeless laws of drama and of the human condition. But the highest forms of art must also incorporate the rarefied beauty and mystery of the romantic temper, as exemplified by Mangan, just as untempered romanticism cannot be assigned the highest accolades.

Had Joyce indeed read Bosanquet’s edition of Hegel, the following quote may have inspired in him the wish to establish “a continuity between ancient and modern theory”, as Aubert suggests. For Bosanquet, the former is:

. . . characterised by rhythm, symmetry, harmony of parts and whole, in short, unity in diversity; for the latter, beauty is inseparable from the notions of “significance, expressiveness, the utterance of all that life contains.” (Quoted in Aubert 69: italics in Aubert)

Aubert comments that “The task of the modern theorist is to conciliate the abstract expressiveness of the former with the concrete expressiveness of the latter” (69).

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28 A new classicism, after “a couple of centuries of pseudoclassicism” had been made possible by Lessing, Winckelmann and others. (Aubert 40)
Joyce’s use of the concept of “rhythm” (see following chapter) is closely analogous to Bosanquet’s description of the ancient classical. Another strand in Joyce’s synthesising platform is this encounter of realistic concrete detail with abstractions: for example, “soul” and “heart” are abstractions which dominate Portrait, as in the villanelle sequence.

At the same time, Joyce argues in the Mangan paper, the impatient temper of the romantic has shortcomings. Since it can see “no fit abode here for its ideals” it is prone to fashioning fantastic figures, “feeble shadows”:

> . . . and the same temper, which assuredly has not grown more patient, exclaims that the light is changed to worse than shadow, to darkness even, by any method which bends upon these present things and so works upon them and fashions them that the quick intelligence may go beyond them to their meaning, which is still unuttered. (CW 74)

Joyce asserts the Apollonian imperative of this “gift” of analysis and interpretation, and for this reason declares that “the highest praise must be withheld from the romantic school”, even if this therefore passes over Blake, “the most enlightened of Western poets”. He may have had in mind Schlegel’s condemnation of the Romantic impulse of the ancient Greeks as ultimately having no “higher character . . . than that of a refined and ennobled sensuality” (24).

Furthermore, “the cause of the impatient temper must be sought in the artist and in his theme”, and the “laws of his art” must also be taken into consideration. In short, before we can attempt to synthesise these two tempers, we must first understand art and the artistic process. It helps, also, to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the artistic character, for the artist is prone to lead an intense life, while the philosophic mind is inclined to “an elaborate life” (CW 82).

Joyce is well aware of his penetrating powers of analysis, and supremely confident with them. He has always excelled at essays and can have no doubt about his intellectual prowess, while he has so far failed to realise his artistic dreams. His poetry, lacking the imaginative riot of a Mangan, had been judiciously reviewed as
evincing talent, but constituting not much more than technical achievement, in the view of Yeats and others. It was judged that he lacked sufficient chaos. Joyce thus turns his analytical powers to understanding a romantic poet with whom he can feel some commonality, all the better to understand the nature of the imagination, and thus his own. At the same time, Mangan’s career affords Joyce the opportunity to compare that poet’s shortcomings against the artistic programme he has begun to develop for himself.

Imagination

Joyce states that it is this quality of being “conceived by the imagination” that characterises the best of Mangan’s poetry (italics mine). The presence of his “imaginative personality reflecting the light of imaginative beauty” is more powerful than the counterproductive presence of “alien emotions” (CW 78).

Imagination indeed, “the mother of things” in this conception frames every figure of our reality: “... whose dream are we, who imageth us to herself, and to ourselves, and imageth herself in us” (CW 78).

Imagination is at the core of the artistic project; it lies in the relation between beauty and truth, where (as in the Platonic formulation), beauty, “the splendor of truth”, is the result of the imagination’s intense contemplation of “the truth of its own being or the visible world” where the resulting spirit is—or rather should be, for this is one of Mangan’s shortcomings, joy (CW 81). The preserve of the epiphany, of contemplating the truth of the world and of the inner being, has now been taken over by the more powerful, more deliberative, synthesising imagination.

Aubert suggests that Joyce was influenced by Hegel’s conception that poetry is the form best equipped for imagination (65). Joyce is again thinking of the imagination when he suggests that poetry is “in a sense” always “a revolt against artifice” (CW 81). “In a sense” because, as we have seen, Joyce has set his goal for a synthesising

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29 Anderson (131): In 1902 George Russell, quoting a Nietzschean precept, assessed Joyce as lacking chaos.
art that embodies the classical and the romantic. Somehow, paradoxically, it must embrace both actuality and the imaginative retreat from actuality. The quest begins to assume a transcendental, almost divine quality: against the turbulence of human struggle, “the miracle of light is renewed eternally in the imaginative soul”.

The realm of the imagination is primarily interior, “where for many ages the sad and the wise have elected to be” (77). To Joyce, so interior is Mangan that he is bewildered by the difference between his own life and his dreams. His vision is a state both of knowing and of unknowing, therefore, since he cannot draw a boundary around what he knows. At the same time, Mangan demonstrates in his art a state of knowing what is essentially incommunicable and inexpressible. Joyce makes the paradoxical and unlikely suggestion that Mangan could have written a “treatise on the poetical art” because of his mastery “which no school can teach, but which obeys an interior command”: for example, the uncanny choice of rhythmic scheme in one poem. The interior derivation of instinct corresponds to the place where a true test of reality is to be found, in “simple intuitions” well beyond socially constructed reality (80-81). Joyce thus begins to develop his theme of the instincts, and of intuition, as lying at the heart of the artistic process.

The exotic of course is also a natural habitat for the imagination, in dimensions of time (mediaeval and old foreign folklore), in space (Timbuctooese, Peristan), and in recondite states of “the middle nature”: of the soul and of the psyche. Joyce suggests allusively that “East and West meet in that personality (we know how); images interweave there like soft, luminous scarves and words ring like brilliant mail” (78). This is a rare instance of collusive tone in Joyce. It is not however clear which parties are referred to in the plural first person; is it Joyce and his university comrades, Joyce and the Irish people or, perhaps, more restrictively, just Joyce and Mangan who are privy to this understanding?

Perhaps the most likely interpretation is that Joyce is referring to Ireland’s putatively Phoenician and Egyptian inheritance. Mangan’s recourse to literature and languages

30 Elizabeth Cullingford examines Joyce’s “pseudo historical genealogy” of Irish language and race in a 1907 Trieste lecture, figuring their Oriental origins, with linguistic roots in the language of the
outside of Ireland’s direct folk and literary tradition (since he had “no native literary tradition to guide him” CW 78) is undoubtedly part of his promise, in Joyce’s estimation. In relation to Nietzsche’s paper on *The Use and Abuse of History*, it should be noted that Joyce did not choose the exotic for his subjects; his method resembles more, Nietzsche’s (7) advocacy of the “plastic power” of the individual to reconcile the foreign and the past to one’s own sense of rootedness. Joyce imports “foreign” and past figures back into his native tradition, and in his fiction at least he never left his native Dublin.

Joyce reverts to the ancient native tradition again in the extraordinary, imaginative (at least in the specialised sense of creating an image) final passages of this essay:

> With Mangan a narrow and hysterical nationality receives a last justification, for when this feeble-bodied figure departs dusk begins to veil the train of the gods, and he who listens may hear their footsteps leaving the world. But the ancient gods, who are visions of the divine names, die and come to life many times . . . in the imaginative soul. (CW 82-3)

It is a compelling conclusion that Joyce is thinking of his own (future) case here, as a mortal practitioner of the divinity of the imagination; just so he had, famously, prefigured his own destiny as a successor to Ibsen, the “third minister” after Hauptmann, in “The Day of the Rabblement”. Most likely he seeks, like Stephen, one day to meet confirmation of a dimly apprehended vision (of art) that he beholds, and like Mangan and like Watteau he seeks beauty and truth that are there “in no satisfying measure or not at all” (CW 78)\(^1\), just as Stephen in *Portrait* seeks the “loveliness which has not yet come into the world” (P 251).

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31 Joyce “borrowed” these words from Pater (Parrinder 87).
Poetry and art

With “James Clarence Mangan”, Joyce’s scope has broadened from the new drama to art in general, and now he begins to explore what would become a central theme of Portrait. Just as in “Drama and Life” he contrasted inferior to true drama, now he identifies three hierarchical realms: the ephemeral, literature, and poetry (to which latter he also assigns philosophy). It is this last realm to which every age “must look for its sanction” (82). The artist must look to “the highest knowledge and to those laws which do not take a holiday because men and times forget them” (75). Appraisal of a work does not consist merely in apprehending the meaning but must also approach “the temper which has made the work”—in short, approaching the purposive domain—in order to discern “what is there well done and how much it signifies” (italics mine). Significantly, the ambitious nature of the poetic endeavour is measured partly by the weight of what it conveys.

Art must be approached in a spirit of reverence, in the spirit according to which it was conceived, and it is in this way that Joyce appraises Mangan. While Mangan’s achievement, unlike Ibsen’s in “Drama and Life”, is not beyond criticism, that criticism must be levelled on artistic, not moral grounds, and not in accordance with critical “profanities” that Joyce does not deign to detail. Mangan’s primary failing is not having subjugated his romantic temperament to classical discipline and thought, and in this respect Joyce might hope to better him.

Mangan’s shortcomings

The shortcomings Joyce identifies in Mangan are a negative measure of his own aspirations. Compared to the unassailable Ibsen, this poet is an artist against whom he might find a foothold to further his own individuating art.

Firstly, Mangan’s work is marred by the presence of “alien emotions”: hate, reactive sorrow (the quality that Joyce would later analyse in his Paris notebook as an inferior quality), recurring “noble misery”, bitterness, fear and cruelty among them. Joyce is uninterested in moral condemnation of Mangan’s personal habits, but the responses his poetry evokes in the reader are another matter. These are reactive, wounding
emotions that leave those who entertain them, endurally subjected to their effect. Mangan lacks that quality of joy that Joyce intuits as being at the centre of the artistic endeavour: an intuition he will soon develop and define in the context of his studies of Aristotle and Aquinas (see “Paris notebook”, following chapter).

Secondly, Mangan lacks faith: both the inner-based faith of the solitary, and alternatively the soaring faith of the middle ages—he lacks in short the “monkish” attributes of Stephen in Portrait (the significance of this “monk” theme is developed further in this thesis, in relation to the 1904 essay, and in the reading of Portrait). He lacks the “courage of his own despair” and the will to confront the ill will of fellow humans (CW 80-81). Unafraid of death, he is more afraid of life, and thus he is ill-equipped for the quality of life-affirmation that Joyce now considers to be at the centre of art—very likely, part of Ibsen’s legacy.

Thirdly, Mangan is so “enclosed” by history that even his wildest transports of imagination cannot set him free. This question of history merits further analysis, as it is central to our account of Joyce’s development.

Joyce defines history curiously, negatively in this essay: as the “denial of reality”, and the quality which “deceives the whole world”. Pejoratively, he refers to those who insist on history as “only men of letters”. Here he resembles not a little that Stephen in Ulysses who found history a “nightmare”. And yet, since the thrust of his argument is that the Irish artist must reshape this central relationship of an artist to his society, in space and time, then clearly “history” is not irredeemable; indeed, engaging with its challenges is central to the highest achievement in art.

Mangan had proved unequal to the task. Mangan was unable to escape the tyranny of the history-bound present: the everyday, the nostalgic, petty or insipid inheritance. For Mangan “never laments a deeper loss than the loss of plaids and ornaments”. He is content to inherit an impoverished legend and to rail against tyrants, an attitude that itself reinforces tyranny. For Mangan lacks the ability to change this inherited tradition, while a “strong spirit” would know how to.
Here, too, Joyce addresses what would become a central theme of *Portrait*, as his discussion of history in this essay clearly relates closely to his own quest to forge a conscience for his own race (see Chapter 2). Just as poetry, “even when apparently most fantastic, is always a revolt against artifice, a revolt, in a sense, against actuality” (CW 81), so should history illuminate universal themes beyond the “comedy” of past or present circumstances and preoccupations. According to Aubert, Joyce follows Blake in defining the “real” as what is eternally true, through vision and imagination, and actuality as mere Fable and Allegory, “fabled by the daughters of memory”. By this definition Joyce defines “reality” as accessible, paradoxically, by interior knowledge and steeped in the universals of the human condition, beyond present conditions. An art which can make us see our historical inheritance in a new light can show us better how to live.

“Reality” in Joyce’s definition, Aubert identifies as the Platonic Ideal, “the Idea realised in accordance with its concept” (67). Mangan’s fault can be considered to be not so much, as Aubert suggests, his failure to connect with his culture (74), but rather his inability to engage dialogically with the historical and mythic tradition of his race and reshape it, to imagine a reality that could be other than he perceives it, to turn his back on the reactive acceptance of inheritance. His is, ultimately, an ineffectual revolt against artifice.

**The charged stasis**

Joyce’s artistic and philosophical growth is primarily evolutionary, rather than being characterised by dramatic shifts. Themes are replicated, reapplied and extended, aims are established and, progressively, ways of achieving them are found. The materialism and social realism that in 1900 Joyce praises so highly in Ibsen is not replaced by the imagination of Mangan two years later, but is implicitly present in this paper as the counter force of classical patience: a challenge to the romantic qualities of a fevered mind, that the new art Joyce envisages can bear up to exacting Apollonian appraisal. The prose “experiment” with social realism in the silhouette, becomes the epiphany, a revelation of social or of psychological reality, and in the design of *Portrait* both these axes of reality are explored. The grounds for Joyce’s eventual breakthrough in a
revised attitude to “history”, around 1907, were established as early as this 1902 speech.

And we can see in Joyce’s exploration of “James Clarence Mangan”, Joyce’s keen focus on a condition that is sometimes overlooked in relation to Portrait: the romantic, restless core, that lies at its heart.

First synthesis

To Stephen in Stephen Hero the classical and the romantic are timeless qualities which take different forms according to the times. The same logic must apply in Joyce’s philosophy, as he clearly did espouse a thoroughly modern art rather than the reversion to older forms. Joyce might well have agreed with Schlegel, who had criticised the “imitators” of the ancients, who create lifeless works, in comparison to the true artists and “genuine followers of the ancients, those who attempted to rival them”, and in whom: “. . . what we borrow from others must be again as it were born in us, to produce a poetical effect. . . . Art cannot exist without nature, and man can give nothing to his fellow men but himself (Schlegel 21)”.

Schlegel considers that criticism has tended to favour the merely plausible surface of the imitators, only tolerating the “animated poets”, as rude wild geniuses. In Joyce’s assessment, analogous attitudes to those analysed by Schlegel have been continued in his native Ireland, in Stephen’s phrase the “afterthought of Europe” (SH 53), with movements like the Irish Revival, which borrows from the broken words of a lost time rather than responding creatively to the conditions of the present, against a sense of historic inheritance. Undoubtedly in the contest of bourgeois “taste” against genius, Joyce would have agreed with Schlegel’s prescription: “Genius is the almost unconscious choice of the highest degree of excellence, and consequently it is taste in its greatest perfection” (Schlegel 21). Such a view effectively assigns arbitration of these matters to those who identify with the description.

The imagination, even when bounded by the rigors of classical analysis and tempering, can take many forms; it is essential as a force with which to renovate the classical, a means of imagining a people’s relationship to history that can be other
than its reactive inheritance, just as without imagination, as Joyce noted in his schoolboy essay “Subjugation”, the writer may find him or herself overwhelmed by the topic.

The imagination can also find expression in innovations of form. In Joyce’s view, poetry should be addressed in terms of its “relation to the highest knowledge” but not so much to “look for a message” as to engage with its design and form (CW 75). Spurr likewise considers that Joyce in effect developed an aesthetics of liberation, the decay of mimesis resulting in freedom for Joyce to explore greater possibilities beyond the conventions of prose fiction and of language. In the dialogue of these apparently contradictory forces, the classical weight of philosophical scrutiny of actuality, and the contrary free play of abstraction and experiment with language, lies the potential for a richly challenging artistic practice.

To understand the thrust of Joyce’s essay we must understand the nature of this proposed balance of the classical and the romantic. Aubert’s (64) reading of this essay suggests the need for the artistic temper, “characterised by unrest and conflict”, “dialectically to reach a stable achievement, aesthetic repose” based on the idea of stasis (see discussion of the Paris notebook in the following chapter). This form of “tempering” has potential to be portrayed as a kind of neutralisation, but such a viewpoint would leave out an essential element in the apprehensive act which is implicit in Joyce, but unstated in his aesthetics. Pater’s definition of the romantic temper is helpful for an understanding of its attractions for Joyce:

> It is the addition of strangeness to beauty, that constitutes the romantic character in art: and the desire of beauty being a fixed element in every artistic organisation, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty, that constitutes the romantic temper (Pater, *Appreciations* 248).

The romantic temper is curious, restless. It should be tempered by classical appraisal and balance, but this does not imply its *subjugation* into quiescence. On the contrary, the romantic temper must be stimulated, its potential activated and harnessed.
Aubert quotes the passage from *Portrait* which he considers to be Joyce’s model of the epiphanic imagination, drawing an analogy to Galvani’s description of the “enchantment of the heart” (7). In this passage however it is also important to note that while the perceiving state reaches a perceptual point of stasis, this is achieved in counterpoint to sensory inputs which create an elevated state of awareness: “very like to that cardiac condition which … Galvani, using a phrase almost as beautiful as Shelley’s called the enchantment of the heart” (213). Joyce intends this phrase quite concretely and viscerally. Similarly, in the villanelle scene, Stephen is both enchanted, by visions cathectically charged and by music from his dream, and searching to achieve a counterbalancing perceptual, aesthetic stasis (see Chapter 8). It can be argued that critical emphasis on this perceptual quality of “stasis” has led to the overlooking of the galvanic charge of sensory and sensual input.

Joyce the fledgling artist of 1902 may aspire to the wild imagination of a Mangan, knowing he has the intellectual apparatus necessary to take its outpourings to their highest form. Later he must balance the unwordly and timeless romantic creative state (see discussion of villanelle, Chapter 8) with the acutely chronotopic sensibility of the novelist. How he achieves this; how, after his first fumbling attempt at the novel with *Stephen Hero* he finds a new approach that is neither unalloyed romanticism nor staid naturalism, that synthesises surface reality with psychological depth in a richly realised prosaic imagination, is the subject of our study.
CHAPTER FIVE:

THE IMAGINATION IN REVIEW

Joyce’s intellective growth in the period following the end of his formal education, and prior to the commencement of the compositional period of *Portrait* (from 1902 to January 1904) is surveyed from the evidence of his jottings in aesthetics, (the published extracts of Joyce’s 1903 Paris notebook) and from clues afforded in his published reviews of other works throughout 1903. Two themes are developed: firstly, the confirmation and extension of principles already noted (synthesis of romanticism and classicism, the importance of psychological portraiture and of forging a conscience for one’s race, chiefest among them) and secondly a growing emphasis on new themes, in particular: the primacy of the imagination, the “modern” project of casting aside traditional values (which is thus identifiably of an historical nature) and a psychological concept of “pantheism”. These increcent themes, it is argued, made an important contribution to the synthesising climax of the intellective and imaginative helices, in the first draft of *Portrait*.

It must be a movement then, an actuality of the possible as possible. Aristotle’s phrase formed itself within the gabbled verses and floated out into the studious silence of the library of Saint Genevieve where he had read, sheltered from the sin of Paris, night by night. By his elbow a delicate Siamese coned a handbook of strategy. Fed and feeding brains about me: under glowlamps, impaled, with faintly beating feelers: and in my mind’s darkness a sloth of the underworld, reluctant, shy of brightness, shifting her dragon scaly folds. Thought is the thought of thought. Tranquil brightness. The soul is in a manner all that is: the soul is the form of forms. Tranquility sudden, vast, candescent: form of forms. (U 21)

The evidence for Joyce’s development in the period after the end of his formal education but prior to his embarkation on his artistic career proper in early 1904,
chiefly consists of his Paris notebook jottings, some letters, and his published reviews of other works. Of the latter, Scholes and Corcoran (698) suggest that in his reviews we learn little about the works in question but much about Joyce. The Paris notebook, of early 1903, explores some general aims and principles that would contribute to the design of Portrait, while his reviews later in that year increasingly come to stress the imagination and a theme that in Joyce’s mind appears to be closely allied: a “pantheistic” spirit that is both psychological and “racial”, rational and yet mystical, and that is clearly allied to Joyce’s interest in developing a conscience for his race.

Two reviews of Joyce’s literary heroes, analysed here in detail, are treated as sketches preliminary to his own self-portraiture, and which focus speculatively on the creative processes and careers of Henrik Ibsen and Giordano Bruno. A common theme is their unflinching heroism, the need to follow the path of their art regardless of the cost of running a contrary path to society.

The university graduate followed Mangan’s proclivity for the exotic, and George Moore’s life path: cutting a figure for himself, moving to disreputable Paris, where he embarked upon self-directed study: Ben Jonson by day, Aristotle by night. Theoretically, he was also emulating Ibsen in taking up the study of medicine. Stanislaus said of his own father that countless lives were saved when he abandoned medicine: on his own brother’s decision no comment is recorded.

Turning his back on contemporary Irish movements, particularly the cultural nationalist movement (Kelly 40) and, more surprisingly perhaps, on the heady influence of various Continental movements: symbolism, decadence, aestheticism, he instead trains his mind on sources from two great periods in the Western tradition, ancient Greece and Renaissance England, the better to explore the kind of art he should seek to create.

With the interrupted Paris sojourns of late 1902 and early 1903, Joyce, like Stephen in Ulysses, took upon himself the study of Aristotle’s Metaphysics and De Anima, in addition to the Poetics. His interest was not merely in literary form, as he was equally

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32 George Moore places himself in company with Byron and Shelley in having been exiled by censorious England (188).
eager to develop his understanding of the soul, that which “is in a manner all that is: the soul is the form of forms” (U 21). Perhaps too, he had hoped to find in De Anima, some counsel in Aristotle’s analysis of the imagination.

In a most revealing passage Stanislaus Joyce records, apropos James’ enthusiasm for the imagination, Mangan and Blake in particular:

The mystical Blake was “of imagination all compact”, and at that time the imagination was fighting hard for its rights in my brother’s soul. It stirred him deeply that in an age of self-satisfied materialism, Blake dared to assert the all-importance of the imagination and to stake his long life on its affirmation. (MBK 99)

Joyce’s aesthetic instinct had also been excited by Dante, Pater, D’Annunzio, Ibsen, Mangan, Bruno and others. And yet, as we have seen in the Mangan paper, a satisfying art cannot reside solely in the romantic temper; it must be tempered by the classical school. For this he takes recourse to the great Aristotle, a pre-Christian thinker, methodical and scientific observer of life, the mind, and art.

Aristotle offers aesthetic and philosophical rigor outside the lamentable tradition of Irish art and the confines of the current enthusiasms and “ambient ideologies” of his home country, beyond the oppressive tyrannies of the Roman Church and of Britain: a philosophy stemming from a very different time and place. Secondly, Aristotle lends a distinguished edge to his quest for artistic individuation, self-differentiation. Scorning the weak will of aesthetes (see: “Day of the Rabblement”, “The Holy Office”), Joyce finds Aristotle particularly attractive. Kenner suggests that Joyce sensed within himself a “steely reserve” that Verlaine’s techniques couldn’t reach, and so he turned to Ibsen and Jonson “in pursuit of dryness” (Kenner, Dublin’s Joyce 33). Thirdly, it is likely that Joyce sought to further his understanding of the form that seemingly was still the focus of his principal ambition: to write drama. Both Aristotle and Ben Jonson might be expected to be of assistance in this regard. Gorman places Joyce as developing his aesthetics as early as 1901 (74), but writing of the time of Joyce’s arrival in Paris records that:
The determination to write was savagely strong in Joyce’s mind, but it must be remembered that while he possessed a general idea of the direction he was travelling and even the framework of an aesthetic he was still in a formative state. Much of his resolution would express itself in assiduous preparation rather than in actual creation.

(89)

As Gorman notes, Joyce had “just passed his twenty-first year when he reached this dialectical peak of his development” (the Paris notebook jottings) and no doubt he would have ascribed some significance to this time as one where he should have reached a kind of intellectual maturity, according to Roman thought (99; and see Gottfried). Joyce set about this determinedly, and developed some ideas which appear to boil down to a few principles that, I argue, were a defining moment in Joyce’s aesthetic development, regardless of whether or not they constituted a successful aesthetics in their own right.

In a review of Ibsen’s *Catilina* Joyce is critical of a “young generation which has cast away belief and thrown precision after it” (CW 101). Stephen, too, in his lecture on “Drama and Life” in *Stephen Hero* argues that his own views on “literature” as distinct from poetry could lead to “spiritual anarchy” if not controlled by the “classical style” (SH 73). The young artist, intrigued by questions that beset and confuse the “age” resorts to an ageless classical authority.

Gorman details the extent to which Joyce studied Jonson, jotting down quotations from many of his works in a notebook (lately found, but not as yet widely available publicly33), and hazards some of Jonson’s attractions for Joyce: his “sinewy qualities” and “classical exactness”, his psychological portrayal of characters according to “humours” and “vapours”, and his lyrics (94-5). Given his dismissive view of Shakespeare as (like Mangan) lacking faith, a “timeserver, ever ready to write what he hoped would please” (MBK 100) the aspiring new dramatist sought an alternative role model in the English language, still from that Elizabethan era which Stephen held in such high regard. Jonson’s psychological characterisation could be expected to stimulate his ideas further, beyond Ibsen’s approach and Aristotle’s theory. Stephen in

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33 Michael Groden (“National Library”) describes the nature of the recently discovered notebook.
\emph{Portrait} claims that “Aristotle’s entire system of philosophy rests upon his book of psychology and that, I think, rests on his statement that the same attribute cannot at the same time and in the same connexion belong to and not belong to the same subject” (P 208).

Aristotle was also attractive to Joyce for his rigor and scientism. Gorman characterises his virtues as representing fixed “Dogma” against “the turbid tides of inchoate metaphysics” (95). He is “System, co-ordination, rationalisation”, the reverse of Platonic mysticism. Stanislaus, in his diary of 1904, recounts that “Jim boasts—for he often boasts now—of being modern”. Shortly before that sentence he notes that “whatever method there is in Jim’s life is highly unscientific, yet in theory he approves only of the scientific method .... The word ‘scientific’ is always a word of praise in his mouth”. (DD 49). In the light of the present review of Joyce’s development it should be argued rather that while Joyce in fact, like Bruno abhorred “dogma” (see below), he did seek a distinguishing theoretical edge to propel the rich synthesis he sought.

It is narrated in \emph{Portrait} that the dusk of Stephen’s mind is occasionally illuminated by brilliant flashes of insight. Perhaps Joyce’s notebook jottings were the remnant products of similar lightning strikes; from them we might glean some rudimentary understanding of what they meant for his evolving aims.

**February-March 1903: Paris aesthetics notebook**

In \emph{Ulysses}, of course, Stephen’s memory of reading in the Paris Bibliothèque (quoted at the head of this chapter) is conveyed in a self-deprecating tone. The “fed and feeding brains” about him, under glowlamps, are like impaled insects, with “faintly beating feelers”. Stephen’s receptive mind is but a “sloth of the underworld, reluctant, shy of brightness”. Joyce memorialised his own flashes of lightning from this period by fixing them in time, appending a date to each separate notebook entry. Stephen in \emph{Portrait} retorts to the Dean of Studies, who is soliciting a paper from him, that he is lucky to have an idea once a fortnight (P 187). If the evidence of his dated Paris entries is any guide, Joyce averaged a little better than that in February-March
1903. As the remainder of these Paris jottings are not currently available, we can only rely on Gorman’s presumably selective quotations.

Form is a thread common to many of these entries. Joyce, having first entertained ideas of writing in verse and later in the drama, re-examines the question of literary form: he compares the respective merits of tragedy and comedy before, some three weeks later, writing a brief few lines on the three “conditions” of art (later referred to as the lyrical, epical and dramatic forms in Portrait), and then, in another three weeks, writing short pieces at short intervals about the “rhythm” (component structure) of a work.

**Tragedy versus comedy**

Firstly, Joyce weighs up the relative merits of tragedy and comedy. Since the former induces an emotion of sorrow, the latter joy, he plumps for comedy as the “perfect manner in art”. What both these forms have in common is that “proper” art induces in us an emotion at rest: tragedy should provoke terror and pity, comedy—joy. Only improper art provokes loathing or desire; just so, Mangan’s art induces “alien emotions”. Thus Joyce, in the first recorded private utterance of an aesthetic viewpoint, finds a sense of destiny in his own name, just as Stephen Dedalus in Portrait finds a destiny in his surname: Dedalus, artificer, exile and fabulous inventor.\(^3\)

*Portrait* by Joyce’s own definitions should aim to evoke joy, and insofar as it does so, it can be called “comic”. Herein lies perhaps, one clue to Joyce’s interest in the Romantic, for Schlegel’s analysis of the Classical and the Romantic tendencies, appraises the latter in relation to the “harmony of all faculties”, to the “poetry of joy” (24). In *Portrait*, this first Paris entry, largely unchanged in tenor, commences Stephen’s peroration to Lynch, with the exception that Stephen does not seek to contrast tragedy and comedy. In my reading of the novel, Stephen experiences a

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\(^3\) Jean Kimball (Early Freidians 7) speculates that it may have been Joyce himself who originated the comment on the interchangeability of his name and Freud’s, based on Freud’s account of one of his dreams (French “joyeux”). The identification is particularly meaningful in relation to the parallel projects of exploration of the unconscious, as Kimball notes. Also see Epstein (“Joyce’s Names” 781).
climax of joy at the end of the fourth chapter, the aesthete’s swoon by Sandymount Strand, and again in the scene where he writes a villanelle. Towards the end of the novel, a further climactic sensation of excitement translates, in Joyce’s terms, into that feeling which is created by the “possession of some good” (CW 144), his sense of vocation, as Stephen joyfully seeks nothing other than to live according to his own true self, to encounter experience and by living truly to forge a conscience for his race.

Assuming that Joyce adhered to his own aesthetics, Stephen as the subject of the novel should excite neither desire nor loathing, and only the critic who approaches the work in a temper other than that in which it was conceived (see his critical writings “Drama and Life” and “Ibsen’s New Drama”, CW 38-67) would be liable to commit such errors.

**The three “conditions” of art**

The next recorded subject appears to be a mere snippet selected by Gorman, as it is preceded and succeeded by an ellipsis.

That art is lyrical whereby the artist sets forth the image in immediate relation to himself; that art is epical whereby the artist sets forth the image in mediate relation to himself and to others; that art is dramatic whereby the artist sets forth the image in immediate relation to others. . . . (CW 145)

Kenner (1955) describes Joyce’s entire oeuvre as spanning two cycles between these forms, identifying *Portrait* as the first successful lyrical work, while at another extreme Ellsworth Mason suggests that Joyce chose the “dramatic” form for all his fiction, as that which he had identified as the highest form. Other critics suggest that any given work embodies the logic of different forms in different sections: *Portrait* thus embraces all three at given times, perhaps in sequence.

For our present purposes, it is enough to note that Joyce here is engaged in an analysis of artistic modes that transcends genre but that embraces timeless, purposive relationships between an image, the artist, and society. It provides a continuum from
the essentially romantic, lyrical impulse (for example, Wordsworth’s *Prelude*) to classically tempered forms and, most importantly, it is measured according to relations of the artist’s fashioned image, to themselves and others. In respect of a work of self-portraiture then, art is evaluated according to the artist’s image in relation to others, and we will not be surprised to see this process shifting according to different stages of the artist’s development. Curran (62) had criticised the disparity between the early, lyrical passages of *Stephen Hero* and the latter parts of the novel, which suggests that some kind of sequential progression between these modes may have been attempted in the first draft novel.

**Rhythm**

The final quoted entry is one sentence defining art as the disposition of “sensible or intelligible matter for an aesthetic end”: the artist’s intention thus is the defining criterion of art. Likewise, it is serving a “common end” that defines the artistic whole in Joyce’s definition of rhythm, as the “first or formal relation of part to part in any whole or of a whole to its part or parts, or of any part to the whole of which it is a part”. The work of art then is characterised by this quality of “rhythm”.

Marguerite Harkness discusses Stephen’s “adolescent” concept of rhythm in its relation to Aestheticism without engaging with Joyce’s peculiarly structural conception of the term, assimilating to it, instead, Stephen’s rhythms and Yeats’s treatment of rhythm in his essays. In her usage “rhythm” is complicit with the aesthete’s desire to control time and “the elements of life” in an “avoidance of life” (60) rather than the careful artist’s structural craft (56-60). In contrast, Umberto Eco notes that “Stephen’s definition of aesthetic rhythm is of clear Pythagorean origin” (*Middle Ages* 18) and that Coleridge shared a similar definition. Joyce’s definition of “rhythm” is elevated to an architectonic principle with the realisation of *Portrait*; Gabler’s analysis (“Seven Lost Years”) suggests that Joyce’s deliberations were chiefly structural. One of *Stephen Hero*’s chief shortcomings is “rhythmic” in Joyce’s sense: it lacks cohesion, intratextual tautness and symmetry in its diffuse parts.
Art imitates nature

Joyce meticulously corrects a mistranslation of Aristotle which sees Art defined as “an imitation of nature” when it should read only “Art imitates nature”: in short, that “the artistic process is like the natural process”. This dictum liberates art from the mimetic function therefore, and delivers it to the essentially romantic realm of an unknowable “aesthetic instinct”. It has already been noted that Mason and Ellmann relate this precept to Stephen’s somewhat deterministic description of a work of art as a kind of sexual reproduction (CW 145 fn 1), a metaphor which Joyce himself shared. A broader interpretation suggests that art is vitally uncontrollable, processive, organic and fluid, suggestions that are equally supported in the imagery of the villanelle episode of Portrait, and that offer the benefit of a Bakhtinian, processive and open-ended historicity.

The last recorded entry in the Paris notebook is dated 28 March 1903. On 11 April Joyce was summoned home to his mother’s deathbed. His aesthetics writings would be resumed near the start of the next Continental foray, some time after Stephen Hero had been started.

The significance of Joyce’s jottings for the subject of this thesis is that they represent Joyce working to shape and inform his art, to give it an individuating form grounded in the Western philosophical tradition. To effect a synthesis of the opposing schools of art, one has to be able to understand what art is, the forms it takes, its structure and developmental process. Much of Joyce’s deliberations focus on form, and while his focus is on the drama and on poetry, the principles he derives will prove equally applicable to prose. They can guide the novelist’s practice and contribute to the underlying logic of the novel that is “living a life that is distinctly its own” in Bakhtin’s evocative description (DI 43). Proper art is “static” rather than kinetic, a principle that is a central theme in Stephen’s aesthetics: (Chapter 8.) It should produce joy rather than sorrow or other kinetic emotions. Joyce thus produces a theorem in answer to what he had already identified as the chiepest of Mangan’s shortcomings. Art is defined by a rhythmic quality of the relations of its parts, and of part to whole: the kind of cohesive, densely framed quality that is achieved within an instant in a
dream, in a lightning flash of inspiration, or over ten years in painstaking wearing away at a problem.

**Criticism in review**

Joyce wrote a number of reviews during the period between “James Clarence Mangan” and the commencement of his career proper as an artist. The reviews, while nominally focused on subjects not necessarily close to his interests, can tell us a good deal. By its nature, a review involves evaluating a particular work, and this necessitates the application of implicit or explicit criteria revelatory of the reviewer’s values.

A survey of gleanings from these reviews can be divided roughly into two camps: works confirming and/or elaborating upon lines already established in his talks, early critical writings, or in his aesthetics, and those which appear to refer ahead to further developments in his thought. These themes are reviewed in broad outline before two major pieces are analysed in more detail: a review related to Ibsen and a book about Bruno.

A core of continuity within Joyce’s evolving aesthetic explorations is confirmed by this survey of Joyce’s implicit attitudes of 1903. For the sake of brevity, all but two of these reviews are not summarised. All are found in Mason and Ellmann’s collection of Joyce’s *Critical Writings*. They are referred to by name, and page references are to this work unless otherwise specified.

**The importance of art**

Every age must look for its sanction to its art and to its philosophy (CW 82). Since the great majority of works that Joyce reviews fall significantly short of serving this highest realm, and constitute either the lowest category of ephemera, or, at best “literature”, and then only barely, he castigates most of them unsparingly, albeit
entertainingly, Insofar as the occasional work conveys some philosophic import, reveals a certain degree and density of “thought”, from the Classical side of the equation, it is scrupulously afforded a nod (“George Meredith”). Likewise, he graciously praises writers who possess the qualities of being at least non-conformist, realistic or painstaking, since a major purpose of art is to penetrate the social semblances of actuality and to reveal reality (“Catilina”, “An effort at precision”).

The artistic and philosophical mission must be contrasted to lesser purposes—the serving of religious, political, nationalist or didactic dogma. Works devoted to the latter are lambasted (“An Irish Poet”). Even Aristotle receives unexpectedly adverse attention: his views on education are too clearly couched in service of “recruiting for the Greek state”. Contrary to the thesis of one writer, Joyce considers Aristotle’s greatest work to be as a metaphysician, not as a “biologist”. Perhaps, given his growing interest in Bruno (see below), a notable anti-Aristotelian (Bruno 8), Joyce’s own attitudes have begun to soften. Perhaps like Bruno he begins to appreciate that too much materialism can dampen the imagination and individual expression.

True art is above mere socially conventional criticism. Joyce quite enjoys Marcelle Tinayre’s House of Sin and defends the author against claims of licentiousness, not by defending the author’s right to be licentious, but by arguing that she is not. He shows awareness of the “religious political novel” and notes the promising theme of the contrasting claims on the self of religious conviction and primal urges, a strong theme in Stephen Hero and again in Portrait, where however the description of Stephen’s “monster” (as it is termed in Stephen Hero) is toned down a little. Tinayre’s protagonist Augustine (with whom James Augustine Joyce may have identified somewhat) is brought up strictly and may have a clerical vocation or at least look forward to a devout life, but his religious defences weaken against the onslaught of human love, a theme that is central in Portrait. In Tinayre’s narrative of religious orthodoxy against modern scepticism, Joyce abhors engagement in material strife but allows it as an internalised combat within one person’s soul. Portrait later proceeds similarly.

Joyce’s specialised usage of these terms is outlined in “James Clarence Mangan”: see Chapter 4.
Synthesis of the classical and the romantic

While Joyce does not formally restate his programme of literary synthesis, frequent references testify to this balance of the two tempers as being a key consideration. He attacks any work that is unduly Classical or Romantic, or whose art does not comprise the best qualities of both schools. Classicism at its worst is too materialistic, too bound up in the circumstantial comedies of everyday life, without seeing beyond the surface to the great and universal laws that bind our existence. Romanticism can be formless and wild, lacks lucidity in thought, and is resistant to critical interpretation. And yet the lack of the lyrical impulse in particular, a criterion that may have emerged from his recent aesthetic investigations, is criticised trenchantly. Even worse perhaps than the lack of imagination is a lazy, pallid or borrowed imagination (see below).

The lyrical

Some months after “James Clarence Mangan”, Joyce, from his raffish new address of Paris, fires a broadside at nationalistic countrymen who dare to sully the name of poetry (“An Irish Poet”). If Mangan had the “impatient temper” to an extreme, William Rooney is impatient and careless in a less worthy, ignominious sense. He is tired in his thinking, and lashes poetry into servitude to religion and nationalism. Rooney’s “carelessness” is not of the Mangan kind, a “great carelessness [that] might do great things” but rather a mean kind that will accomplish nothing. If Mangan was too much beset by “history”, Rooney is too busy serving other ideological ends. Joyce opines that “Religion and all that is allied thereto can manifestly persuade men to great evil” (CW 62).

Meredith clearly hasn’t found the right synthesis of the classical and the romantic and thus his art fails to attain the essential quality of fluidity. The dismissive review of Lady Gregory’s volume of folklore (“The Soul of Ireland”) contrastingly invokes various art forms that aspire to the condition of music, referring to Whistler/Mallarme and thereby, according to Barry (304 fn 6) silently invoking Pater’s dictum: “all art aspires to the condition of music”.

If the mean talent of Rooney lacks the grander, more generous impatient temper of Mangan, this is also a shortcoming in the novelist George Meredith. Meredith in his view lacks that “irreplaceable” value of the tradition of literature, the lyrical impulse. The problem, Joyce opines, is that Meredith’s keen mind doesn’t allow him to be lyrical. Meredith’s logical mind overrules any possibility of lyricism; an assessment tantamount to the theme of oppression by the super ego that could well have been penned by Freud.

This quasi Freudian hypothesis suggests an aspect of Joyce’s struggle at that time: between the lucid and discerning intellect which could not allow himself any but the highest expressions of art, and an imagination which was in his own estimation either too wild or too tame, or as yet too weak to withstand the onslaughts of the former. Still with Mangan in mind perhaps, Joyce opines, with just a hint of pique, that the lyrical impulse has often been taken from the wise and given to the foolish. Implicitly Joyce positions himself squarely within the ranks of the wise, while the synthesis of wisdom and imagination so far has eluded him.

**Imagination**

In addition to the fluid quality of lyricism, good writing is characterised by imagination. Without it, a work is liable to exhibit tired thinking (“An Irish Poet”). It is still that same criterion of imagination that Joyce does not fail to hammer, even for the much more modest undertaking of one Mr Gwynn’s book of ten essays on Ireland (“Today and Tomorrow in Ireland”). While Joyce is characteristically dismissive of the Gaelic Revival, he is most scathing of Gwynn, who lacks imagination completely, for having “somehow the air of discovering Mangan”. Perhaps Gwynn’s greater crime is in implicitly recruiting Mangan to his own cause. Joyce brutally compares the book’s imagination against Mangan, that “creature of lightning” who came as “a stranger among the people he ennobled”, to demonstrate the relative shortcomings of

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36 The clash of a repressive, self-censoring superego against the creative impulse is a staple and commonplace of contemporary “how to” books on creative writing, popularised particularly by Dorothea Brande, and later by Nathalie Goldberg, for example. Joyce’s interest in the artistic process is likely to have had developmental value for him.
that uninspired nationalist crew. The Irish imagination upon which his patron Lady Gregory’s mythic folkstories draw is “senile” (“The Soul of Ireland”).

Shortcomings

As with the Mangan essay, we can read the shortcomings he castigates, as a negative print of his own ambitions. He applies his Paris aesthetics to one work: it lacks even the first quality of beauty: integrity, defined as separateness and wholeness (“An Irish Poet” 87). It lacks spiritual and living energy. Contrary to the spirit of Ibsen’s best plays, despite some very useful analysis of the repressive effect of religion on some characters, in Marcel Tinayre’s *House of Sin*, the main characters ultimately are defeated by history: “the tradition of generations overcomes the lovers”—a most regressive outcome for Joyce, as we would expect from his Mangan paper.

Critical Development

Stephen in *Stephen Hero* speaks about “modern” notions, modern art and modern unrest, as Stephen in *Portrait* does not. The notion of a modern artistic practice that should outstrip the old is seldom stated in Joyce’s primary critical writings, but does appear in his reviews, as the one unequivocal indicator that Joyce once held similar views in this regard to the Stephen of *Portrait*. Stephen in *Portrait* of course eschews this outright rebellion and challenge for a less reactive, dialogically engaged, approach.

This project of the “modern” should afford vital clues as to the shaping forces behind Joyce’s design, but Joyce is typically allusive and brief on the subject. Two other highly significant themes which recur in these reviews, are pantheistic spirituality, and psychological analysis, while a passing reference to the possibilities of the novel offers an insight into his future practice.
Joyce restates a sense of crisis in literature. It is under siege by the enthusiast and the doctrinaire (“An Irish Poet”). Contrary to his earlier, pro-science proclivities, he distances himself from those materialists who advocate science as an end (see above). In Nietzschean mode, now Joyce rails against the fact that the “scientific specialists and the cohort of Materialists are cheapening the good name of philosophy” (CW 109).

This vulgarisation and cheapening of the highest cultural values creates an urgency to resist social pressures, the weight of “history” broadly defined (see Chapter 1) and to fashion a new social conscience, since the modern project is to break up tradition. With the American writer James Allan (“The Mettle of the Pasture”) he does like the “general current” of the book in suggesting an “eager lively race working out its destiny among other races under the influence of some vague pantheistic spirit which is at times strangely mournful” (118). This appears to resonate with Joyce’s project to forge a conscience for his own race.

Joyce accords a good degree of value to this “pantheistic” view of a race’s creative soul, as, approvingly, he quotes a passage of Allan’s book that treats of the powers that shape our destiny beyond our will. In the final pre-compositional phase prior to the January 1904 Portrait, marked by pieces written from August to December 1903, Joyce’s reviews bear repeated references to a mystical strain that seems to have appealed to his imagination. In his review of *The House of Sin* and in other reviews, he makes veiled references to arcane world views: for example that “mysterious spirit of the earth” whose voice is always breaking in upon the prayers of the saints.37 Similarly his treatment of Allan’s book refers to a life force beyond human values.

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37 Mason and Ellmann cite the then fashionable theosophy as one source of these concepts (fn 1, 5: CW 83).
Under the perhaps studied and self-fashioning “enigma of a manner” that is attested to in the 1904 Portrait, and hinted at here in this language of mystery, heresy and the “occult”, Joyce articulates a two-pronged programme for engaging with one’s own creative potential. Firstly this consists of Da Vinci-like introspection, such as that mentioned in his review of “Mr Mason’s novels”, and secondly, in his own case at least, of exploring the fascination of mystical ideas, perhaps as a counter to excessive classicism, the repressions endemic to a too-logical mind. Aubert suggests that Joyce in “James Clarence Mangan” was “investigating the concept of nature, in its widest acceptation” as related both to pantheism and to science. For the former strand he took direction from Plotinus (via Bosanquet), Bruno and Spinoza (Aubert 81). Scholes and Corcoran (702) also suggest more generally that there is a strong German Romanticist core to these aesthetics which has been little studied, and that Hegel may have been a source of Joyce’s interest in pantheism. Schlegel’s analysis of the ancient Greeks also is tantamount to a dissection of their pantheistic “deification of the powers of nature and of the earthly life” (24).

Increasingly, Joyce makes references to a “pantheistic” spirit of race. In reviewing Lady Gregory’s work, Joyce, lately steeped in Aristotle’s study of the soul, analyses Ireland’s collective soul and the creative depth of its folk myth and story. His review begins on the topic of “Speculation” as defined by Aristotle (according to Barry), and through this, imagination. His chief interest in this review is in the nature of Irish myth and the quality of imagination it embodies, wherein it is found greatly lacking. Joyce believes that children have better imagination than the broken light of Irish myth, the pallid imagination embodied in these stories.

The old folk stories are sleepy, fragmentary discontinuous stories, not satisfying and whole. So Joyce critiques Irish myth and, as it were, the collective mythic soul of Ireland. It lacks even the vivid and living imagination of childhood. Ireland has only “memories of beliefs” and only one true belief: the ignobility of its conquerors. Here Joyce comes close to a view that Ireland as a whole needs to revert to its instinctual resources; a conclusion that he later applied to himself after the Rome sojourn (Chapter 9). In this review Joyce cuttingly dismisses the western Irish, the stock from which his future partner and wife Nora would come.
Joyce’s conclusion in this review has an echo in “The Dead”. Lady Gregory’s book quoted lines from Walt Whitman to the effect that no matter how far one travels, one finds the best in those people and things close to us when we return. Gabriel Conroy echoes this sentiment in “The Dead” (Barry xviii): perhaps another marker of the development of Joyce’s historical sense since Rome 1906, as Joyce too in imagination “comes home” to reconcile himself with that “race”, those people and things which served in the formation of his soul, the subject of the first novel.

Psychologism

The other strand of this “pantheistic” soul of a race is its expression deep within the individual consciousness, a matter for introspection and psychological self-examination. In relation to this, Joyce follows Pater in referring to the case of Da Vinci (“Mr Mason’s novels”).

Joyce had declared psychological insight to be one of Ibsen’s chief claims on immortality, and this criterion applies equally to fiction, where he deplores flaws in characterisation (“Arnold Graves’ new work”). He is clearly aware of a tradition of the psychological novel, tracing back at least as far as Henry James, but notes that much bad work has been defended in that name (CW 118).

A second strand of Joyce’s psychological preoccupation is again somewhat psychoanalytical in tenor, an intriguing precursor of Stephen’s theory about the relationship between Shakespeare’s art and his life in Ulysses. Joyce quotes Leonardo Da Vinci as a case of the artist’s choosing their own (ugly) likeness rather than a beautiful visage, for a study. This reference is applied with anti-climactic condescension to explain one Mr Mason’s pattern of reproducing if not his own likeness, then at least his own fascinations and unconscious complexes, repeatedly in his novels. Our chief interest here is in how Joyce views Da Vinci as “exploring the dark recesses of consciousness in the interests of some semi-pantheistic psychology”. There is an echo here too of Joyce’s later choice of sometimes unlovely images of Stephen Dedalus in his portrait of an artist.
In these late reviews we begin to see the clustering of some themes that will soon fuse into one: the fruits of individual introspection are reflected in psychological portraiture which in turn mirrors, echoes or shapes the pantheistic spirit of a race. These themes soon re-emerge in the 1904 “blueprint” of Portrait (see Chapter 6).

Towards a prosaics

It has been noted that Joyce’s views about art were formulated chiefly in regard to poetry and the drama, Aristotle’s Poetics being one important source. Bakhtin has noted this disjuncture between criticism based on the classical attributes of an ancient poetics, and the need for a new understanding of the peculiar logic of the novel: a “prosaics”.

In these reviews we can observe a perhaps obvious yet crucial development: Joyce begins to reapply his aims and evaluative criteria to the novel form. Meredith for instance, does not, in his estimation, have “the instinct of the epical artist”. Unfortunately, Joyce does not enlarge on what this instinct is, nor on what form it may take in the novel (the first glimmerings of a story to be called “Ulysses” is as yet some four years off.)

After his survey of the novel during his Rome stay, Joyce must have come to appreciate the need to reinvent the novel form according to his own purposes. One way in which prose art can aspire towards the desired, fluid condition of music, is observed in his review of Tinayre’s novel. Joyce approves of the way that this work adjusts in style to express the growing entropy and collapse of the narrative, a style that may have contributed to a technique he would soon apply himself: what Ellmann has called “magnetisation of style” (JJ 146) or what Litz (46) termed “expressive form”.

38 “All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music” (Pater, Renaissance 135).
March 21 1903, Paris: Catilina

The first of Joyce’s reviews that merits detailed analysis is of a new translation of Ibsen’s *Catilina*. Joyce uses this piece on Ibsen’s first play as a vehicle for reviewing Ibsen’s entire career, in the process affording fascinating insights into some attendant preoccupations of his own, which illuminate his vision of his own future. In this paper, which Mason and Ellmann dismiss as waxing increasingly eloquent and irrelevant (CW 98) he describes Ibsen’s career as a development along two artistic strands, the romantic and classical schools, that he had identified in “James Clarence Mangan” as being at the heart of the highest art. Similarly to the “Portrait” essay which he would write less than a year later, this review portrays an artist not in “iron memorial aspect” but in a succession of phases. It examines the significatory power of form, and announces some related considerations central to the modern art. Finally he introduces in passing a fragile figuration of the imagination: as an ungraspable fluid that can only be held in the vessel of form.

Joyce had confided in a letter to Stanislaus that he was up to his eyes in Aristotle’s psychology, feeling very intellectual these days, and that Stanislaus would see the fruits of it in this review. Again, as in his review titled “An Effort at Precision”, Joyce contrasts appearance and reality. This time though the theme is how a writer is memorialised in their final shape, compared to the developmental reality of a series of phases. Ibsen’s final shape, the image he has left to the world, is the outcome of heroic struggle. His earlier writings are testament to this struggle, and this history of the artist’s development should be accounted for in our assessment of him. In similar vein to the later *Portrait* essay, Joyce goes on to note that “Yet, in some ways, this earlier manner suggests the later manner” (CW 99) and so we can recognise the early writer in the mature figure. The earlier phase of the artist is important to our understanding of the late phase artist. Thus Joyce himself traces the double helical progression of Ibsen’s imagination and intellect.
The romantic temper fired

In “James Clarence Mangan” Joyce criticised the view that the classic temper was simply the romantic temper grown old. While Ibsen indeed commences as a romantic writer, his ascension to a classic and mature art is not an inevitable progression so much as an act of heroism, a hard-won victory, though few people, he notes, are able to perceive this. (Thus by Joyce’s own analysis, the growth of art is far from “genetically” predetermined, and in this respect is no function of “nature” but rather of the writer’s travail.)

Ibsen’s later evolution into classicism was a far higher development than his romantic phase, which had been prey somewhat to inartistically contrived outcomes. *Catilina* is romantic and essentially forgettable, a youthful excess. In general the untempered romantic form seeks to be supported either by the heroic or the monstrous, and ultimately this early tragedy is resolved not according to the nature of the characters but in relation to the needs of the romantic “dogma”.

“And Ibsen has united with his strong, ample imaginative faculty a pre-occupation with the things present to him” (CW 101). Ibsen’s ultimate achievement was to synthesise imagination and the penetration of actuality, precisely the kind of art Joyce envisages for himself, but is yet to achieve.

The modern task

Joyce casually announces the “modern” task, as if it were a given: firstly to “break up tradition”, broadly understood, history—in today’s terminology “discourse” or ideology, a word akin to those other big “words which make us so unhappy” as he snootily pronounced in a review of Rooney. Secondly, there is the Nietzschean project to “discountenance the absolute” (100), something which Joyce sees as inevitable. And while the work *Catilina* has little merit, yet it does show “…an original and capable writer struggling with a form that is not his own.” (73) Before long, Joyce would experiment with the novel before likewise finding that the form posed a challenge he was not yet fully equipped to deal with.
In Joyce’s analysis, this early “manner” of Ibsen’s career endures up to *Peer Gynt*, where it achieves its apogee. After that, Ibsen continues to evolve his own form, which progressively combines ever more skilfully the essential elements of the drama: construction, speech and action. Just so, Joyce would evolve form and style all his life, arguably to ever-higher degrees of integration of language, structure and thought.

Joyce praises the “astonishing courage” that Ibsen’s career entailed and suggests that it is characteristic of this “age of transition” to praise the earlier over the later work. He may have in mind the recent movements of aestheticism and symbolism in commenting that this generation has “cast away belief, and thrown precision after it”. It prefers the impatient and careless temper to the intellectual, ironic and calm classicism of the more highly evolved imagination. The unchallenged romantic temper is intermingled with other cries of hysteria: war, statecraft and religion.


In a late book review (these ceased in late 1903 after Joyce irremediably incensed the editor of the *Daily Express*), and on a subject of great interest to himself, we find the next in his series of portraits of an artist. Having sought self-understanding and self-direction from his studies of Ibsen and of Mangan in particular, in turning to Bruno he finds suggestively strong parallels to his own identity in this complex, many-faceted figure.

In his portrait of Bruno we see the climaxing convergence of a number of themes, a cluster of paired-opposite attributes that is later reflected in his first self-portrait: Bruno is romantic and classical, material yet imaginative, modern yet mediaeval. He sloughs off tradition yet is acutely aware of, and engaged with it, faith-inspired yet heretical, fevered yet wise. As with the Mangan paper and with his review of *Catilina*, he continues to compare the romantic and classical tendencies. As in the Mangan paper, he is fascinated by the quality of imagination of Bruno’s impatient temper.
And the review prefigures some identificatory elements with which the reader of the 1904 ur-Portrait and of *Portrait* is familiar: figures of the monk, the heretic, the quality of the mediaeval mind. Above all, however, the qualities which Joyce extols most in Bruno are his admonitions about the value of the intuitions, and his status of objective, independent observer (CW 133-134). In a later chapter, it is demonstrated that Joyce revisited and reapplied this theme of the intuitions and instincts as part of his fashioning of a new, powerful historical sense that would contribute to the re-formation of *Portrait*.

**Portrayal in many phases**

Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait* is unwilling to portray his father’s status in iron memorial aspect, so resorts to a list: “A medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician . . . and at present a praiser of his own past” (P 241). Joyce reviews Bruno’s life as follows:

> A Dominican monk, a gypsy professor, a commentator of old philosophies and a deviser of a new one, a playwright, a polemist, a counsel for his own defence, and, finally, a martyr burned at the stake in the Campo dei Fiori. (CW 133)

Even as early as 1903, at the age of 21, Joyce himself could identify with many of these phases. The image of “monk” has echoes in the artist’s solitude and practices in the 1904 essay, and is a repeated motif associated with Stephen in certain phases of *Portrait*: for example, Stephen the aesthete who composes a villanelle awakes to monkish solitude and contemplation:

> The full morning light had come. No sound was to be heard; but he knew that all around him life was about to awaken in common noises, hoarse voices, sleepy prayers. Shrinking from that life he turned towards the wall, making a cowl of the blanket . . . (P 221)

While Joyce may not have aspired to be a “gypsy” like Mangan or Bruno, the increasingly poor Joyce family had indeed become shiftless, moving on frequently and owing rent. In relation to “professor”, he had been offered some tutoring work at
the university (JJ 140), which he had rejected. In the guise of commentator of old philosophies (and Bruno’s itself surely meets this category), Joyce too had immersed himself in Aristotle and Aquinas. He had made first forays as a playwright, albeit unsuccessfully, and still retained the ambition to write a drama. He had made a name for himself as a polemicist in his self-published broadsheet “The Day of the Rabblement”, and in the following year would supplement this with his broadside “The Holy Office”.

He had acted as the counsel for his own defence too, defending his literary papers against censorship and criticism of his “immoral” references and in one instance speaking for half an hour without notes in response to criticism (JJ 74). Like Bruno, Joyce begins to consider himself an exile. And like Bruno, Joyce’s alter ego Stephen will take on the name of a martyr, another figure devoted to the truth, who in Portrait is accused of being a heretic and is forced to “admit”.

Bruno, however, through all these “modes and accidents of being (as he would have called them), remains a consistent spiritual entity” CW 133). This is the kind of portrayal of the artist that Joyce will soon mount, in regard to himself. Different phases of the soul co-exist in memory, different facets of a complex soul. Different phases of Ibsen the artist or Bruno the philosopher and writer cast light on different aspects of the same evolving soul. His own self-portrait will not be conceived in “iron memorial aspect”.

**Bruno’s project**

Joyce follows the view of Gordon McIntyre (CW 133), whose biography of Bruno he is reviewing, in calling Bruno the “father” of modern philosophy, more than Bacon or Descartes. This is how Joyce would characterise modern philosophy:

> His system by turns rationalist and mystic, theistic and pantheistic . . . is full of that ardent sympathy with nature as it is—natura naturata—which is the breath of the Renaissance. (CW 133)
Bruno’s mysticism is not quietist but “strong, suddenly rapturous and militant” (CW 134), consonant with the modern project as Joyce conceives it: the casting off of tradition (CW 133). Joyce at this point of his career clearly predicates his own future success as a writer on finding the courage and objectivity to cast off the suffocating weight of history and tradition and to find his own form and style, his own “content”. At the same time, as a commentator of old philosophies, Bruno is deeply engaged with that against which he takes an independent stance: a fact that will take on renewed significance for Joyce after his Rome sojourn (Chapter 9). Likewise, Joyce will not follow the caprices of his own generation, which would throw away precision and engagement with the artistic tradition (CW 101).

Again Joyce compares his own mind to that of a wildly imaginative predecessor. While he is a fountain of fevered ideas, like Mangan, Bruno is no dialectician like Aristotle. Instead, his mind resembles the impatient temper of the Romantic writer: “His active brain continually utters hypotheses; his vehement temper continually urges him to recriminate (93)”. Bruno’s writings are so full of hypotheses and of recriminations that, on the surface, they afford a poor perception of this true “lover of wisdom”. Despite some less valuable tracts, amongst which Joyce suggests would be his works on Lullism, memory and morality, his enduring principal virtue is as an independent observer, characterised by his “noble mind and critical intellect” (CW 133), so that in Bruno at least, beneath the torrid surface, he can see the germs of classical tempering.

**Form and matter**

While Joyce, as was observed in Chapter Two, ascribes primacy to the imagination at its seat in “intuition”, equally it is important to engage with the material universe, just as Joyce placed Mangan’s imagination amongst the material world, from which origins it is flung abroad amid “planetary music” (CW 82). Stephen also makes this claim for the poet in *Stephen Hero*. For Bruno is “hardly a peripatetic” and his interrogation of the relations between matter and form is of a different kind. Bruno’s view of the material universe sees it neither as the kingdom of the Soul’s malady, like the Neoplatonists, nor as a place of probation (Joyce’s account of the Christian
viewpoint) but as an opportunity for spiritual activity and to unite himself with God. Bruno, then, sets an example in bridging the material and immaterial worlds, a project parallel to Joyce’s desire to synthesise social and psychological actuality.

Bruno’s engagement with materiality and existence, however, is not finally bound to material terms. Bruno, in Joyce’s estimation, expresses the ultimate freedom, and thereby becomes one of the elect: “he becomes of the number of those who loftily do not fear to die”. Theoretically this would appear to be Joyce’s position too, as noted in the following chapter, although it would be put to the test during his Rome sojourn. Here too Bruno is contrasted to Mangan who, if not afraid to die then at least was afraid to live. This theme of confrontations with mortality in the face of aspirations to immortality, already evoked in “James Clarence Mangan”, plays an important role in Stephen’s artistic evolution in Portrait (see Chapters Seven and Eight).

**Brief for a modern art**

For the imagination has the quality of a fluid, and it must be held firmly, lest it become vague, and delicately, that it may lose none of its magical powers. (CW 101)

With the Paris notebook Joyce furnished some working principles for his art. Kenner remarks that with his new theory Joyce can no more produce his art than Einstein could blow up Hiroshima with his notebook (Kenner, *Dublin’s Joyce* 39). These jottings are not yet for Joyce, fused, “applied” Aquinas. Equally, however, without such theory Joyce would not have created the art he sought to realise. To borrow a less violent metaphor, Henry James speaks of erecting a literary “architecture” about his subject, built around the inherent suggestions of its nature (xii). Through these aesthetics and critical writings, Joyce commissions himself an architectural project, with a broad brief: a synthesising art drawing on classical depiction and analysis of social and psychological reality, “real life” as he stressed in “Drama and Life”, together with the unexpected beauty and mystery of the imagination. This latter however must be of a rarefied form, capable of yielding to analysis rather than fearfully opaque, unlike the products of a disordered consciousness and impatient temper (“James Clarence Mangan”). It must be an art that promotes stasis rather than kinetic emotions, joy rather than sorrow, an art that is life-affirming rather than
embroiled in the lying semblances of actuality. An art embodied more in form than in narrative, conceived and framed as a whole, the rhythmic dialogue of part to parts and parts to whole.

Building on the declarative broad strokes of the Paris aesthetics notebook and his talks to the Literary and Historical Society, hints of further details emerge from his reviews of the art of others. The project of modern art is that aim of breaking up tradition; nor is it the purpose of art to serve a didactic or moral lesson, or to serve a temporal enthusiasm. In his review of *Catilina*, as also in his summations of the lives of Mangan and Bruno, we see the germ of the intellective idea that the theme of the first work of this new art would fittingly be the life of the new artist, since an understanding of that artist’s life and aims is fundamental to understanding art itself.

The modern art is not to be a reactive movement aiming merely to shock or outrage. This is to be a deliberative art that is deeply dialogically engaged with literary and philosophical tradition. It will not resemble that generation that has cast away precision together with belief. Joyce the apostate has retained a deep faith in the mission of art, and he is to be contrasted to Shakespeare, who did not have a commensurate faith (MBK 100).

Three insistent themes emerge in these late reviews: psychological and spiritual self-examination through introspection; imagination; the pantheistic spirit of a “race”. Through introspection the artist creates a new imagination to sweep away the constricted and senile haze of his own “race”. The creation of a renewed spirit in his race is based on the psychological and spiritual insights derived from introspection, and intellectually informed by an understanding of the broader Western philosophical and literary tradition.

These principles contribute to an implicit architectural brief specifying the form and soul of an art as yet unrealised, the possible as potential. These themes of Joyce’s reviews, of course, echo closely the purposive statements associated with *Portrait*, in relation to art, self-portrayal, and the forging of a conscience for his race (Chapter 2). The brief is also addressed in the architect’s preliminary “blueprint”, the 1904 essay (see Chapter 7).
We can measure Joyce’s development up to this point, against our central chronotopic measures (see Chapter 1). He has outlined the artist’s key responsibility: to forge a conscience for his race. This responsibility transcends everyday strife and ambitions and addresses the very heart and soul of the Irish condition. This is to be a joyful and life-affirming conscience, one that will open the eyes of his race to a point of stasis wherein they might apprehend the beauty and the wider possibilities of life rather than succumbing to kinetic emotions of despair or reactivity.

Creativity continues to be that quality with which he is preoccupied: not unnatural for an ambitious and talented artist who is as yet unable to find his way. With the fruits of his classical temper he has created the conception of a very temple of art. He continues to seek a means by which, harnessing that elusive quality of imagination, somehow he will realise it, actualise that potential. He seeks to create a form, a vessel, capable of holding this precious, “magical” substance, lest it slip through his fingers.

From our perspective one hundred years after Joyce’s “annus mirabilis”, it can be seen that the key element as yet lacking in Joyce’s design, from the evidence of these critical writings, relates to our third chronotopic measure.

Had Pyrrhus not fallen by a beldam’s hand in Argos or Julius Caesar not been knifed to death. They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted. But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass? Weave, weaver of the wind. (U 21)

Far from being a mere aesthete struggling to shrug off the social shroud of history, Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses* actively engages in historical speculation, at the heart of which is the contrast between a deterministic view and the opposing possibility, associated with the “infinite possibilities” of an individual’s potential, their agency.

Aspects of Stephen in *Portrait* and in *Ulysses* can be taken to represent phases of Joyce’s own evolution, when he himself perceived “history”, in its broadest sense, as oppressive and limiting, as it had also proved for Mangan. Indeed, a defining step
Joyce took, chronotopically speaking, towards his artistic future was that initial flight from the constraining “nets” of his homeland, from the turbulent, kinetic sociohistorical reality of his native Ireland. This allowed him the necessary space to grow towards a renewed philosophical centering. In his first refuge point, Paris (1902-3), he begins to imagine a succession of re-orientations, re-imaginings of the artist’s relations to others, in his jottings about literary “modes”: the lyrical, epical and dramatic. Finally he reassesses his approach to history, after a reorientation born of the trials of his Rome sojourn.

In respect of Bakhtin’s triad of chronotopic attributes, at this point Joyce’s sense of history still regards it simplistically as the agent of tyranny, and the mission of modern art appears to be reactively defined: to break up tradition. The seed of the suggestion is there, in his review of *Catilina*, that one must engage with the poetic and philosophical tradition, something Joyce clearly has done in his research into aesthetics and in his broader readings. And yet the complex synthesis of individual psychology, social actuality and artistic form that would eventually find expression in the “prosaic imagination” would only start to take shape several years down the track, once Joyce had adopted a less reactive and more engaged approach to history.
CHAPTER SIX:

THE GENESIS OF BOOK

In this final chapter of Joyce’s developmental history, the first years of the compositional period of *Portrait* are retraced, from the compressed “essay” called “A Portrait of the Artist”, through the fragments that remain of the abandoned novel *Stephen Hero*, and with reference to four associated texts: Joyce’s individuating broadside, “The Holy Office”, two notebooks of aesthetics jottings, the Pola and the Trieste notebooks and a reprised version of his paper on “James Clarence Mangan”. The 1907 version of this crucial statement, composed some five years after the original, demonstrates a renewed emphasis on the question of history after Joyce’s Rome sojourn, and the influence of his historiographic reading.

. . . and, as youth commonly brooks no prevention, he is content to hurl himself upon the world and establish himself there defiantly until his true weapons are ready to his hand. (Joyce, review of *Catilina*, CW 100)

The college detective’s “paper trail” in respect of Joyce’s development, and the seeds of the *Portrait* project, take on a very different character in 1904 as, for the first time, Joyce works on a creative project that will find eventual fruition. By convention, the 1904 “Portrait” essay is considered the inception point of *Portrait*. This view is supported by Joyce himself, according to Gorman, and is the most logical view to adopt here, in preference to nominating the commencement of *Stephen Hero* or the recasting of *Portrait* in 1907.

39 Gabler (*Portrait* 1-2) makes the quite startling claim however, based on the testimony of one of Joyce’s sisters, that the writing of *Stephen Hero* preceded the writing of this essay.
The concept of design guides our deliberations in respect of the twin evolutions: of Joyce as artist, and of his self-portraiture. In relation to the first strand of design, artistic aims and principles, Joyce had preliminarily developed a core set of objectives, consolidated and developed them (primarily) in relation to his study of Aristotle. With the second strand, specific intentions, the following analysis of the 1904 “Portrait” demonstrates the germinal synthesis of Joyce’s chief themes, which had evolved over years: portraiture, psychological analysis, forging a conscience for his race, expression of the soul.

As for the third strand, form, this chapter explores the proposition that Joyce realised a preliminary synthesis of the romantic and the classical in this first “Portrait”, but that his first attempt to realise the “blueprint” in the more sustained form of a novel, with *Stephen Hero*, was a failure. Form fell short of his philosophical aims and principles. It is suggested that, key to the new approach to form with *Portrait* was a revised attitude to history which Joyce underwent after the trials of his Rome stay; this new approach is expressed chronotopically in the form of the novel. Some details of Joyce’s Rome stay are afforded in this chapter, and this crucial period is revisited in Chapter Nine. An examination of Joyce’s revised 1907 lecture on “James Clarence Mangan”, where the theme of history now comes to the fore, casts further light on Joyce’s historiographic shift.

We have also noted that Joyce’s aesthetic ruminations to date, so far as is documented, had paid no specific attention to the novel form. The failed experiment of *Stephen Hero* is further testimony to the fact that it was form which remained Joyce’s chief stumbling block. What the 1904 “Portrait”, *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait* all share in common (together perhaps with the abandoned and lost early drama of Joyce’s, *A Brilliant Career*, which Joyce had dedicated to his own soul) is the purpose of portraiture, a purpose which Joyce had explored in his critical writings (Chapters 4, 5). *Stephen Hero*, it is true, often seems to waver from this primary purpose, yet the novel does delve into Stephen’s character in considerable detail.
We have seen that Joyce’s intellectual development up to this point has focused on understanding the nature of art: firstly by analysing the achievements of certain artists and their careers, secondly by study of Aristotle’s philosophy. (This latter must be contextualised as a defining, initially shaping interest against the ambient philosophies to which Joyce had been exposed either directly or indirectly: Hegel, Wagner, Nietzsche, Bruno, German Romantic philosophers, Pater). Since 1900 Joyce has sought to understand his own artistic future in relation to the careers of artists he admires. His next step is to begin this artistic mission formally, which he undertakes with a complex and original portrait of his own soul; by understanding better this emerging artist, he might learn the art he can be expected to create.

Joyce’s published artistic career proper begins shortly after this preliminary announcement of 1904, with the commencement of his first novel, the publication of his first short stories, and his self-imposed “exile” to the Continent, with Nora. The beginning can be dated to the day after the twelfth day of Christmas, and, perhaps not by chance, the day succeeding the Feast of the Epiphany: January 7, 1904, when Joyce wrote a short piece, “A Portrait of the Artist”, intended for publication in a new magazine, Dana. In the estimation of Feshbach and Herman (747), this piece had been relatively little studied; my review of the literature suggests that this remains substantially true.

**Origins of a Portrait**

In Aubert’s view (1) the young Joyce was obsessed with his image; he also notes that Joyce attributed to other portraitists the quality of reflecting their own images in the portraits of others (23), an observation Freud might well have interpreted in terms of “projection” on Joyce’s part.

Seed (viii) notes that “the topos of the novel as portrait had become well established by the 1880s”. There are five likely sources of influence on Joyce’s choice of the theme of self-portraiture: firstly, previous self-portraits, such as George Moore’s
rather scrappy *Confessions of a Young Man*, Mangan’s quite unreliable autobiographical writings, and the autobiographical tenor of the novels of D’Annunzio (see Cope, Chapter 3).\(^{40}\) Secondly, the aesthetic interest in portraiture was a strong contemporary influence. Parrinder (“Joyce’s Portrait” 111) suggests that the *Portrait* essay was modelled on Walter Pater’s *Imaginary Portraits*. Pater’s story “The Child in the House”, we have noted to have parallels to the story of *Portrait*. Pater’s study of Da Vinci was one source of the theme of introspection that featured in his reviews, and dominated his 1904 “Portrait”; a theme, Aubert suggests, which Joyce shared with Nietzsche (118).\(^{41}\) Thirdly, the precedent of the work of Henry James with the psychological novel may have helped to point a direction forward for Joyce, for whom psychological analysis was a central objective. Joyce was particularly impressed by James’ *Portrait of a Lady*, and it is possible that he was more responsive to his own brother Stanislaus’ urgings of James’ qualities, than we are aware of. Stanislaus noted that Meredith’s reputation in the English novel was pre-eminent, but considered Henry James far superior (DD 119-120). Fourthly, Joyce was surely acquainted with the Romantic theme of the development of the poet’s soul, such as in Wordsworth’s *Prelude*. Wordsworth had been singled out by Joyce as being in the highest rank of poets (JJ 205). Finally, Joyce must have been acquainted with the Bildungsroman tradition, and would have been aware of the *Künstlerroman* also as a potential genre model for his first novel. It has also been suggested that Joyce was influenced by Samuel Butler’s *The Way of all Flesh*, although there are differing views as to when he could have been exposed to this work.\(^{42}\)

By the time of his Rome sojourn, his review of English novelists confirms for him that he has nothing to learn from them (*Selected Letters* 124), although he is interested in Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Grey*, commenting nonetheless that Wilde confesses in too abstract terms. Aubert also suggests that Wilde’s essay “The Soul of Man under Socialism” may have suggested elements of Joyce’s own image (32).

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\(^{40}\) D’Annunzio was a formative influence on the inception of *Stephen Hero*, in the estimation of Jackson Cope.

\(^{41}\) Kimball (*Early Freudians*) also notes that Joyce made liberal use of Freud’s study of Da Vinci around 1911.

\(^{42}\) Epstein (“James Augustine” 19) suggests that Joyce read it only in 1909.
To date, we have examined the double helix of the artist’s development in terms of two parallel and related strands: the intellect and the imagination. With the 1904 ur-
*Portrait* we see the first substantial synthesis of these strands, in a compressed piece that is generally referred to as an essay, even if with the occasional disclaiming adjective such as “odd” (*Early Freudians* 2003). Some critics are condemnatory: Carens finds it confused and confusing, a clumsy and congested attempt to deal with all the major concerns of what would become *Portrait* (256). The work is incomprehensible”, tortuous and allusive (“A Portrait” 88).

In the following reading, aside from examining this piece as a culmination of Joyce’s imaginative and intellective development to date, a comparative base is provided against which one can read Joyce’s accounts of Stephen’s development in *Stephen Hero* and in *Portrait*.

Consonant with the architectural metaphor of the previous chapter, this piece is sometimes referred to as the “blueprint” for *Portrait*, even though there is no suggestion that it was originally written for this purpose. According to Ellmann, Joyce tossed off this dense and agitated hybrid piece in one day (JJ 144). It may well have been an outpouring of “lightning”. In Stanislaus’ detailed account however, his brother first conceived the idea of writing an essay, “probably acting on Yeats’s suggestion” and solicited some titles from himself, one of which he proffered being “A Portrait of the Artist”. Stanislaus at the time was reading Henry James’ *Portrait of a Lady* (MBK 242-3). Stanislaus’ account is consistent with a model of Joyce’s artistic development as exploration, rather than the fruit of deliberation. After Joyce failed to achieve publication of this piece, it could well have become for *Portrait*, after the fact, what *Chambers Dictionary* describes as a “preliminary sketch or plan of work to be done”, a blueprint, as its themes are closely represented in that novel, although they are less evident in the *Stephen Hero* fragment. The fact that the essay manuscript is followed by a series of notes for *Stephen Hero* clearly suggests that it was a key reference point for the novel project (Scholes and Kain 68-73), but it would be a mistake to ascribe to this essay the quality of detailed closure that one might expect of an engineer’s plan; for the form would take years to crystallise.
“A Portrait of the Artist” is a powerfully evocative treatment of Joyce’s intellectual preoccupations: with art, with the role of the artist, and with revelation of the soul and conscience. It explores the Romantic realm of the artist’s imagination by the “light of day”, in the classical temper of painstaking analysis. A reading of this piece evinces a miniature of the narrative of Portrait, embodying in nascent form, many features of its eventual realised design.

The double helix in place and time

Having, in the Mangan paper, affected to resuscitate the career of a neglected talent, Joyce extends the charitable work now to the promotion of the career of an artist who has barely become one yet; or who, perhaps, becomes an artist in the very event of portraying himself. In this elaborate flourish Joyce boldly epiphanises, manifests himself to the world in the best biblical fashion, in an annunciation of vocation. Curiously for the depiction of the philosophical artist and aspiring aesthetician we know Joyce to have been, the focus is on announcing his apostasy, his dabblings in dark disciplines and, finally, the mission he has discovered: “to reunite the children of the spirit, jealous and long-divided, to reunite them against fraud and principality. A thousand eternities were to be reaffirmed, divine knowledge was to be re-established” (Scholes and Kain 64).

The tenor of this extraordinary announcement is, of course, not unlike Stephen’s ecstatic mission of encountering “for the millionth time the reality of experience” in Portrait (253), and similar to Joyce’s intentions for Portrait, of forging his race’s conscience (see Chapter 2). While the essay ironically acknowledges the “fatuity” of the project, the blame nonetheless rests squarely upon the unreadiness of his fellow citizens to take up the cause (64).

Joyce states his thesis from the outset: the rest of the piece consists of a portrait conceived in a series of phases. And that is how a portrait should be constructed and read:

The features of infancy are not commonly reproduced in the adolescent portrait for, so capricious are we, that we cannot or will not conceive the past in any other than its
Art imitates nature, the Aristotelian has written. And nature consists of change over
time, over a “fluid succession of presents”. To understand our object then, we must
examine it over time, just as Joyce analysed Ibsen’s career in the *Catilina* review.
Likewise, it can be inferred not only that we should understand Joyce according to his
developmental history, but also that, as in Coleridge’s observation, studying the
 genesis of a work helps us to understand it better.

Nietzsche’s conception of “becoming” may have been an influence on Joyce, and
Aubert identifies Renan as another possible source (17): Renan comments that “the
science of a being (man) who is in a perpetual becoming can only be his history” (17).
Joyce’s thesis may also have been inspired in part by his reading of Aristotle’s *De
Anima* since, in the view of Hugh Lawson-Tancred, “the founder of the Lyceum
conceived the explanation of change as being the prime task of the science of nature”
(14). Joyce’s excited reading in Paris must have left him in agreement that “the
inquiry into the soul (is) among the first kinds of knowledge” (126) and that “soul is
the first actuality of a natural body with organs”. The human and the artistic soul is
inextricably twinned with the physical self, no more separable from it than the imprint
is from wax (Aubert 157), and thus the soul, like a work of art, presumably is closely
allied to nature. In the ur-Portrait is also evident in trace Aristotle’s question whether
the soul is composed as a whole, or of parts, a notion corresponding to the concept of
“rhythm”.

According to Epstein (James Augustine 3):

Joyce’s beliefs about human experience are based on Aristotle, who defined human
life as a curve from birth through maturity and on to death. From this Aristotelian
perspective, Joyce defined maturity as the stage in life when human beings produce
“images” of themselves: children, or, in the case of the artist, works of art. . . .
Joyce’s own life, his experience of this archetypal pattern, is reflected in his work
even more than is that of most writers. His own experience, at once individual and universal, provided him with the subject matter for his work.

Joyce develops his theme: just as, in the Paris aesthetics, we should apprehend a work of art according to its “rhythm”, so do we apprehend a life according to this pattern of part to whole:

Our world recognises its acquaintance chiefly by the character of beard and inches and is, for the most part, estranged from those of its members who seek through some art, by some process of the mind as yet untabulated, to liberate from the personalised lumps of matter that which is their individuating rhythm, the first or formal relation of their parts. (Scholes and Kain 60)

A distinctly more sophisticated development of “Trust not appearances” (Chapter 4) is this pronouncement of psychological examination balanced between the “rhythm” of two axes, the synchronic and the diachronic. To understand character we must look beyond certain features which we might take to be defining, to the “rhythm” of the individual’s component reality in space and time, the relation of part to part, and their relations over time, the relation of self to self, present to past to prior past. The portrait unfolds as an exposition of the subject’s relation to the dominant discourses of his society, and the project of psychological portrayal is profoundly chronotopic as it is a socially situated examination of character over time and socially mediated space.

Integral to the chronotopic project must be the endeavour to engage with history. The individual is a product of their own history in time and space, but also of their society, and of those elements which make up the fabric of a society: language, mores, movements, history and myth. Joyce cannot speak of the “conscience” of his race in pantheistic terms without being closely aware of the disapproving dominance of Catholic Church doctrine: “subjugation” viewed in the non-sublatory sense of repression (see Chapter 9). Stephen in Portrait twists this nexus of individual and society into a clever paradox that empowers his differentiation: “This race and this country and this life produced me, he said. I shall express myself as I am.” (203) And the first step towards understanding his race is introspection, through which to
understand at close hand the effect of these “ambient ideologies” (Aubert’s phrase) on one’s own soul.

At the same time as he advances this project of self-portraiture in the first paragraph of the essay, followed in succeeding paragraphs by a time-portrait in broad strokes, Joyce self-reflexively announces the nature of the art by means of which he seeks to realise it: a “process of the mind as yet untabulated”. The essay then is a “blueprint”, while the various structural and formal issues implicit in the project are yet to be solved. The aims at least are set; how they will be achieved is another matter.

**The phases**

This portrait sketch of the artist shows the subject in dialogical relation to social discourse. It begins and ends with faith, of differing sorts, and curves spirally through related but contrasting, succeeding phases. A period of reserve is followed by dabblings in dark disciplines and active proselytising of a new prophecy. In the wake of his failure in the prophet’s role, he reverts to introspection and private studies. One apparently disjunctive phase disrupts the logical sequence: a lyrical apostrophe to an unnamed love interest and the (most likely fantastic) narration of a passionate affair, which proves the penultimate step prior to his final statement of vocation: the fashioning of a conscience of his race.

These phases reflect back on Joyce’s intellectual adventures during his young life, and anticipate in germ the narrative of *Portrait*.

**Phase 1: Faith**

Although the preamble damns portraits for not reproducing infant features, Kimball notes wryly that this piece “is no exception, for the first glimpse the reader has of its subject is his praying in the wood as a boy of fifteen “ (*Early Freudians* 27). However, the implication of the circumlocutory second paragraph is that, similarly to Pater’s description of the birth of the soul “clothed”, this artist’s soul was born into preceding discourse (see discussion of Spoo in Chapter 8), awaking to the ideas of “eternal damnation, the necessity of penitence and the efficacy of prayer” (60). The
artist is portrayed as having plunged zealously into these ideas (also see discussion in Chapter 2 of the "Malahide" incident) and the depth and conviction of his faith are contrasted savagely to the "marketable goodness" of semblance that is described as the social norm. This prepares us for the development of the picture of an apostate who, paradoxically, relinquishes a faith that was much stronger than the semblances of the apparently "faithful". This individual quality of faith, successively displaced into new areas, is nonetheless shown to be a constant theme in the "rhythm" of the artist’s personality.

The narrative sweep of the second paragraph covers the artist’s entire childhood and youth up to the point where he enters university: thus, religious faith alone is explored in relation to the artist’s soul in infancy and boyhood.

**Phase 2: Fortification**

Next the subject of this portrait goes through a period of secrecy and reserve, constructing battlements on a high ground to preserve an unspecified “crisis”. From a Bakhtinian perspective, at this point the would-be artist is intersubjectively positioned in such a way that he is unable to express himself freely. His creativity thus is hindered.

This artist starts to analyse his peers and others objectively from behind his “enigma of a manner”. The artist is viewed in a manner akin to the epical mode: in mediated relation to others. Hearkening back to conceits of the Elizabethan period, he senses the “deeds and thoughts of the microcosm” converging to himself.

Just as his religious faith had been of a higher, uncompromising order, so is his new faith in art, defined as an “arduous good”. The university graduate is portrayed as rejecting an unworthy career as a clerk, for the pursuit of something better. (Had Joyce referred back to this paper at the time of recasting *Portrait* in 1907, as is most likely, he might have rued not having made a similar decision in respect to his short career as a bank clerk in Rome.) The climax prepared for by this strategic psychical fortification is the announcement of his decision to leave the church. Notably, even
this act of defiance is carried out within the bounds of Church precedent: “through the
gates of Assisi” (63) as a latter-day St Francis.

**Phase 3: The heretic**

The adventurous artist soon leaves behind St Francis for “the maddest of companies”,
mystics and heretics in the shape of Joachim, Bruno, Michael Sendivogius,
Swedenborg and others. During this period the artist engages in the modern project of
sloughing off tradition: he has “annihilated and rebuilt experience”. The result is a
resolution to reunite the conscience of his race (65). An ungrateful populace excuses
itself from embracing these unspecified “thousand eternities” and “divine
knowledge”, restricting itself merely to some curiously half-baked “heterodoxy”; thus
the would-be prophet retires hurt, withdrawing into isolation.

**Phase 4: Introspection**

Now the artist supplants his study of the obscure arts (in which respect he appears to
have emulated Daedalus, as in Portrait’s epigraph from Ovid) and mystic
philosophies, seeking a new certitude in the monkish “sisterhood of meditative
hours”. This appears to mark an important turning point, because his wanderings in
nature lead him to the possibility of a “philosophy of reconcilement” between the
“absolute satisfaction” he had sought, and the “beauty of mortal conditions”: he will
reconcile too the opposed poles of the romantic and the classical tempers.

This is a crucial moment for the young artist who has previously set himself above
mere actuality, with his superior faith, with strategic “induration of the self”, scornful
distancing, solitude and aloofness—those Dedalian traits which have occasioned so
much opprobrium for Joyce’s “facsimile” (Sultan)\(^3\). The process has been made
possible by his recollection of St Augustine’s dicta on the coexistence of the good and
the corrupt. (Tantalisingly, the very moment at which this new attitude is announced
is found in a part of the manuscript that is only partially legible.)

\(^3\) In this phase, the subject of the “Portrait” most resembles the Stephen of Mahaffey’s critique as one
who is too caught up in the transcendent vision of authority.
Phase 5: Embracing mortal beauty

In an apparent departure from this dialectic of faith, withdrawal, counter faith, withdrawal, renewed belief, the artist is next portrayed as embracing mortal beauty quite literally, engaging with life at its source. An unnamed amatory object is apostrophised (“Dearest of mortals”), someone with whom he has engaged in an abstract courtship of “tributary verses” and chance meetings in life and in dreams, “the foolish society of sleep”.

This object it seems was the stimulus for a secondary reawakening of his soul, his sensual awakening portrayed in an extraordinary passage as a kind of occult rite of celebration in a profane temple: yellow gaslamps before a violet altar.

This rite too is portrayed as a sacrament, Joyce punning on his subject’s lustful encounter with a woman as a form of sacred “communion”: “in all that ardent adventure of lust didst thou not even then communicate”. The communion of souls and a corporeal communion profanely echoes the ingestion of the “body of Christ”.

It is this Beatrice, this “Beneficent One” who, amongst the irony and pride of his intellectual achievements, shows him hidden aspects of his true nature. In this apostrophe then, it is the figure of a woman that represents his muse, the path to self-knowledge, and stimulates his imagination to ornate imagery. More, she is his path of chronotopic orientation to “the central torrents of life”, that vital stream into which the artist must plunge. Her disposition can “refine and direct his passion, holding mere beauty at the cunningest angle” (66). The artist begins through her to engage in a new chronotopic relation to life: the interior, romantic impulse now turned outwards to embrace actuality. This contrasts with the pallid imagination of the former (Dedalian) aesthete, for whom: “it had not been uncommon to devise dinners in white and purple upon the actuality of stirabout but here, surely, is sturdy or delicate food to hand; no need for devising” (66).

The synthesising artist enriches a formerly desultory imagination with the enlivening actuality of experience. Experience will allow his analytical mind to engage with
actuality and find the truths that lie beyond it. Scholes and Corcoran (700) trace Hegel influence in the importance that Joyce placed on experience. From this insight he finds his way forward through the “measurable world and the broad expanses of activity”, metaphorically penetrating mortal and actual beauty in the decidedly “rhythmic” evocation of physical embrace as this amatory dialogue achieves a climax: “their bodies sounding with the triumph of harps! Again, beloved! Again, thou bride! Again, ere life is ours!” (66).

These closing ejaculations are more than a little reminiscent of the metaphor of sexual reproduction of art (see Chapter 8). In this crucial phase of the artist’s development one arm of the genetic double helix, the artist’s intellectual aims, eschews transcendent or solipsistic discourses—Christian faith, mystical philosophies and introspection—for engagement with actuality.

**The confederate will**

After the decidedly kinetic close of the penultimate passage, the final phase begins “in calmer mood” before reprising in crescendo, in what Ellmann has amusingly described as a “stirring peroration compounded of Zarathustra, a dash of Marx, and Joyce” (JJ 147). Political revolution, barked out in the closing sentences, is later supplanted by the higher theme of spiritual and intellectual freedom in the creation of a new conscience for his nation.

This account of the intellectual, philosophical and imaginative growth of the artist is capped with the climactic embracing of a social and political mission that indicates this artist’s orientation towards society, characterised by the three chronotopic terms we have identified as our chief focus. This is no dry manifesto, however, no mere dogma, but rather the artistic product of what can only be called a vision; the synthesis of his creative response to what his intellect has decided to be the plight of his people.

Sadly mindful of the worst [,] the vision of his dead, the vision (far more pitiful) of congenital lives shuffling onwards between yawn and howl, starvelings in mind and
body, visions of which came as temporary failure of his olden, sustained manner, darkly beset him. (67)

This is a dark and haunting incarnation of the artist’s *responsibility*. As in the narrative of *Portrait*, worse far than death is the dullness of “congenital lives”, the living dead shunted between yawn and howl. The artist again experiments with the role of prophet in the cause of enlightenment. And yet, confronted with the choice between “sensitiveness” and “dulness” (sic), the artist finds his vantage point “between camps”, aware of both, denying both and mocking both. The reactive experiment fades, a new way appears: “urbanity in warfare”, as Joyce appears to anticipate his own later “celebrated” attitude shift (Spoo 16) towards a reconciliatory recognition of his country’s contribution to civilisation.

It is in an *historical* spirit however that this portrait of the artist concludes, heralded by the telegraphic announcement of “the messages of citizens [which] were flashed along the wires of the world” (67), a cursory reference to a “thirty years’ war in Germany” and councils of the Latins. The essay ends by addressing another Bakhtinian chronotopic given, the all-importance of *futurity*, emerging out of the present:

> Man and woman, out of you comes the nation that is to come, the lightning of your masses in travail; the competitive order is employed against itself, the aristocracies are supplanted; and amid the general paralysis of an insane society, the confederate will issues in action. (68)

Not only is art created in a “natural” process of sexual reproduction, but so is culture transmitted similarly through the generations, and it is into this transmission that Joyce seeks to interject with “the word” into “those multitudes, not as yet in the wombs of humanity but surely engenderable there” (68). Stephen in *Portrait* harbours a similar ambition of interceding into this reproduction of culture (P 238: quoted in Chapter 8).

This piece is a powerful synthesising utterance of the artist’s mission, balanced between classical and romantic, abstract and concrete, in spirit and in flesh and blood,
in form and matter, in heart and soul. In parts it is an extraordinary piece of writing, and one that far transcends the relatively insipid form that was the epiphany.

Thus the “blueprint” of Portrait contains the chronotopic imprint of a work that would yet take ten years to realise in a form that, similarly to Joyce’s description of Ibsen, was still new as yet—not only to Joyce the artist, but also to the world: the novel, as it would be transformed by the likes of Joyce during the period up to 1914, and embracing that period “on or around 1910” when, Virginia Woolf has concluded, the world changed and modernism began (Bradbury and McFarlane 33).

At the heart of the concluding passage is a powerful chronotopic convergence of responsibility, creativity and sense of history. Rather than portraying a mere aesthete (indeed, as we have seen, clearly rejecting this label), this piece penetrates to the chronotopic heart of the mission of art, the vague “divinity” which this essay speaks of being a euphemism for the pantheistic spirit that had been greatly exercising his mind lately; a term which would in time be supplanted by the term “conscience” of his race, both in Joyce’s letters, and later in Portrait.

This latter word is overdetermined for the art of this protégé of the Jesuits, a product of scientific rigor compounded with Catholic consciousness of guilt and compunction, con-science, for Joyce confronts “at its very root the contradiction between Science and Truth” (Aubert 22-3). We have already noted the collocation in Joyce’s conception, of the consciousness of the individual, and the collective spirit of the race (see Chapter 5). The Chambers Dictionary shows these two words as etymologically linked to the Latin conscius (“to know”) and consciere: “to know well in one’s own mind”. “Conscience” consists equally of knowledge of within as of without: it is both self-judgment and moral imperative. For Joyce, the revelation of his consciousness provides enlightenment, a mirror to the consciousness of all his countrymen and women, a truthful understanding that mingles the instinctual and the social, the sacred and the profane, the realms of the actual and of the possible. It provides an antidote to the falsities of insincere literary conscience, the importance of which to Joyce, Stanislaus has recorded (MBK 92) and also urges the necessity of facing one’s own consciousness of guilt, under the repressive shadow of which the artist must seek creative freedom.
The implicit design for a portrait embodied in this blueprint is an early synthesis of coupled spirals of aspiration: the intellectual impulse of the “cubist” thesis, an imaginative embodiment of portraiture in style and in metaphor. Joyce establishes the designing aim of a portrait in time and space, straddling the synchronic and the diachronic, the complex “rhythmic” relation of parts of the personality to other parts, and of parts to the evolving whole. Not only does Joyce consider that the aesthetic detective should sleuth the aesthetic instinct; the founding act of becoming an artist, for Joyce, consisted of reflecting on the development of the artist’s soul, and announcing the kind of art, “as yet untabulated”, and indeed as yet unachievable, that might realise its portraiture.

**Stephen Hero**

The failure of *Stephen Hero* can be analysed in relation to three chief criteria: its failure to meet the artistic and aesthetic principles Joyce had devised, its failure to frame the novel within a satisfying chronotopic form and, finally, failure to address the question of history in such a way that would enrich and free up his imagination, allowing the synthesis of the romantic with the classical work on things present to the artist.

It is of value in this developmental history of Joyce, of the progress of his aesthetic instinct, to speculate on these comprehensive shortcomings, and on how Joyce had come to overlook them—or at least fail to conquer them. The matter cannot be dismissed so simply as Joyce’s lack of development as a writer, for shortly after embarking on the first draft novel, Joyce had immediate success with the short story form. While the design of *Dubliners* is beyond the scope of the present investigation, clearly it was quite different to that of *Portrait* (some key planks are noted in Chapter 2).

There was ample precedent in the novel for both classical and romantic forms (D’Annunzio’s lyrical novels furnishing one important influence, as Cope has demonstrated), and certainly he was aware of the Bildungsroman form, as he was of
the psychological novel (Carens 264). It seems that not only was the young Joyce, like Ibsen before him, with *Stephen Hero* struggling with a form that was not as yet his own but also that this form, the novel, proved resistant to accommodating the “arduous good” of his design: its principles and purposes.

**Designing *Stephen Hero***

We have little information about the planning of *Stephen Hero*. Ellmann quotes Stanislaus’ comments about Joyce planning the book in anger, after the rejection of his essay and to prove the worth of himself as subject (JJ 147). Stanislaus records that it will be “almost autobiographical, and naturally as it comes from Jim, satirical” (in JJ 147). He claims to have collaborated with his older brother in regard to details such as characters’ names, and the title of the work, just as he had suggested the title of the precursory essay.

Scholes and Kain (68) reproduce some handwritten notes that were appended at the end of the copy of the *Portrait* essay, destined for various chapters of *Stephen Hero*, but these are merely supplementary to an outline of planned chapters. Their physical placement certainly suggests that Joyce did refer back to this essay in planning *Stephen Hero*, but still the blueprint failed to be realised in *Stephen Hero*.

We know that the original plan was for 63 chapters, a detail suggestive of the encyclopaedic zeal characteristic of the later Joyce, but here attesting to inadequate attention to the “rhythmical” composition of the work. In a letter Joyce proudly recounts Oliver Gogarty’s incredulous reaction: “Gogarty used to pipe ‘63’ in treble when I told him the number of the chapters” (*Selected Letters* 56). In fact, *Stephen Hero* never got beyond Chapter XXV.

Scholes and Kain suggest that the 71 epiphanies formed an excellent supplement to the plan, and were indeed the main building blocks of *Stephen Hero*. If this is so, one can only note that this seemingly arbitrary plan, the insertion and incorporation of isolated and unrelated fragments, flies in the face of an organic and unified art, and seems likely to pose serious problems for the harmonious relations of part to part and part to whole, that is a work’s “rhythm”.
In Ellmann’s view, Joyce quickly recognised his theme: “the Catholic renegade artist as hero” (JJ 148). Ellmann surveys the literary precedents available to Joyce, based on two separate but related (to Joyce) themes: the religious defector (Samuel Butler, Shaw, Gosse, Moore, Tinayre) and the insurgent artist (Moore’s Vain Fortune, Ibsen’s Love’s Comedy, Hauptmann’s Michael Kramer, Suderman’s Magda; JJ 148). In the latter list, most are not novels.

The early progress of this novel’s composition was rapid, Ellmann records. Kenner however makes the shrewd suggestion that this book was the only one that “cost Joyce far more trouble to focus than to execute” (1955 109) and suggests that ultimately Stephen Hero lacked the “autobiographical” theme that Portrait possessed (111). Inevitably, Joyce came to be disillusioned with the novel in progress. A detailed assessment of the causes is beyond the scope of this thesis, but a short review of some of Stephen Hero’s notable shortcomings against Joyce’s artistic platform and broader aesthetic aims deepens our understanding of Joyce’s considerations in the redesign of Portrait.

**Shortcomings of the “Hero”**

Two important elements in Joyce’s broad artistic aims were the fusion of the classical and the romantic, and the “modern” project of breaking up tradition.

Stephen Hero attacks the latter task with gusto, and for this reason it affords a rich and immensely quotable seam of material relating to early Joyce’s themes. However, in relation to artistic fusion, the work fails comprehensively. It is also worth noting that an early, detailed comparison of Stephen Hero and Portrait by Phillip Handler concludes that the strength of Portrait derived in part from its application of Stephen’s aesthetics.

**Form**

For a novel which makes strident references to the “modern” spirit, the work itself resembles nineteenth century forms, not least in being a novel of plenitude. Thornton
(1994) and Kenner (Dublin’s Joyce 109), however, both imply that the novel is of the “picaresque” form: an unlikely vehicle for realising the “blueprint” (and see Sultan [153]).

While in a review, Joyce castigated one hapless work for not meeting the first requisite of beauty, integritas, Stephen Hero itself (from what we can discern of the fragments) comprehensively lacks this quality of unity and wholeness, a satisfying “rhythm”. The work is most inadequately framed compared to Portrait (see Chapters 7 and 8). The relation of part to part at times is arbitrary. The aesthetics are scattered over a series of references rather than being compressed into one sustained, unified exposition as in Portrait.

Every epiphany, every little triumph Stephen has experienced, every cherished memory it seems, was to have been covered in these 63 chapters. Encyclopaedism was never a part of Joyce’s aesthetics but it became in later works a notable principle of design. Aubert suggests that an attraction of the Summa Theologica for Joyce was the endeavour, after Spinoza, to see “total summation” (108).

Portrait on the other hand has a density and unity far superior to the chaotic jumble of Stephen Hero, the rambling narrative. Joyce has contrived to frame his material so that each element is represented in the most appropriate light, so that part refers back to part, and parts to the evolving whole in the “individuating rhythm” of the work.

Riquelme (Teller and Tale) notes problems with Stephen Hero in terms of narrative style and control of point of view. Perhaps the most penetrating description of Stephen Hero’s inadequacies, however, can be borrowed from Bakhtin’s discussion of ill-formed artistic prose in the novel form as hybrid: “An artistic hybrid demands enormous effort: it is stylized through and through, thoroughly premeditated, achieved, distanced” (DI 366). Mediocre prose on the other hand is orchestrated not by means of heteroglossia but is “in most cases merely a directly authorial language that is impure and incompletely worked out” (366).
Imagination

In common with many critics, one might conclude that Stephen Hero is largely autobiographical. By Joyce’s own criteria it falters with the “classical” weakness of getting too caught up in the materiality attendant on it (CW 74), when the task of portrayal, as of art generally, is to penetrate the comedy of circumstances and lead us toward deeper meanings; in this case, to allow the reader to see beyond Stephen’s posturings, gestures, profuse and diffuse theories. This then is a failure of imagination, of the artist’s duty to penetrate the welter of details, to strip away the superfluous and reveal what the young Joyce considered “timeless” truths. For this reason, towards the end of 1904, and with Stephen Hero well underway yet already beginning to falter, Joyce would resume investigations into aesthetics, precisely on this very theme, of perception (and, it is suggested, through perception to understand better the imagination; see below).

Evaluations of Stephen Hero

Stephen Hero is a rich source for understanding the genesis of Portrait. It is however important to consider it in the context of its history as a failed experiment that ultimately, Joyce, who later evaluated the work as “puerile” (MBK 218) and as “rubbish”, a “young man’s book” (Tindall Reader’s Guide 101), did not intend to see the light of day. To cite but one example, the exposition of the epiphany as a perceptual process that is part of Stephen’s aesthetics, should enjoy only a tenuous place in the Joycean canon, and then only, as has already been suggested, considered as a phase in the context of Joyce’s development.

An early assessment by Marvin Magalaner summarises some of Stephen Hero’s enduring value for the Joyce student:

The principal value of Stephen Hero is that it not only enables us to penetrate Joyce’s mind during the years when Dubliners was being written, but also affords us insights into his finished Portrait and even into his later books. Thought out and composed at the most tempestuous period, intellectually and emotionally, of the artist’s life—the crucial years which saw his decision to leave the Church, go into exile from Ireland,
turn to writing as a career, marry, adopt a style- this manuscript reflects the pull of forces exerted upon the frail young man hardly out of his adolescence. . . . the early version of Portrait holds riches not yet tapped.” (Magalaner 115).

Riquelme (Teller and Tale 91) treats Stephen Hero largely in relation to frustrating point of view issues. He considers Dubliners to be better developed in this respect, as it uses two voices: a narratorial voice and a separate voice for the character. In his view then it is Dubliners which provides a gateway to the portrayal of consciousness in Portrait. Seed (38) also focuses on this issue of point of view, contrasting the diversity of voices in the mature novel to the satirical narrator of the former.

The many shortcomings of Stephen Hero aside, a curious refrain in some evaluations is that in some ways it is a superior book to Portrait: Stephen (and others) are more fully-fleshed characters. Stephen is more human and more likeable as he is portrayed as more engaged with society and with his peers. Some critics consider that his aesthetics in Stephen Hero are “complete” as they include the epiphany, while in Portrait they do not. At the very least this ignores the patchy and fragmented nature of their exposition in Stephen Hero.

While the 1904 “blueprint” portrait embodied a preliminary, organic fusion of Joyce’s imagination and of his intellect, the massed inspiration of elements that had been slowly gathering like clouds for years, this first attempt at translation into the novel form was a contingent event. The novel was conceived in a reactive and kinetic “temper”. Paradoxically, to achieve the apparently organic and seamless form of the final novel, in emulation of the original inspiration of that day’s work, would take in all some ten years to achieve.

The problem with Stephen Hero, ultimately, is one of design. It represents a comprehensive failure of form and style to meet Joyce’s artistic platform. The recasting of this novel in 1907 would consist of two steps: abandoning the design of Stephen Hero completely, and adopting a change in chronotopic orientation that would see Joyce’s imaginative engagement with, indeed reshaping of, Irish history and society. This would necessitate a new form and a new logic of expression, distinct from the fragmented and episodic first draft.
Daedalus’ Progress

“Stephen Daedalus” is not merely the name of a fictional character in *Stephen Hero*, and also in *Portrait* (where it is spelt differently, however, to soften the alien effect of the Greek vowel); it is also Joyce’s pseudonym when he commences his published career as a writer, with the publication in the *Irish Homestead* of his first story, “The Sisters”, on 13 August. Stanislaus Joyce records that his resorting to a pseudonym was a temporary weakness, which he later regretted. In fact, he later intended to append the following inscription at the end of his novel: “Stephanus Daedalus Pinxit” (MBK 244).

Joyce appears to have gone through a period of self fashioning at this time. It seems suggestive that at the same time as he proceeded with the rapid composition of *Stephen Hero*, the story of one Stephen Daedalus, he should have been using that same name as a *nom de plume*. 1904 was for Joyce the year of career takeoff, when “Stephen Daedaluses”, both the character and the pseudonym, were launched into an unready world (the series of stories published in the *Irish Homestead*, the “pig’s paper”, soon came to an end after complaints). The outlandish name serves to mark Joyce, similarly to Nietzsche’s self-description (UAH 4) as a figure outside of his own time and place, from a tradition and mythology that is not that of Ireland.

“The Sisters”, as the first story, underwent significant rewriting preparatory to the publication of *Dubliners*. In its original form, the story is comparatively elliptical, if not insubstantial, and, as the analyses of Magalaner and of Sultan demonstrate, the later version is far more powerful.

Despite the shortcomings of this first story in its original form, notably the suppression of detail about the priest, which may well have had much to do with the fear of censorship, it is apparent that Joyce quickly found his way in this short prose form, and found a good deal of pleasure in the writing of these stories (JJ 232). Examining the progress of *Dubliners* is beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice it to note that Joyce was already a writer capable of astonishing maturity, insight and density, culminating in the crowning final story of this collection. The realisation of
his aims was made possible by discovering a workable approach to the short story form. The majority of *Dubliners* was written to a polished level within about three years—including the final story, around four years, while *Portrait* would take just under ten, according to Gabler’s research (“Seven Lost”).

*Dubliners* of course was fashioned according to a very different design to *Portrait*. Indeed, by and large, it forms a negative image of those principles which Joyce had established for himself and which, it is argued in this thesis, he sought to realise with *Portrait*. *Dubliners* hardly sets out to evoke joy; if anything, it is designed to promote a shocked recognition of the joyless life that so many Dubliners lead. For the achievement of an apprehensory stasis, one can substitute representation of “paralysis” of the will. As for the synthesis of the romantic and the classic, there is hardly any of the former in the entire work, and even the city’s aspiring writers like Little Chandler and Mr Duffy have hardly any imagination. As for shaping a new historical tradition, this aim for Joyce works only in reverse; by showing his characters as trapped, the argument for shaping a new tradition is laid. *Dubliners* in a sense encapsulates a negative image of some design principles of *Portrait*: the promotion of joy, of a liberating new tradition, of imagination and futurity, are prepared for by the “vivisective” examination of a pathology that precludes all these things.

**August 1904, Dublin: “The Holy Office”**

Another crucial event in this year was Joyce’s meeting Nora Barnacle, the corporeal embodiment of that idealised love about which he had written in the “Portrait” blueprint some months before. Soon he hatched the plan of eloping to the Continent with her.

Some two months before they eloped, in October 1904, Joyce penned a broadside, which he then had printed. The poem is an extraordinary act of intersubjective positioning, of self-differentiation by defining this artist’s own “individuating rhythm” against a comparative survey of other Dublin notables.
It begins with an announcement of himself in Aristotelian guise as “Katharsis-Purgative”, perhaps aiming to cure those conditions he had begun to document in *Dubliners*, and ends, in the estimation of Mason and Ellmann in “elevating his metaphor” and condemning others “from the mountaintop to which Ibsen and Nietzsche had helped to bring him” (CW 149). They note that the imagery of Joyce as a stag flashing his antlers from a “mountain ridge” is echoed in *Stephen Hero*. An even more significant parallel for our purposes is the use of similar imagery of Joyce as a stag flashing his antlers from the “highlands” in the 1904 essay (Scholes and Kain 61), since this places it within the familiar confines of self-portraiture and marks it as an extension and replication of a pattern.

Joyce again fashions himself as his race’s *conscience*, with the added refinement of ancillary purgative properties, in a role that engages both satirical lancet and pedagogical pedantry, owing to his self-schooling in the Stagirite’s philosophy.

> Myself unto myself will give
> This name, Katharsis-Purgative.
> I, who dishevelled ways forsook
> To hold the poets’ grammar book,
> Bringing to tavern and to brothel
> The mind of witty Aristotle

Mason and Ellmann take this reference to the “poet’s grammar-book” to be Joyce’s collection of the solecisms of others, called “Memoranda”, while no source for this inference is offered. I suggest that a more compelling interpretation is that Aristotle’s poetics and metaphysics are the “grammar book” concerned and that the “dishevelled ways” are those of unschooled artists such as those he pillories in this poem.

Joyce’s broadside contrasts these apparently constipated or retentive poets with their “timid arses” and sexual self-repression to his own apparently freewheeling bodily functions and self-expression. The particular intellectual and spiritual waste products that are the sedentary byproducts of these unhealthy lives consist of “safe” heterodoxy and amenable adaptions to life’s challenges: “Ruling one’s life by commonsense/How can one fail to be intense?” The failings of these people consist in their appeasing
others, in seeking bourgeois respectability, and generally adopting attitudes of
crouching, crawling or praying (CW 152).

In a variation of the recurring Joycean contrast of mortal and immortal conditions, the
targets of his scorn are characterised as labouring “to the grave”, while he stresses his
own immortal spirit and soul (152). There are overtones here of Nietzsche’s
description of modern life (UAH; see Chapter 9). Joyce had confided to his aunt in
1903 that he wanted to be famous while he was alive (JJ 142).

Joyce has come to this “Holy Office” not through “Grandmother Church” who, he
claims bitterly, uncrowned him and “left me severely in the lurch”, but through a
source well outside the native tradition: Aristotle’s philosophy. Joyce’s art is to create
a sewer, a conduit through which the “dreamy dreams” and “filthy streams” of these
artists might course, a service of sanitation not unlike that complained of by HG
Wells in his review of Portrait in respect of its “cloacal obsession” (330).

Undoubtedly Joyce’s celebration of full robust physical expression was meant to
extend to Joycean jouissance too, taking a message “to tavern and to brothel”. The
matter can be contrasted with his critique of Emma in Stephen Hero, a case which
matches the poem’s reference to “Mammon’s countless servitors”, since Emma insists
on the “forebearance” of the male in deference to the contract of marriage. (See also
the conversation between Lynch and Stephen on the sexual contract of marriage: SH
200-204). In Ibsenian mode Joyce demands a sexually revolutionary attitude from his
partner, a demand Nora bravely met.

Joyce frequently links sexual expression with creativity, as in his slighting reference
to Irish artists being unleashed on Europe as beings “without sexual education”
(Scholes and Kain 100). The “Joycean revolution” entails the frank probing of
interior depths, the lifting of repression. If art imitates nature, and if it is reproduced
as nature is reproduced, how can a repressed person possibly be an artist? In a
seemingly paradoxical inversion of the inhibited mores of his time and place, Joyce
turns frank expression of oneself, including physical expression, into “The Holy
Office”, and himself into an Aristotelian priest. Likewise, Stephen in Portrait
sometimes administers a “holy office” of self-confession to chosen confidantes:
— Thanks, said Stephen. You mean I am a monster.
— No, said Davin. But I wish you had not told me.
A tide began to surge beneath the calm surface of Stephen’s friendliness.
— This race and this country and this life produced me, he said. I shall express myself as I am. (P 203)

In a later chapter, the suggestion is explored that Joyce revisited similar territory during the Rome sojourn, and in reference to Nietzsche’s essay (UAH) linked the importance of getting in touch with one’s instincts—sexual, intuitive, mystical, and otherwise, to the project of a reappraisal of history.

**Composition of *Stephen Hero* on the Continent**

*Stephen Hero* had its genesis in a reaction to Joyce’s disappointment at the rejection of his “essay”. It constituted a riposte not merely to the editor of *Dana*, “John Eglington” but also to Dublin in general, to many others whom he considered to have hurt or disappointed him in other ways. And yet, from the moment he left the company of those whom he had been lampooning, satirising or generally attempting to shock, the reactive gesture of writing *Stephen Hero*, beyond the direct influence of its intended audience, must have started to feel a little hollow. From an early stage he sought feedback on the manuscript eagerly, from friends and family. While he defended every criticism of the work, no doubt their responses contributed to his growing doubts. On the Continent, while the series of short stories that was to become *Dubliners* proceeded steadily, *Stephen Hero* continued to emerge rapidly, but not without Joyce’s experiencing misgivings. By February 1905 he had written much of the novel in draft, including the beginning of that part which is still extant.

Writing to Stanislaus in 1905 he writes that he considers himself an “exile”. He leaves behind the pseudonym Stephen Daedalus, which now becomes the historical marker of one phase in the relationship of the artist to his native Dublin. An exile is defined in relation to that state from which one is exiled, and this new construction of his identity at least affords Joyce a continuing umbilical link to the source of his
creative inspiration, Dublin and its people, as well as to the example of his great inspirations, Dante and Ibsen.

With the cessation of his identification with “Stephen Dedalus”, Joyce becomes the writer writing, that state which Bakhtin indicates cannot be represented in fiction, while the character of that name, Joyce’s “fakesimilar” would continue to inhabit Joyce’s fictional world of Dublin in Portrait and in Ulysses, up to June 16 1904, a time just a few months before Joyce’s flight from his country, aged twenty two.

**Pola aesthetics notebook: Nov 7-16 1904**

During Joyce’s first trip to the Continent, the Paris excursions of 1902-3, he had begun by honing his critical views against the austere yet yielding whetstone of “witty Aristotle”. Upon his return to the Continent in 1904, calmly in the face of some early setbacks in the search for work, Joyce resumed his exploration of aesthetics and made the last recorded jottings of this kind he would undertake.

The Pola notebook was begun in November 1904, some ten months after Stephen Hero was begun. The three entries which have been published are dated the 7th, 15th and 16th of November, very shortly after the couple arrived in Pola. Two likely motivations are possible, not mutually exclusive: firstly as an aid to himself, a guide against certain artistic difficulties he was encountering; secondly, to work these jottings into a complete aesthetics for the purpose of Stephen’s exposition in Stephen Hero. In relation to the first, the jottings may not have worked as he hoped. It was only a few days after this last known entry, that Joyce complained to Stanislaus about his dissatisfaction with the work (quoted below).

The Aristotelian undertakes some further elaboration of his ideas in the light of Aquinas, just as the Stagirite’s views had been reinterpreted by the Scholastics. It is very possible, as some commentators have suggested, that Joyce saw in Aquinas a strategic, if unlikely ally. If Joyce’s impatient temper in “The Holy Office” is taken as a measure of his relentless purpose of frank self-expression, nonetheless the question must soon have arisen for him, as to how some of the uncompromising
matters he was treating in *Stephen Hero* could be reconciled with his own design principles and aims.

In this notebook Joyce again addresses the timeless identification of truth and beauty. In the first entry he deduces that both the true and the good are desirable, and that both “the intellectual and aesthetic appetites, are therefore spiritual appetites”.

In the second entry he concludes, *inter alia*, that in respect of the first act of apprehension, “cognition or simple perception . . . even the most hideous object can be said to have been and to be beautiful in so far as it as it has been apprehended” (CW 147). Not to leave the matter to chance, he proves the point again in relation to the second act of apprehension, recognition, and again in relation to the third act, of achieving satisfaction.

These first two entries comprise a rationale for frank self-revelation: it is inherently beautiful and true. Arming himself with the authority of Aquinas, Joyce reassures himself that the material he presents, no matter how hideous, is in the matter of its apprehension inherently pleasing in some degree. There is plenty in the remnant fragments of *Stephen Hero* which would have had great potential to shock, such as his extraordinary proposal to Emma for a mad night of love, and some of the uninhibited adolescent chatter of Stephen and his peers.

The following day, perhaps sensing that he had not yet fully answered the matter, Joyce revisits this third term of apprehension, now circumventing the question of the hideous by noting that while the third activity, of “satisfaction”, is that which is chiefly taken to adjudge the beauty or otherwise of the apprehended, those objects which are taken to be “beautiful” in this sense are in reality three times beautiful, whereas ugly items, one should infer, are only two times beautiful and for that matter, only one time ugly.

Mason and Ellmann suggest that Joyce, in supplanting Aquinas’s term “pleasing” for “satisfaction” intends to match the quality of stasis that he had emphasised in the Paris notebook (fn 1, 148 CW). A significant flaw in Joyce’s formulation however is that he overlooks the emotions that “hideous” material is, by definition, liable to evoke in
the reader, a very kinetic reaction of dis-satisfaction that would far outweigh the “small measure of aesthetic satisfaction” that one might glean from the purely abstract and essentially mundane pleasures of apprehension in itself.

Indeed, the “satisfaction” Joyce may have derived from garnering this quite literal moral support against the pre-apprehended charges of “hideousness” and immorality was shortlived. He wrote to Stanislaus a few days later, on 19th November: “I am afraid I cannot finish my novel for a long time. I am discontented with a great deal of it and yet how is Stephen’s nature to be expressed otherwise. Eh?” (in JJ 189).

That, of course, is precisely the intenitive question that would be at issue, at the heart of Joyce’s consideration of the chronotopic possibilities of the novel form, a few years in the future. The indifferent success of these aesthetics jottings, if they are any guide to the rest of the Pola notebook, indicates a turning point in Joyce’s career. While he could furnish a plausible rationale in support of the unfolding draft Stephen Hero, for what he sensed at least unconsciously, not to be the highest art that he aspired to, the task ahead now was to understand the nature of his own “aesthetic instinct”, and particularly the workings of his imagination, and to embody its development satisfactorily somehow, within the novel form. Neither the frank revelation of matters shocking to the taste of bourgeois Dubliners, Joyce’s audience according to Kelly, nor the satirical barrage of Stephen Hero was adequate to Portrait, which necessitated a new approach altogether.

Joyce’s aesthetic equivalent of “atomic theory”, in Kenner’s phrase, having proved a satisfactory basis for his artistic programme, the actual means of applying it would require a different approach altogether.

These fellows, said Stephen, know nothing of the world. You might as well say that a rat in a sewer knew the world. Anyway you will not repeat what I say to your confessor in future because I will not say anything. And the next time he asks you “What is that mistaken young man, that unfortunate boy, doing?”, you can answer “I do not know, father. I asked him and he said I was to tell the priest he was making a torpedo”. (SH 210)
In this passage of *Stephen Hero* Stephen apparently has now assigned the “holy office” of sewer maintenance fully to the priesthood, setting his own mind to the making of his art a confessional, and employing in his life some strategic weapons: silence, and cunning Daedalian artifice in particular. Ultimately, Joyce senses that the exploding weapon he has been fashioning is composed of altogether too much satirical gunpowder and, as yet, too little imaginative spark. The Pola writings do not feature in *Portrait*, and the word “hideous” there finds its rightful place, repeatedly, in the overblown, kinetic rhetoric of the hellfire sermons.

**Abandonment of “Hero”**

In December 1904, shortly after these jottings, Joyce vigorously resumed the writing of *Stephen Hero*. In January 1905 he sent off the manuscript to Dublin. Stanislaus Joyce, Vincent Cosgrave and Constantine Curran read it. Curran criticised its progression from lyricism in the childhood episodes, to satire in later chapters. Joyce defended this, as he seems to have defended also the criticisms levelled by Stanislaus, who generally praised the work. Stanislaus “wrote a long letter, extremely detailed in its comments, glowing with admiration for his brother’s work, which he compared favourably to that of acknowledged masters” (JJ 190-1). It is an intriguing possibility that Stanislaus’s enthusiasm for a satirical novel, for which by his own account he had supplied the picaresque prototype in the title *Stephen Hero*, based on the song “Turpin Hero”, might have contributed significantly to his elder brother’s not pursuing a more appropriate design for his first novel. In its early days at least, Stanislaus recorded the view that the “chapters are exceptionally well written” in an original style (DD 20).

Curran’s criticism pinpointed *Stephen Hero*’s shortcomings in relation to its lack of those Aristotelian qualities of unity and “rhythm”: surely indefensible failings in Joyce’s own eyes? It is also revealing that Curran is quoted as being concerned that Joyce would run out of autobiographical material (JJ 194). If the more than twenty chapters to date don’t appear to have the requisite unity and to have achieved the desired effect, at what point might the monumental work in progress, as yet not halfway through, ever hope to achieve it?
Other comments in his letters reveal Joyce’s misgivings: the intellect rationalising the failure of the imagination. Joyce insists that “It would be easy for me to do short novels if I chose, but what I want to wear away in this novel cannot be worn away except by constant dropping” (JJ 193). *Portrait* of course is precisely a much shorter novel but certainly its cohesion, density and control were not achieved easily: it took him some seven years, in contrast to the less than two years that it took Joyce to write the more profuse *Stephen Hero*.

At this time Joyce also contemplated changing the title back to *A Portrait of the Artist* or alternatively, *Chapters in the Life of a Young Man*—the latter title perhaps echoing Moore’s *Confessions of a Young Man*. In the case of this latter option, Joyce would have been simply reframing the work to reflect better the rather shambolic structure and logic of Moore’s confessional, and his own. In the case of the first option, at the same time as he has begun to question the “heroics” suggestively bound up in his conception of the work, he also doubts the sardonic efficacy of the current title. His aesthetic instinct in effect was attempting to lead him back to the territory of the 1904 essay and the central question of how to realise this blueprint in the form of a novel, how to balance the classical exposition of actuality with the romantic theme of the individual self.

**Rome July 31 1906- Mar 1907: The Classical and the Rome-antic**

The significance of Joyce’s Roman stay for his later work on the crowning story of *Dubliners*, “The Dead” and for the origins of *Ulysses*, has been well recognised since Ellmann’s biography of Joyce, and Spoo’s scholarly study has added further detail, particularly in relation to *Ulysses*. As Rice (53) notes, however, relatively little has been written about the significance of the Rome sojourn for *Portrait*, the first major work which Joyce commenced after completing “The Dead”, after a period of convalescence from an illness, and after the birth of his second child, Lucia. In this section, a brief outline of some aspects of this period is furnished in reference to their potential significance for *Portrait*.

The actual date of Joyce’s abandonment of *Stephen Hero* is not recorded, nor are reasons enumerated, in his letters. By June 1905, Joyce had finished Chapter XXIV,
and was also rapidly finishing *Dubliners*. Ultimately he got less than halfway through the intended 63 chapters.

The saga of frustrations associated with delays in the publication of *Chamber Music* and of *Dubliners* has been widely commented since as early as Gorman’s biography: it suffices to recognise their contribution to what must have been an intolerable, mounting pressure on Joyce by the time of his sojourn in Rome. Joyce’s writing output may well have been slowed by the birth of his son Giorgio in July 1905. A year later, exasperated with the tribulations of trying to get *Chamber Music* and *Dubliners* published, Joyce left Trieste for Rome to work fulltime and save some money. The project was predictably a financial failure for the spendthrift Joyce, and a complete failure in allowing Joyce any time to write.

Shortly before his elopement with Nora, Joyce had been troubled by a series of nightmares involving skulls, which he took to be ill omens. Joyce may also have associated departure for the Continent with the fatal illness of his mother, that which had been the cause of his recall from Paris. In this latest episode of his Continental odyssey, he suffered another series of nightmares: “death, corpses, assassinations in which I take an unpleasantly prominent part” (JJ 225). This latter theme is not so surprising in the light of Joyce’s attitude that the Roman Church was the most oppressive master of Ireland; one way or another, as a result of his stay here, Joyce concluded this master had to be confronted.

Spoo has analysed the importance of Joyce’s coming to terms with death and with history for his writerly development. The confrontation between a creative life, and mortal death, is a recurring one in Joyce’s biography, as it is for Stephen in *Portrait*. Certainly Joyce’s reaction to the omnipresent spectres of mortality (in regard to which he made the celebrated quip that Rome reminded him of a pimp selling glimpses of his grandmother’s corpse, *Letters II* 165) was part of his hostile reaction to Rome, and appears to have played an important role in spurring renewed creative efforts once he had regained Trieste.

Spoo’s analysis of discourses of history in *Ulysses* and in *Portrait* treats the Rome sojourn as a “resonant text” in reference to Joyce’s engagement with “ideas of history,
and the history of ideas” (10). In Spoo’s estimation, Joyce at this time was “reading and thinking about history with an astonishing range and intensity” (11).

In a later chapter of this thesis I enlarge speculatively on the Church, on mortality and artistic immortality, in reference to two external texts, one of them a text identified by Spoo: Nietzsche’s “On the Use and Abuse of History”. For the present it is enough to note some of Joyce’s key attitude shifts about this time, commented by Ellmann and others: chiefly, increasing doubts about the theme of “heroism”, and an attitudinal softening towards Dublin: symptoms of the shifting attitude towards “history” that would contribute to a far more potent chronotopic design for Portrait. He “applied himself to creating a subtle and elaborate art, less incriminating, more urbane than the chapters of Hero or the early stories of Dubliners” (JJ 196). He wished to present the “second city” of the British Empire to the world for the first time (Selected Letters 78). By the time of writing articles in Il Piccolo he has become quite partisan and comments to Stanislaus that the Irish are “the most intelligent, most spiritual, and most civilised people in Europe” (JJ 259).

Joyce is also reading widely and critically: short stories and old Italian novellas (Melchiori 21), and English novelists, from whom he concludes that he has little to learn (Selected Letters 124). At this time he writes his “sharpest criticism” to Stanislaus, apparently aimed at reorienting his own artistic aims in relation to the literary tradition. He weighs whatever he reads, meticulously for its naturalistic accuracy, honesty of purpose, and style. Thus, suggests Ellmann, “It is clear that the whole idiom of twentieth-century fiction was established in Joyce’s mind by 1906” (JJ 233).

In the leadup to Joyce’s abandonment of Stephen Hero, a suggestive clue appears to be his questioning of the “hero” figure. This movement of questioning had begun as early as a few months after his departure for the Continent. In a letter to Stanislaus (7th February 1905) he wrote: “I am working in “Hairy Jaysus” at present. Do you not think the search for heroics damn vulgar—and yet how are we to describe Ibsen? I
have written some fine critical sentences lately. They have discovered a novel of Disraeli’s” (JJ 192).

Joyce is discussing the nationalistic Dublin character Skeffington, and presumably the triggering reference was to that person’s political, perhaps vulgar heroism. And yet, Joyce muses, Ibsen’s artistic heroism clearly is admirable. Perhaps by contrast, he has begun to suspect that the posturing of his own “hero” alter ego in the novel is a little vulgar compared to an Ibsen. He goes on to comment that “I am sure however that the whole structure of heroism is, and always was, a damned lie and that there cannot be any substitute for the individual passion as the motive power of everything—art and philosophy included” (Selected Letters 54). This insight, once applied to the case of Stephen, would eventually lead to a very different approach to the portrayal of his nature; it is one that is strongly suggested in The Use and Abuse of History (Nietzsche: see Chapter 9).

Ellmann recounts satirically that in late 1903 Joyce had had a flirtation with socialist activism “for how else should he be fed?”, encountered Marxist and anarchist theory, and fed heroically on the rhetoric of Nietzsche (JJ 142). During the Rome sojourn Joyce would experience a temporary resurgence of interest in socialist and anarchist politics, as Manganiello (1980) has demonstrated. Later, he would recommit and reshape his artistic aims, not indeed to become a “man of action” but rather to embody action in his art, as Nietzsche’s essay can be construed as urging.

The 1904 ur-Portrait offers an interesting inversion of the traditional “heroic” image: the artist hero is cast in the role of martyr or victim rather than political incendiary, the hunted stag flashing his antlers is still not far away, and Joyce appears to relate to the latter image of the hounded Parnell more closely than to Parnell the leader and man of action. In Stephen Hero Stephen Dedalus relishes grand flourishes (for example the much-anticipated talk he gives) and insults or witty asides, but fails to galvanise the population either for or against him. This is an impotent, ineffectual role for the artist, doubly disappointing when the truly heroic nature of an artist’s labour

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44 Given that Joyce corresponded with his brother frequently, it is likely that the critical sentences referred to, postdate the last publicly available entries of the Pola notebook.
must have continued to impress itself on Joyce, under the present trying conditions. How then to portray the undoubted heroism of the artist effectually as his race’s conscience?

By the end of May in 1905 Joyce’s thoughts are still focused on the more reactive kind of heroism. While earlier that month he had noted that “in my opinion I am incapable of belief of any kind”, on 27 May nonetheless he refers to his life as “martyrdom” and finds the title of his novel “justified” (Letters II 90).

Corresponding with the publisher Grant Richards over Dubliners, Joyce had written in a letter of April 26 1906 that his attitude was not heroic; it was merely logical. But nonetheless he would not prostitute his talent. “I have written my book with considerable care, in spite of a hundred difficulties and in accordance with what I understand to be the classical tradition of my art.” Joyce’s denial of the “heroic” disavows what he clearly continued to experience. Ultimately, his attitudes would shift from these alternatives of martyr or futile hero towards a purely artistic heroism such as he had already described in Ibsen’s career. In Joyce’s case this entailed a renewed, critical engagement with “history”, and the new attitude would come to propel a radically new chronotopic form for the novel.

To round off this inceptional history of Portrait up to the point of its revamping in September 1907, it is important to note two final texts: Joyce’s Trieste notebook, and the revamping of his talk on “James Clarence Mangan”.
Post-Rome Trieste

Once returned to Trieste and the company and support of his brother, Joyce started a line in journalism, prepared a series of lectures on Irish themes for an Italian audience, and resumed tutoring. He also wrote the final story of *Dubliners*, “The Dead”.

After a serious illness and after the birth of his second child Lucia, Joyce saw a way to rework the material of *Stephen Hero* into a new novel: five chapters rather than 63. His attitude had mellowed: no longer is he “the Jesus Christ I once fondly imagined myself”. Christ, of course was a preacher and Joyce had long ago determined that preaching was not the purpose of art. It was now essential to find a form for the novel that could embody his aims in a truly artistic fashion.

The inception of Portrait

Given the stated central theme of Ellmann’s biography of Joyce, the intertwining of Joyce’s life and art (JJ 3), it is unsurprising that it is through this theme that he traces the reconception of *Portrait*. Ellmann considers the key development in *Portrait*’s composition was a “structural principle” derived from Joyce’s recent life: the decision to rewrite *Hero as Portrait* in five chapters was taken after Lucia’s birth in July (another conception which must be traced to Rome, where the seeds of “The Dead” and of a story called “Ulysses” were sown) for *Portrait* is in fact “the gestation of a soul, and in the metaphor Joyce found his new principle of order” (JJ 296-7). In Ellmann’s view *Portrait* starts with the theme of fathering, and ends with birth (separation from mother.) Liquid motifs evoke imagery of embryonic development throughout the novel.

However, the conception of *Portrait* according to Ellmann also sounds a good deal like the thesis of the 1904 essay: the book’s pattern “is that we are what we were; our maturity is an extension of our childhood, and the courageous boy is father of the arrogant young man” (JJ 295). What a purely “reproductive” account misses however is the crucial chronotopic dimension of the artist’s relation to society, and the chance
events that in Bakhtin’s conception of history as open and fallible evolution (see Chapter 1) create a unique outcome.

While Joyce’s interest in this “reproductive” metaphor of creation is clearly discernible in his letters and in his work, our retracing of the early history of Portrait has sought to demonstrate the countervailing social, political and philosophical constraints that belie the apparently determinist, ahistorical and asocial metaphor of childbirth. These warrant attention as part of the struggle to achieve the highest art, that Joyce discerned in the heroic career of Ibsen, and adopted as his own mission too.

The Trieste notebook

Gorman (1941) identifies the Trieste notebook as a third term in the series started in Paris. Without this express guarantee, one would little suspect it, for the work (written, it is believed, between Joyce’s return to Trieste in 1907 and his second return trip to Ireland in 1909; Scholes and Kain) is of a very different nature to the previous two: a series of alphabetical notes with no unifying theme or purpose, mostly fragments with which Joyce had no doubt, in memory, extended textual associations. This book suggests no longer the neophyte writer seeking philosophical and aesthetic guidance towards an unrealised image of art, but rather the artist assembling a palette of incidents and ideas in support of some unwritten design.

Of greatest interest to our study of the development of Joyce’s chronotopic attitudes are those notes under the heading “Aesthetic” and those under “Ireland”. “Aesthetic” now takes a very different focus, away from the theory of Aristotle and Aquinas, to the physiological and instinctual nature of art: as “enchantment of the heart”, which Joyce contrasts to merely reflex instincts which are not aesthetic. Joyce surveys cathartic relief, and inspiration, a term with its etymology in the physiology of breathing (see discussion of villanelle: Chapter 8); artistic “reproduction” and the suggestivity of the uncanny time of “morning inspiration”. The artist who had singled out the imagination as early as 1902 now returns to the theme at some length, inspired in part no doubt by reference to the Romantics, reminders of whom had been so present to him in Rome (see Chapter 9).
We see this change of focus towards the individual passion and instinct reflected in his letters too about this time (see Chapter 2), and again, recourse to *The Use and Abuse of History* affords enlightening context. Nietzsche (28) claims that one effect of an excess of history is that “the instincts of a nation are thwarted, the maturity of the individual arrested no less than that of the whole”. In respect of *Dubliners*, Joyce had replied by furnishing a diagnosis of paralysis. So too Joyce would write of the image of his superseded self in this notebook: “Dedalus (Stephen) . . . He shrank from limning the features of his soul for he feared that no everlasting image of beauty could shine through an immature being (Scholes and Kain 95”).

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, Joyce drew close associations between the soul of the individual and that of their race. Equally germane to Joyce’s new approach is Nietzsche’s assessment of the relations of history and art: “Art has the opposite effect to history; and only, perhaps, if history suffers transformation into a pure work of art, can it preserve instincts or arouse them” (42).

Joyce had by now set himself the task of melding a new sense of history into the synthesising mix of inputs that he had assembled for *Portrait*. In a later chapter I speculate on the lines of this new sense in greater detail.

Of Aristotelian inquiry now there are but traces: “It relieves us to hear or see our distress expressed by another person” faintly echoes the theme of catharsis, while “the skeleton conditions the aesthetic image” (Scholes and Kain 97) marks the primacy of form. This latter entry also nicely encapsulates the central dialogue between images of mortality and of artistic immortality that had haunted Joyce’s Rome sojourn. Through the mortal skeleton of form, the soul of actualised substance (Aristotle 156), an artist might hope to gain immortality.

Still under “Aesthetic”, the entries about “inspiration” are closely reflected in *Portrait*’s episode of the writing of the villanelle, a fact strongly suggestive that, whatever one’s assessment of Stephen’s poem, Joyce’s representation of the aesthetic instinct in action in that novel should be taken in earnest.
The imagination is the subject of one of Joyce’s most sustained entries in this notebook, an entry which reflects nineteenth century views of the unconscious origins of art, inspired by Schelling in particular, and the organicist models of art promulgated by Coleridge, a model complicit with a world view of Being as Becoming, as Abrams (219) notes. “There is a morning inspiration as there is a morning knowledge about the windless hour when the moth escapes from the chrysalis, and certain plants bloom and the feverfit of madness comes on the insane” (Scholes and Kain, 96-97). This passage too is closely echoed in Portrait, as my reading (Chapter 8) demonstrates.

As for the entries under “Ireland”, these resound with Nietzschean critiques of a race that believes itself to be “epigones” of past glory (1957), cast asunder from its own instincts, exhausted and depleted. The Irish artist and thinker, from this land of the “senile imagination”, would be unleashed on Europe: “a being without sexual education”. Ireland itself resembles “France after the Napoleonic wars or . . . Egypt after the slaughter of the first-born”. Again, “her rebellions are servile wars” (Scholes and Kain 100).

This then, is how Joyce saw the nature of the “race” for whom Stephen Dedalus would set his goal to form a renewed conscience. Joyce’s interest in “Aesthetic” is in this notebook confined to largely romantic, or physiologically charged, images of the imagination.

1907: James Clarence Mangan revisited

Joyce’s second Italian lecture was planned as a revamp of the original paper on Mangan, reframed for an Italian audience. From the incomplete remains of the manuscript, it seems that Joyce reused much of the original paper, now beginning it with a new, prefatory biographical sketch, and a brief history of “Ireland’s contribution to European literature”. Joyce does not revert to his original theme, the synthesis of romantic and classical—clearly of marginal interest to his audience.
While the previous version had clearly identified Mangan’s failings in part as his inability to cast off the weight of history, this now becomes the central theme of the revamped piece:

> There are certain poets who, in addition to the virtue of revealing to us some *phases* of the human *conscience* unknown until their time, also have the more doubtful virtue of summing up in themselves the thousand contrasting tendencies of their era, of being, so to speak, the storage batteries of new forces. (CW 175; italics mine)

Notably, Joyce’s interest is both in revealing some unknown *phases of the conscience*, a task central to the original “Portrait”, and in the chronotopic endeavour of summing up an era. Mangan however failed to forge a new consciousness for his era but instead became a passive reflector of its welter of contradictory forces.

For Joyce, what is ultimately at stake in this challenge of history is the opportunity to seize one’s artistic immortality. He discusses Mangan’s reputational neglect, in the face of his own great fears in that regard. Mangan’s acquiescence in some of the enthusiasms of his time allows for the obliteration of his highest qualities and achievements, which in tandem with the ignoble caretakership of his reputation by his race has seen him suffer the fate of obscurity, of immortality merited yet unrealised. He is, like the subjects of portraits described in the 1904 essay, precisely the kind of case likely to be “iron memorialised” according to some popular and ignoble aspect, such as drug addict: one day, that is, when Ireland gets around to it (CW 176). His true self, and his art, have therefore been interred in a mental monument of neglect which “is the most polite and effective way to assure a lasting oblivion of the deceased” (176). Mangan’s reflection of his race and of his time is but a passive reflection, not dialogical engagement; his reactive image of history a “doubtful virtue”. And yet his lyrical qualities are unparalleled anywhere “except in the inspired songs of Shelley” (177).

Joyce’s Roman nightmares (on which he sought guidance as to how to awaken from them: see Chapter 9) about death and assassinations were no doubt inspired not only by the omnipresence of mortality, and the statue of the heroic Giordano Bruno in the Campo dei Fiori (a reminder of his horrific end), but also by personal preoccupations.
He had taken a trip with Nora to the cemetery (August 15), where he encountered more memorials, to Shelley and Keats, likewise dead, but at least assured of their immortality, that prospect that he had begun to fear would never be his. It is on the 19 of August that his letter reports these nightmares.

How then might Joyce achieve the immortality that was his due? Nietzsche’s essay suggests that the right approach is in the accounts of true heroes, those who went against the enthusiasms of their times, those who, heeding the Delphic utterance undertook the path to self-knowledge and realisation of their own, plastic artistic force, deeply rooted as it was in history and in society. Mangan too, in Joyce’s thesis had taken steps toward this path, the “work of true self-revelation” (CW 175), and yet had been ignored because the “appearance of such a genius is always a signal for all the corrupt and vested interests to join together in defence of the old order” (UAH 180). Somehow an artist must find a means to combat these forces.

Indeed, Nietzsche suggests, between the equally dangerous poles of disuse and overuse of history, perhaps the best use for history is in the hands of the artist who engages it with the requisite skills and knowledge. In the original Mangan paper, as noted in the previous chapter, Joyce concluded with some extraordinary imagery, of a successor to Mangan reborn in the divinity of poetry, seizing the “keys of hell and of death” (CW 83). This passage appears to have been excised in the revamped lecture, clearly too personal a concern, not of interest to his audience. Gone too is that symbolist formula of adolescent seriousness: “death, the most beautiful form of life” (CW 83). Immortality in his work and in his reputation is for Joyce now the only acceptable form of death.

Instead, Joyce consoles himself in the closing paragraph with a new conclusion: surely anyone who has “expressed in a worthy form the sacred indignation of his soul cannot have written his name in water”. That, of course is the reflection his thoughts may have taken him to after contemplating the immortality of Keats in the Roman cemetery, in its marmoreal memorial aspect:
Here lies all that was mortal of a Young English Poet who, in the bitterness of his heart, and at the mercy of his enemies, asked that these words be engraven on his tombstone: HERE LIES ONE WHOSE NAME WAS WRIT IN WATER.

The seven lost years

I don’t think that beauty is fortuitous. A man might think for seven years at intervals and all at once write a quatrain which would immortalise him seemingly without thought or care—seemingly. Then the groundling will say: “O, he could write poetry”: and if I ask “How was that?” the groundling will answer “Well he just wrote it, that’s all. (SH 185)

Stephen’s comment about the composing process is prescient and, like Joyce, his thoughts are preoccupied with the quest for immortality. In reproach to the feckless groundlings, ignorant of and uncaring about the heroic process of transformation that is the work of the artist, by examining this developmental history of the early Joyce, the inceptional history of Portrait according to its evolving design, one can come to apprehend the slow achievement of Joyce’s artistic principles, the development of an artistic project and the philosophical and aesthetic investigations designed to further it. Secondly, we have viewed the emergence of his purposive aims: primarily, through introspection and frank psychological portrayal, through a process informed by a reversion to his instinctual roots, to forge the conscience of his race.

Our inceptional history of Portrait ends in September 1907, where begins what Gabler has termed the “Seven Lost Years” (1976), a period characterised by the almost total lack of intermediate manuscript evidence of the slow, ever-evolving curve of this novel’s realisation. It remains now to see how Joyce realised this purpose, by examination of the third element of design, that of the realised form of the final work, which is attempted by means of a reading of Portrait in the following two chapters. If the inceptional history of Portrait begins in 1904 with Joyce’s inquiry into the nature of his own soul, it must be answered with an inquiry into the soul of the work of art that is form (Lawson-Tancred 59).
Part Three:

The *Portrait* in another frame
CHAPTER SEVEN:

A CHRONOTOPIC READING OF PORTRAIT

A chronotopic reading must afford a sense of the “implicit or explicit” theory of history that is embedded in a narrative, according to Bakhtin. In the case of Portrait, this entails reading successive phases of Stephen Dedalus’s consciousness, as an unfinalisable and open-ended “history”. In this chapter, the first four chapters of Portrait are analysed in terms of shifting time-space relations, and narrative motifs, as they affect this central character. These shifting relations are analysed according to key chronotopic measures: his senses of responsibility, creativity and historicity. Two principal chronotopic patterns are described: “time as societal change” emerges as a force that impels Stephen to engage with society as his world changes. Secondly, Stephen experiences internally propelled evolutionary change, in relation to his intellect but also according to his “instinct”, which is primarily expressed in terms of the “impatient temper” that Joyce associates with the romantic impulse. A dominant narrative theme of Portrait is the ceaseless dialogue between Stephen and social discourses: language, politics, the Church in particular. Stephen throughout, is portrayed as engaging dialogically with social discourse, and ultimately embracing a critical sense of historicity also, similar to that which Joyce himself came to embrace after his Rome sojourn. A contrary phase of Stephen’s development, also internally propelled however, sees him occupying an alternative “world” characterised by the chronotopic logic of religious devotion, where Stephen turns his back on society, and on history in particular.

The dominant theme is Stephen’s struggle for the freedom of his creative soul against those social forces which, in Bakhtin’s model, impact upon creative agency and intentionality in a charged field of contested words and values (see Chapter 2). Stephen’s struggle is analysed in relation to key narrative motifs: of mortality, orientation, the play of light and shade, fashioning and vestiture.

Stephen: Nothung!
(He lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier. Time’s livid final flame leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry.)
THE GASJET: Pwfungg! (U 475-6)
A portrait in a perspective

Design has been posited, in the case of Portrait, as a blend of Joyce’s broad aesthetic principles, stated aims, and chronotopic form, and the development of these first two elements in the period prior to the beginning of Portrait’s compositional period has been traced (Chapters 3 to 5). The first two forms that Joyce’s first novel took have also been outlined (Chapter 6). In this and in the following chapter we analyse the realised form of the first four chapters of Portrait, primarily according to the chronotopic logic of Stephen’s agency, the play of time-space relations, and the changing attributes of responsibility, creativity, historicity and futurity, as Stephen undergoes schooling, and endures a succession of phases before adopting the vocation of artist, at the climax of Chapter Four.

The framing of a chronotopic reading

First, a brief restatement of Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope is in order. Bakhtin’s theories in general, of course, are notorious for their lack of methodology. They are seldom systematised, and they often embody apparent contradictions; Bakhtin’s mode of exposition is in itself novelistic, working according to “exhaustive presentation rather than by elegant concentration” (Watt, qtd in Holquist “Introduction”; DI xvi).

The following then is offered as explication for the intentive direction of my own research, without pretence to systematisation or comprehensiveness. Bakhtin’s essay on the chronotope is subtitled “Notes toward a historical poetics” and indeed he situates the novel genre within a sociohistorical context. The chronotope he defines as “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature”; it is “a formally constitutive category of literature” (DI 84). Holquist offers two broad senses in which Bakhtin uses the term. Firstly, in a limited sense, it refers to chronotopic logic as a kind of technical device, a means to understand the logic of narrative form (Dialogism 109). In this sense it can resemble the motif, or narrative function (110). In a broader sense, chronotope refers to ways of understanding art, and the life that art represents, within its times. The relationships of art and life are “complex, indirect and always mediated” (111). The
chronotope can serve to address the sociohistorical context of a work in a more intrinsically literary, prosaic way than many overtly historical studies (113).

Beyond time and space relations, and the use of motifs, Bakhtin’s survey of the chronotope in a wide range of genres focuses on certain attributes: for the purposes of our study of Portrait as the developmental portrait of an artist, the attributes we focus on are the protagonist’s changing relations to society, and changes within himself, as reflected in his senses of responsibility, creativity and historicity (see Chapter 1).

Tindall (Modern World 102) suggests that Stephen Hero is a chronotope of place, Portrait one of no-place. Portrait, like Finnegans Wake presents a world that is apparently situated at “no spatial time” (94). A more detailed reading however paints a distinctly more complicated picture. Portrait presents as a disjunct series of times and spaces (Parrinder “A Portrait” 90), with associated changes in genre, style and consciousness. My analysis demonstrates that these shifts are pregnant with signification.

An associated theme with great relevance for criticism of Portrait is the question of the hero’s agency. In a superior chronotope, the hero has the power to act upon the world. Bakhtin’s description of the artistic representation of another’s discourse serves well as a summary of the narrative drama of Portrait:

The importance of struggling with another’s discourse, its influence in the history of an individual’s coming to ideological consciousness is enormous. One’s own discourse and one’s own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other’s discourse. (DI 348)

Stephen however is often read as the hapless product of discourse rather than as an intersubjective agent in dialogical relation with society. Some readings take the dominance of societal discourses in the text as an indication of Stephen’s passive state. In the present reading, however, an alternating path of engagement and disengagement is observed in Stephen’s development, corresponding to his poles of orientation to and disorientation from, society. In the first chapter the lonely and awed Clongowes schoolboy traces a path to active engagement with the august world of the
school’s authority. A second movement sees Stephen’s retreat into introspection, taking counsel of his own instincts. Then follows a deep re-engagement with the chronotopic world of his faith, followed by a final “retreat” from this faith, a defining dis-orientation from the world he knows. In time, as his intellect develops, he gradually experiences a shift in chronotopic orientation that will allow him to re-engage creatively with society, with “history” in a way that will allow him to employ powerfully, his plastic creative force.

Stephen is demonstrated to be an active consumer of discourses, who immerses himself in their languages to know and master them, ultimately to engage with and sublate them to the purposes of his art. In particular, given the dominance of Church discourse on Stephen’s young consciousness, in overthrowing this faith he nonetheless substitutes for it a sublatory faith in art, and determines to become a “priest of the imagination”. To observe the poet of the villanelle immersed in the language of aestheticism is not an invitation to “iron memorialise” his developing soul in this one aspect, but rather to see this as yet another contributory, romantic phase in the growth of Stephen’s double helix: the intellect and the imagination.

Time-space relations in a novel evoke a sense of a character’s relation to his or her society. While “The Arranger” in Ulysses provides some ambitious stage directions for “the collapse of all time and space” (quoted at the head of this chapter), here the younger Stephen of Portrait experiences generally less apocalyptic but nonetheless dramatic shifts in time-space relations as he passes through different phases. In attempting a chronotopic reading of Portrait, one cannot expect to find a “normalising point of stasis” (Holquist 141), no measure against which to measure Stephen’s progress, nor (given Bakhtin’s global concept of unfinalisability) need we expect a definitive endpoint. Two general time-space forces propel Stephen’s development: firstly, the external world of “time as change” where Stephen is exposed to change in his own life, and historical change in his country (Parnell’s death), and thus is spurred to creative response.

Secondly, from the second chapter, Stephen’s internal engine of instinctually driven change, is activated and sets him on a path of development that takes alternating impetus from both external and internal forces.
In the more technical sense of chronotope, we can also measure Stephen’s progress in coming to grips with “others’ discourses”, in relation to signifying narrative motifs: in particular, motifs of vestiture, mortality, light and shade, and orientation.

Robert Spoo has demonstrated the prevalence in Portrait of romantic historiographic discourse, such as mysterious shrouds and other romantic vestures. From a dialogical perspective, however, Spoo’s use of Pater’s metaphor of vestiture as textile nets that imprison the consciousness should be reframed. Joyce’s narrative redevelopment of Pater’s motif of vestiture (consonant with the spirit of Nietzsche’s essay “On the Use and Abuse of History”) is a relativist signature of identity, where the individual is empowered to don and doff “uniforms”, and where a divided reality is noted between vestiture and identity. The hero reflects on the split between apparent identity (similarly to the blueprint essay’s image of “beard and inches”) and the reality of the individual soul. For the Jesuit is a man who could have been a “higher up”, but who instead donned a very different vestiture.

Two or more motifs are sometimes condensed into one figure. For example, “vestiture” may be associated with the theme of mortality that recurs throughout Portrait. Stephen intersubjectively identifies at different times with Roman historic figures, saints, aesthetes and occultists. Comparing himself to the un fashioned nakedness of his peers at The Bull, Stephen imaginatively fashions himself proleptically into the role of artist (not necessarily poet, it should be noted):

What were they now but cerements shaken from the body of death—the fear he had walked in night and day, the incertitude that had ringed him round, the shame that had abased him within and without—cerements, the linens of the grave? His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her grave-clothes. Yes! Yes! Yes!
(P 171)

Unlike Mangan, who was afraid of life, Stephen rejects the living death of a Jesuit vocation, that “inhuman voice that had called him to the pale service of the altar”, and likewise the “dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair” and chooses to fashion himself in a role of his own device.
The motif of Stephen’s confrontations with mortality is central. From an early age, he seizes the opportunity to engage with life rather than to undergo the living death of passive conformity. This pattern climaxes in Stephen’s embracing the life of experience, even the commitment of mistakes and errors, in preference to a safe life of slow, waking death (the kind of life the denizens of *Dubliners* all too readily embrace). Towards the end of the novel, Stephen’s own attitudes have swung back to a chronotopic re-engagement with society, and he expresses a powerful sense of history that suggests his own creative futurity as an artist of the prosaic imagination, forging the conscience of his race (see Chapter 8).

Orientation is a recurring narrative theme in both a general and in a literal sense. Stephen comes to embrace the east, the continental sophistication of Europe, its storehouse of mythology and history, its historic legacy as the land of Ireland’s putative Celtic origins, and turns his back on the world he knows so well. Particularly at times of crisis, Stephen repeatedly attempts to orient himself in terms of his place in the universe (Chapter 1, the geography flyleaf), in history (prior to marching to the rector’s office, Chapter 1), in regard to his own family, to family names and history, to place (Chapter 2, Cork trip); and again in response to the mythology of his name and to the history of his “race” (Chapter 4).

**Chapter 1: Ministry of the interior**

The first chapter, stretching through infancy to childhood, is divided into four sections, and alternates between home and Stephen’s first school, Clongowes. It is narrated mostly from the point of view of Stephen’s consciousness. Stephen’s soul, in Paterian terms, is “born clothed”, awaking to (self) consciousness in a sea of preceding discourses, of language steeped in literary tradition, in myth, in strands of historical consciousness, in politics and in the discourse of the Church.

Stephen announces much later in the novel that “This race and this country and this life produced me” (203). However, since his attitudes and values are so different to
those of most of his peers, clearly he is no passive product of these discourses. From
the first he is actively engaged in meaning-making, developing an independent
consciousness, devoting himself to his studies and applying his mind towards making
sense of the universe. The infantile language of the first section soon becomes
increasingly complex, interspersed with echoes and quotations of the language of
others, as Stephen begins to relate to society dialogically through language and
discourse. Stephen’s first tentative steps towards individuation and self-differentiation
in this chapter are a precursory announcement of bolder and more radical steps later
on.

The first section is a seemingly impressionistic series of apparently flimsy fragments
from infancy, the stuff of first memories. The early days of Clongowes in the second
section portray Stephen as somewhat removed from the activities of the school
regime, immersed in his private thoughts and speculations, the kind of evidence
sometimes used to read Stephen as congenitally aloof. In the powerful third section,
the celebrated Christmas dinner scene, Stephen is witness only to a dramatic debate
between the respective claims of political and religious allegiance in the aftermath of
the fall of Parnell. The climactic scene however sees him responding to an experience
of unfair treatment and summoning the considerable moral courage necessary to take
a stand on the matter; his individuation has begun.

Three dramas contribute to his moral and ethical education, in a dialectic of
experience, experimental response and subsequent reflection. Wells’ bullying act in
shouldering Stephen into a ditch results in fever, and yet Stephen observes the moral
code imparted by his father: never to “peach on a fellow”, and triumphs from his
honorable interpretation of it, receiving a frank apology from Wells. The second
drama is the terrifying argument at Christmas dinner, where he witnesses the violent
effects of divided allegiances within the family.

The third incident represents Stephen’s emerging ethically-informed agency, making
his presence felt in the world. As a result of Stephen’s direct experience of a
perceived injustice, Fr Dolan’s pandying him on an unfair charge of malingering, he
makes a decision that marks out his qualities of moral courage and independent
mindedness. This is the first notable development in the career of the nascent artist,
into the realm of ethics and answerability, a significant development from the
sensitive and frail boy who ran on the fringe of the ruck on the rugby field so as to
keep out of harm’s way, keeping the counsel of his own thoughts. This climactic
incident is the subject of some detailed scrutiny, below. The often-commented first
section is also worth more detailed examination.

**Refractured Fairytales**

From the very first words, *Portrait* announces a genre-based time signature: “Once
upon a time”. In Bakhtinian terms, the novelistic language is intermeshed with that of
the fairytale: “Once upon a time, and a very good time it was there was a moo-cow
coming down along the road and this moo-cow that was coming down along the road
met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo” (P 7).

Immediately, this generic borrowing is countered dialogically, being undercut by the
interjection: “and a very good time it was” which destroys the effect of timelessness
by placing it outside of frame, the evaluative tone bespeaking an external perspective,
an irruptive descent to the prosaic, by an unidentified narrative voice.

The problem of point of view in *Portrait* has of course been the subject of much
debate and analysis since Booth’s *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). It is not an aim of
this research to weigh in to this complex debate. In this thesis, two principles are
assumed as integral to the design of *Portrait*: firstly that the narrative is represented,
so far as possible, through the refracting prism of Stephen’s consciousness, and that
wherever possible Stephen’s world is presented dramatically. This principle
explains the frequent discontinuities in language, narrative and the work’s structural
logic.

A second, supplementary principle is the use of third person narrative or of free
indirect discourse, as tonally and rhetorically unobtrusively as possible, to convey a
sense of Stephen’s perspective even where he is not directly represented as speaking
or engaged in some action; Wollaeger (Casebook 9), using Dorrit Cohn’s

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45 Bowen (423-4) advances a similar description. Carens also suggests that the novel effectively
portrays Stephen’s consciousness more than even Stephen can be aware of (299).
terminology, considers “narrated monologue” to be the preferred mode. For example, in the second paragraph of Portrait: “His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.” Stephen is not the subject of action and the father’s actions are conveyed in the third person, but from “his” (Stephen’s) point of view.

The following paragraph represents Stephen’s actual thoughts, and while employing the third person, chiefly to avoid the overtly subjective first person, operates as free indirect discourse: that is, “a device for integrating linguistic traits associated with the speech and the thinking of specific characters into segments of the narrative” (Gillespie, Reading 215).

He was baby tuckoo. The moocow came down the road where Betty Byrne lived: she sold lemon platt.

Where third-person narration is used, it generally echoes or agrees with Stephen’s thoughts, language and point of view. Carens (335) notes Joyce’s virtuosity in switching point of view deftly from detached, objective narrator to Stephen’s consciousness. However, Stephen’s thoughts are invariably intertextually penetrated with other languages and texts; in Bakhtin’s phrase, “language carries with it where it has been”, so that Stephen’s language is never exclusively his.

Wollaeger considers Hugh Kenner’s “uncle Charles principle” to be essentially synonymous to narrated monologue/style indirect libre/erlebte rede, but more subtle and intermittent. It is not dissimilar to what Bakhtin terms a “character zone”, where language used chimes with the consciousness of the character being focused on. The principle is a more specialised application of, but analogous to, a stylistic tendency in Joyce that Ellmann has termed “magnetisation of style and vocabulary by the context of person, place and time” (JJ 146) and Litz (46) has called “expressive form”—broadly defined, the suggestive collusion of style with content. An important aspect of this idiosyncratic style of Joyce’s is that it is chronotopic: it is sensitive to and reflective of, time and space (Wollaeger, Casebook, 10).

The section Kenner focuses on is a third person narration introducing the character of Stephen’s great uncle:
Uncle Charles smoked such black twist that at last his nephew suggested to him to enjoy his morning smoke in a little outhouse at the end of the garden.

— Very good, Simon. All serene, Simon, said the old man tranquilly. Anywhere you like. The outhouse will do me nicely: it will be more salubrious. )P 60)

Clearly these first words, the opening of Chapter Two, are not from Stephen’s point of view, as they focus on the exchange between Charles and “his nephew” Simon. In the following paragraph, however, the third person narration could equally be told from Stephen’s point of view as from Charles’:

Every morning, therefore, uncle Charles repaired to his outhouse but not before he had greased and brushed scrupulously his back hair and brushed and put on his tall hat. While he smoked the brim of his tall hat and the bowl of his pipe were just visible beyond the jambs of the outhouse door. *His arbour, as he called the reeking outhouse* which he shared with the cat and the garden tools, served him also as a sounding-box: and every morning he hummed contentedly one of his favourite songs . . . (P 60; italics mine)

The first three italicised words are, as Kenner notes, citations of Charles’ genteel vocabulary, but the third person narrative simply echoes Stephen’s dialogical engagement with Charles’ style, a lad who probably follows his great uncle out to the shed. Certainly this interpretation chimes well with other elements of *Portrait*’s design. Stephen, with his fascination for words, studies, repeats and analyses the living language all about him.

Indeed, in the final italicised section of this passage, the narrative specifically quotes Charles and calls our attention to the act of citation: “His arbour, as he called the reeking outhouse”. The “uncle Charles principle”, if Kenner is right, would have the effect in *Portrait* of distracting attention away from the central character, of aligning the narrative to less central characters. Similar comments apply to the use of free indirect discourse to convey the consciousness of other characters: a matter that Gillespie does not adequately address. In the discussion of Chapter Four below, a further refinement of the Stephen-centred point of view principle is explored, that Stephen’s consciousness is itself at times divided, a field of conflicted discourses.
This thesis is supported by Aubert’s analysis of Joyce’s divided subject (57) and by the Bakhtinian concept of double-voicedness.

In the first paragraph of the novel, the narrative point of view appears to echo Stephen’s father’s manner of telling a story, as good story tellers often do, with illustrations and jocular interjections. The erratic Simon Dedalus is perhaps about to extemporise in his performance of the evening story, on a nostalgic Ireland of past heroism and glorious deeds. The language of this first paragraph, quotations and echoes excluded, on the surface appears to be mostly the talk of an infant, the “nicens little boy”. More probably however it conveys the actual words of the storyteller, directly quoted by the infant, as he adopts the kind of babyish language that adults often use when speaking to children.

Gabler’s genetic studies (“Seven Lost”) suggest that this chapter in its current form was one of the last sections of Portrait to be written, and thus Joyce most likely composed it retrospectively to suit the overall shape of the realised novel and to accommodate it to the individuating rhythm, the sum of its parts, that it had become. A key operation in this “overture” (Kenner; Dublin’s Joyce 116) is the infant’s work in actively ingesting story, song, politics, symbolism and other discourse, and relating it to his own life, re-creating meaning.

From the first words, the artist-to-be is immersed in the “nowhere, no-time” of the fairytale genre, and then, in short order, in the dimension of the mythical. For the story of the moocow is not merely a children’s story but is steeped in myth, the story of a cow who ferried children across to an island, where they were schooled to be heroes before being brought back to their own country (Gifford 131-2). Stephen connects the story to himself: “He was baby tuckoo”. The mythic dimension of this story parallels the kind of calling that Stephen later decides is his: he too will remove from his country only to return, in his literature at least, as a kind of hero in prose. The cow itself, “silk of the kine” is a symbol of Ireland. Metonymically the story also evokes the mythic story of one of Daedalus’ ingenious inventions, a device that would allow Pasiphae to mate with a bull.

The initial movement of the overture then, fairytale and mythical time engaged dialogically with everyday time, weaves a dense representation of the birth of the
boy’s soul clothed in the verbal vestures of story, myth, political aspirations (the search for heroes), and the echoing answers of the boy’s soul, where he weds abstract time to the concrete, atopic myths to local places and identities, the local road and Betty Byrne.

Stephen’s habit of concretising and localising these intertextual references carries through his later years also, for example where he puzzles over the meaning of the liturgical phrase “tower of ivory” and comes to understand it by relating the words to his experience of Eileen Vance: “Her fair hair had streamed out behind her like gold in the sun. Tower of Ivory. House of Gold. By thinking of things you could understand them” (P 43).

In this first section of the novel we see in rudimentary form the work of a creative imagination, ingesting literary discourse, interpreting it, even reworking words and phrases. Indeed, it culminates in a reversal of this pattern, where the creative utterance for the first time stems from the subject. Instead of attempting to relate a fragment of song or story to his present reality, Stephen’s experience of threat based on religious taboo (which Kenner in Dublin’s Joyce suggests is imaged as the “eagles of Rome”, 116), against his expressed desire to marry the protestant Eileen Vance, results in a primitive poem: he hides under a table and in a magical incantation for protection chants (or recites mentally) a rhyming verse balancing the opposing threats of his dilemma:

Pull out his eyes,
Apologize,
Apologize,
Pull out his eyes.
Apologize,
Pull out his eyes,
Pull out his eyes,
Apologize.

Stephen’s first simple verse closely resembles the much older Stephen’s description of the origins of the lyric: “The lyrical form is in fact the simplest verbal vesture of an
instant of emotion a rhythmical cry such as ages ago cheered on the man who pulled at the oar or dragged stones up a slope” (P 214).

Thus begins the artist’s career.

**Dis-oriented Stephen**

The second section of the first chapter has a very different chronotopic logic, concomitant with the familiar regime of boarding school time, an intertextual lode which Kershner (*Joyce, Bakhtin* 168) demonstrates has significant similarities to works such as *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*. It begins with Stephen running around a rugby field at Clongowes, but with his mind elsewhere, occupied with ruminations and memories. Given the narrative predominance of his mental processes, Stephen appears in this sense dissociated both from the physical space he occupies and from social interaction with his peers. To foreground this solitary aspect of Stephen is to miss the boy who is also very curious about others. Stephen muses of the other boys, similarly to some reflections on Eileen in the first section: “All the boys seemed to him very strange. They had all fathers and mothers and different clothes and voices”. He ponders both upon his commonality with his peers and on the strange diversity within this commonality.

To suggest that Stephen, who suffers similarly bad eyesight to Joyce, does not really “see” the world is to miss the frequent visual perceptions of Stephen’s world, particularly its colours, in this chapter, and indeed Carens notes on the contrary that Stephen “truly can be described as a visualiser” (270). Indeed, perhaps inspired by Aristotle’s emphasis on the senses in *De Anima*, this early chapter of Stephen’s soul is in many parts conveyed through the perceptions of various of his senses: sound, smell, touch and so on.

Stephen’s spatial existence has been jolted out of the familiar home routine, for which he longs. He is staying at Clongowes, to the west and north of Bray, where his family lives, on the east coast south of Dublin, and so his dis-orientation is quite literal. His disorientation is expressed also in anticipatory displacement of time, wishing time to advance so that he might find himself home again. (Anticipatory time also penetrates
deep into the future, where Stephen expects to be as big and knowledgeable as the fellows in the higher lines.) In an attempt to regain some sense of orientation, he inscribes on the flyleaf of his geography book:

Stephen Dedalus  
Class of Elements  
Clongowes Wood College  
Sallins  
County Kildare  
Ireland  
Europe  
The World  
The Universe

He seeks to take this spatial trajectory to its limit, seeking a conceptual line with which to frame the universe, to find a boundary where none exists, arriving for now, at least, only at the necessity of abandoning the attempt in favour of his faith in God.

What was after the universe?  
Nothing. But was there anything round the universe to show where it stopped before the nothing place began?  
It could not be a wall; but there could be a thin thin line there all round everything. It was very big to think about everything and everywhere. Only God could do that. He tried to think what a big thought that must be; but he could only think of God. (P 16)

Names are another important tool of orientation, and Stephen puzzles over the fact that God has different names in different languages. When quizzed about his curious name and his paternity, he only announces his identity as the son of a “gentleman”. Later he must find more satisfactory formulations, particularly since this comfortable appellation no longer applies. As in Volosinov’s (68) analysis of the linguistic form, “orientation” properly relates not to mere identity, but rather to circumstantial context, to a “dynamic process of becoming” (cited in Kershner, “Nightmare”, 31).

Stephen’s attempts at chronotopic orientation in time and space are a recurring trope in Portrait at times of crisis, functioning as calming, anchoring mechanisms, such as
on the Cork trip, his disappointment after the Whitsuntide play, and at the strand, among others. Significantly, at times of trouble, his instincts lead him to seek out the world and to understand his place in it, rather than to retreat from it, as one might expect of a solipsist who is far removed from reality.

**The schoolboy in history**

In the final section of the first chapter Stephen finds within himself the capability for ethical action, after being punished unjustly. Stephen’s thoughts reveal an understanding not only of the unfairness to himself, but also of the social context: the school administration’s desire to crack down on the student body as a whole in retribution for some unspecified serious misdemeanour which had been perpetrated by some senior boys: “That was why the prefect of studies had called him a schemer and pandied him for nothing” (P 54). He is learning not only about ethics and answerability, and about how the world works, but also about some of the complexities of motivation in human beings.

Stephen’s experience of the pandying is described in excruciating detail. The symbolic threat of punishment in the first section of the chapter has now developed into an actual event, and again Stephen’s “vision” is the focus of the wrath of the authorities. No longer threatened with having his eyes picked out by eagles, his eyes nonetheless are at fault after his glasses have been broken in an accident, and he is unable to read.

While Stephen up to this point most resembles the narrative’s description of him as quietly obedient, merely a timid and indifferent player in the daily grind of the school, since he finds the courage to act ethically when the situation demands, here the chronotopic logic of this first chapter takes on an historical orientation.

In the aftermath of the pandying, Stephen is encouraged by his peers to protest, a fellow of the second of grammar making an ironic but sympathetic pronouncement: “The senate and the Roman people declared that Dedalus had been wrongly punished.” Stephen takes the association quite seriously, ruminating on those great figures whose heads are “in the book of history”. Taking recourse to his proud
surname, he reflects scornfully in contrast upon his tormentor Fr Dolan, whose name resembles that of some washerwoman.

Yes, he would do what the fellows had told him. He would go up and tell the rector that he had been wrongly punished. A thing like that had been done before by somebody in history, by some great person whose head was in the books of history. And the rector would declare that he had been wrongly punished because the senate and the Roman people always declared that the men who did that had been wrongly punished. Those were the great men whose names were in Richmal Magnall’s Questions. History was all about those men and what they did and that was what Peter Parley’s Tales about Greece and Rome were all about. (P 53; italics mine)

Stephen, alone, is tested by a moment of weakness and indecision before making a dramatic detour from the playground way into a dark corridor, where he passes hung portraits of saints and “great men of the order”. The portrait is of course another means of representing past and present figures in their absence, like those pictures in history books.

Stephen has already realised a fundamental fact of human potentiality: that destiny is product both of character and of personal qualities, and in part product of contingent decisions, the results of which are reflected in the changeable, visual and physical circumstances of one’s condition. For instance, had not the Jesuits plumped for a religious vocation, most of them could have become “high up” people. Then they would be fashioned in a different vestiture and yet, presumably, beneath this surface they would remain similar people: “It was hard to think what because you would have to think of them in a different way with different coloured coats and trousers and with beards and moustaches and different kinds of hats” (48).

From the portraits of historic figures in books to the framed portraits that adorn the dark corridor, Stephen notes these images of saints and other church figures in idiosyncratic guises, given a defining individual mark such as cloaks or berettas. Once at Father Conmee’s desk, however, he is confronted by the timeless reality beyond all temporal human guises: the skull on Conmee’s desk, apparently a memento mori, which is mentioned three times. The emergence of Stephen’s individual agency is a
response to this series of images: heads in history books, framed heads in hats, and a gaunt skull in the office of the “head” of the school.

The distinction between guise and reality is no incidental theme but evokes the premise of the 1904 essay: that portraiture often foregrounds the image of a person not according to their past or their potential, but rather in relation to an “iron memorial aspect” of beard and inch: or, perhaps hats. The young Stephen as yet finds it difficult to penetrate this radical split of contradictory surface and underlying realities, and yet has grasped the concept broadly.

He is certainly interested in myths and stories, but equally so in the stories of history, as he ponders Clongowes legends: the liberator, Richard Rowan, the soldiers’ slugs and so on. He understands instinctively the ennobling potential of an understanding of history, the sense that emerged when his responsibility was aroused. Thus, ethical answerability and a sense of historicity converge momentarily, at least, in this immature but significant phase of the soul of the individuating Stephen.

The climax of this first chapter of the young artist’s life is marked by a breakthrough not in language nor in art, but in his moral and ethical education. Ironic readings of Stephen tend to ignore the admirable courage and determination Stephen exhibits here. Later in the novel, Simon Dedalus recounts a shared joke between Fr Conmee and himself about the incident:

Father Dolan and I, when I told them all at dinner about it, Father Dolan and I had a great laugh over it. You better mind yourself Father Dolan, said I, or young Dedalus will send you up for twice nine. We had a famous laugh together over it. Ha! Ha! Ha!

(P 72)

Stephen’s triumph is, in some readings, completely overshadowed by this later reframing in time. However, there is nothing in the text to suggest that Stephen is in any way humiliated by his father’s story: his reaction indeed is not recorded. Clearly this narrative reprise casts a new light on the story, but it serves only to further Stephen’s ethical education in the complexities and limitations of the lives of the “men of action” whose deeds he has followed. Certainly it is ironic that Stephen, who
had feared ridicule from his peers if the trip to the rector’s office proved a failure, becomes the subject of merriment because of his success, but this irony reflects chiefly his social environment, and is not definitive.

**Time in Chapter 1**

Unlike the conventional biographical novel, *Portrait* does not begin with an account of the circumstances and time of the child’s birth and family background. Instead, the odyssey of Stephen’s young soul begins intertextually in mythical, fairytale time.

The “interior time” of *Portrait* begins with this young soul’s dialogical encounter with words and story, with the various texts that constitute a society and its discourses, of which he can have as yet only the simplest understanding. A new element creeps into and disrupts the chronotopicity of the second portrayed world: Clongowes, that regimented ordering of time and space. The death of Parnell pierces the seamless fabric of stable, habitual social time, that predictable cycle of the school year, with the force of change. Change is a measure of time’s effects on one’s environment, a measure Stephen is soon exposed to back home. The Christmas dinner argument shatters the security and harmony of the home at a time of year when the stable, timeless customs of Christian goodwill are meant to prevail. The drama of apprehended change begins to impinge still more insistently on Stephen’s life in subsequent chapters, with important implications for the artist’s practice.

If change is inevitable, Stephen accepts that he must make a choice. Human, and especially artistic agency, can either dedicate itself to the attempt to regain nostalgic former glories, or look forward to shaping the future, to embracing new possibilities. Towards the end of the novel, Stephen’s private thoughts are expressed thus:

*April 6, later.* Michael Robartes remembers forgotten beauty and, when his arms wrap her round, he presses in his arms the loveliness which has long faded from the world. Not this. Not at all. I desire to press in my arms the loveliness which has not yet come into the world. (P 251)
Change viewed from a perspective a little removed in time becomes the matter of history. History in turn becomes a reference point for social action in the present. The fact of historical change, often impelled by important figures, implies the possibility of individual agency in the present, as Stephen senses, and at the time that he seizes this opportunity he feels himself egged on by the portraits of many predecessors, whose immortality has been framed in history books or hung on the walls of the castle at Clongowes.

Ultimately, what will be at stake for Stephen, prefigured for now in the first chapter and further developed in later chapters, is his own immortality. Not to seek one’s immortality is to accept the fate of one’s ultimate reduction to a decaying set of bones out of time. Fr Conmee’s paperweight has the desired effect of instilling fear for one’s mortal soul, but ultimately not in the way intended.

**Space in Chapter One**

The text begins in a seemingly aspatial world: the infant consciousness can recount only words and story and song, and think on the figures who people this world. This internalised world is rich and involving enough, and yet in this chapter, and again later in the novel, Stephen feels the need to orient himself in the world, both within the spatial order of the universe, and within the symbolic realm of names (and the social history that comes with names). Later in the novel, anomalously, Stephen replies to Davin’s query—“Are you Irish at all?”—“Come with me now to the office of arms and I will show you the tree of my family” (P 202). There are times when the ambitious artistic design of *Portrait* outstrips one of its primary assumptions: rigorous realism.

Significantly, as early as the first paragraph, Stephen figures himself on a road meeting the moocow; such a road links mythical time to present actuality. And a road will take us to the world outside our present domain. While *Portrait* can be characterised as proceeding through a series of phases in what can be called interior time-space, Stephen’s world is already, in Chapter One, by no means a solipsistic, sealed individual capsule, but rather one that is penetrated by intersubjective, dialogical social discourse, historical and political forces, as well as the deeper
intertextual cultural memory that is bound up in a society’s stories: its myths and legends.

Chapter 2: Framed in Cork

“Frank O’Connor” (pseudonym of Michael Donovan) tells a story that he attributes to Joyce’s associative mania. Joyce had a picture of Cork in his hallway. O’Connor “could not detect what the frame was made of. ‘What is that?’ I asked. ‘Cork’ he replied. ‘Yes’, I said, ‘I know it’s Cork, but what’s the frame?’ ‘Cork’, he replied with a smile” (O’Connor 371). The second chapter of Portrait also represents Cork and is framed chronotopically around corks. A climax of this chapter is the trip to Cork in space and time, where Stephen, a chip off the old Corkonian Simon Dedalus, is exposed to an apparition of his own origins and endures his father’s nostalgic, often morbid, mythologising framing of Cork in bygone times.

Stephen’s soul, however, at the same time, has begun to cut adrift from his family, taking its own journey. The movements in residence of the Joyce family are a marker of their declining circumstances as they are pulled centripetally towards the seedy centre of Dublin. From Bray, they have moved north to Blackrock, a less fashionable seaside resort closer to Dublin, where Stephen, having been cut adrift from the life of Clongowes is killing time, drifting a little aimlessly. By the end of the chapter he is alone, washed up in the city of Dublin itself, amongst the teeming life, the fascination of its density, its industry and variety, the “vastness and strangeness” of city life and the squalor too. The family walks around Blackrock environs are replaced by his solitary rambles exploring Dublin, where the restless and as yet unempowered subject ends up roaming the dark city streets or alternatively is washed up at the harbour, where he wonders at the many bobbing corks treading water, floating by the wharves like so many lost souls.

While the first chapter culminates in the early emergence of Stephen’s moral self, of responsible agency, the second climaxes with another aspect of his individuation—expression of his inner self, of his creativity, and the eruption of his “impatient temper” (see: P 74, 75, 77, 83, 84); that which Joyce designated in his critical writings as characteristic of the romantic impulse in the artist. On the one hand
this provides the poet with energetic impetus, but on the other his restless nature’s impulses must be tempered by the classical approach. The chapter makes us privy to the growing beauty and complexity of Stephen’s mind, as in Stephen’s symbolistic experiment in visual poetry on the train trip to Cork (P 87), but equally it does not baulk at acknowledging the “riot” of his senses and the effect of his guilty secrets on Stephen, in enhancing his sense of distance from his fellows.

**Time as threatening change**

Stephen has already learned, in Chapter 1, about the fact of historical change, in addition to his anticipatory intuition of his own future development: these then are the two strands of his apprehension of *anticipatory time*. Based on half-understood signs from the present—the demeanour and utterances of his father and so on, he senses the failing fortunes of his family, Mike Flynn’s impending illness and its consequences. This onset of change—his departure from Clongowes, the cessation of athletic training with Mike Flynn, finds Stephen beset not only by the riotous hormonal changes from within that threaten his stability, his obedient and pious self-image, but also by changes from without that seem liable to reduce his familial and social circumstances.

With the emergence of dramatic change in his immediate environment comes the question of how one should view times past. Stephen farewells his departed childhood, records its passing and continues to refer back to past times in memory. While abjuring nostalgia, he continues to engage dialogically with the past, in memory: reframed and recontextualised images and phrases associated with Clongowes, Eileen, and Emma, recur. Simon Dedalus in contrast on the Cork trip, wallows in mythologising a glorious past, despite the fact that the purpose of his trip is to attend to the continued diminution of their present and future by selling off the remaining family assets.

Stephen’s sense of futurity belongs elsewhere, not in the illusory pursuit of past glories: so far it is little more than a faint premonition of some image, some figment of imagination that he hopes at some point to realise.
He wanted to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld. He did not know where to seek it or how, but a premonition which led him on told him that this image would, without any overt act of his, encounter him. (P 65)

Enduring his father’s nostalgia and romanticising is sufficient experience to create an entrenched view in Stephen, that will lead to his refusal to engage in the kind of mournful inheritance that in Joyce’s view the poet Mangan was prey to.

An epiphanic intimation of sordidness on the Cork trip has a marked effect on him: spying the word “foetus” engraved on a desk. This word acts as a node for the confluence of many forces. It reminds Stephen of his own private orgies, where he has committed the terrible sin proscribed by the Church, of spilling his seed fruitlessly. It evokes the conjugal embraces of his parents that had begotten him, and the biological link between himself and this erratic praiser of his own past, the Corkonian and the cork adrift. It reminds him of his own embryonic origins and of his developmental sense of future destiny. But predominantly it reminds him of the biological basis of the human condition, a fact that has been increasingly pressing itself upon him in those furious surges of hormones and emotions seeking an outlet. These then are some of the “facts of life” which Stephen must address as he sees deeper realities beyond the simpler assumptions of his now-vanished childhood.

Towards the end of the chapter, Stephen again proves himself capable of answerable action. Faced by his father’s apparent incapacity to save the family’s declining fortunes, he generously disburses the fruits of an “exhibition” among the family in an effort to stem the rising tides of squalor. The experiment soon results in failure, with the expiry of his pot of pink paint and his unfinished wainscot.

**Time as individuating change**

There is a second, contrapuntal movement to this time of externally generated change: an irresistible oceanic movement of individuating change, a sensation within himself that grows from vague intimations to great unrest and unfulfilled longings. Stephen’s soul begins to beat an “individuating rhythm” that defies the force of social
expectations, particularly the strictures of the Church, whose internalised teachings have resulted in his torments of guilt and self-condemnation. Equally he will find himself by degrees unable to meet the aspirations and values of his family: to be a gentleman, to be gregarious and athletic, to mix with a “good crowd” of fellows.

One individuating spiral comes from the artist’s “impatient temper” and its follies. Another of course is intellectual in nature. Stephen starts to find solace in texts other than the prescribed liturgical texts: in Shelley’s fragment “To the Moon” rather than in scriptures. His religious views become the subject of trial by bullying from his peers, after he has been accused of heresy in the classroom. While he graciously withdraws an heretical proposition, he is far more uncompromising when it comes to his views about literature. Here he is adamant in preferring the rebel Byron to Tennyson or others. In contrast to his rival Heron, however, Stephen adopts at school an attitude of “quiet obedience”: it is actually Heron who adopts an arrogant, swaggering posture. In a quiet personal revolution, what Stephen will not do is obey the various, sometimes conflicting voices that enjoin him to be a gentleman, a pious catholic, a jesuit, or a nationalist revolutionary. His path to individuation has begun.

On the Cork trip, Stephen endures a crisis of disorientation, a much deeper sense than had assailed him before, and desperately seeks to reorient himself, both spatially and nominally:

Nothing moved him or spoke to him from the real world unless he heard in it an echo of the infuriated cries within him. He could respond to no earthly or human appeal, dumb and insensible to the call of summer and gladness and companionship, wearied and dejected by his father’s voice. He could scarcely recognize as his his own thoughts, and repeated slowly to himself: — I am Stephen Dedalus. I am walking beside my father whose name is Simon Dedalus. We are in Cork, in Ireland. Cork is a city. Our room is in the Victoria Hotel. Victoria and Stephen and Simon. Simon and Stephen and Victoria. Names. (P 92)

Stephen, adrift in oceanic change and psychological storms, fearing aphanisis, the “total loss of the subject into a blindingly white field” (Aubert 52), seeks anchoring in this chronotopic litany of names and places, seeks the very preservation of the self, in
a crisis. The Latin quotation that Stephen is asked to clarify during the Cork trip is quite apposite: “One of them, in order to put his Latin to the proof, had made him translate short passages from Dilectus and asked him whether it was correct to say: *Tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis* or *Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis*. That is, as Gifford (173) translates: either “Circumstances change us and we change in them” or “Circumstances change and we change with them”. Gifford implies that the latter is “correct”, while *Chambers Dictionary* provides a comma after “nos” in the former phrase. Stephen is certainly changing as his circumstances change, but he is no passive object of their shaping power. While he is as yet powerless to turn about the circumstances of his life, yet he is capable of independent thoughts and acts, in defiance of norms and expectations.

The twin forces of this ongoing crisis of time as change are figured poignantly in an oceanic metaphor:

> How foolish his aim had been! He had tried to build a break-water of order and elegance against the sordid tide of life without him and to dam up, by rules of conduct and active interest and new filial relations, the powerful recurrence of the tides within him. Useless. From without as from within the waters had flowed over his barriers: their tides began once more to jostle fiercely above the crumbled mole. (P 98)

There is a third, swelling but not as yet foregrounded current in these two tides: Stephen’s desire for his romantic object, Emma. Relatively little critical attention has been given to this figure, the focus point of his disappointed yet enduring longings, a character with whom Stephen’s thoughts continue to be preoccupied up to the last pages of the novel.

His unrequited love for her provides him with one access point to those buried centuries of history embodying the universal human condition that Stephen frequently seeks to tap into, an orienting vector of his creative consciousness into the tradition of his “race” and beyond that, a deep view of the human condition.
His heart danced upon her movements like a cork upon a tide. He heard what her eyes said to him from beneath their cowl and knew that in some dim past, whether in life or revery, he had heard their tale before. He saw her urge her vanities, her fine dress and sash and long black stockings, and knew that he had yielded to them a thousand times. (P 69; italics mine)

This is a fine imaginative conceit, Stephen’s creative consciousness penetrating the details of everyday encounters to a deeper vision of the human condition. It is no coincidence that the narrative derives from an Epiphany (Number 3), reframed. Stephen’s receptiveness to epiphanic moments prepares him for the artistic apprehension of truth amidst the “insignificant details” of reality.

Emma is not merely love object but also muse, focus of his unrealised passions and emotions, of his unrealised desire for a deep bond with another human being. Characteristically, his perceptions of her are intertextually penetrated with his readings, such as the romance of Dumas’ *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and works that not only stimulate his imagination but help to shape the curve of desire that he describes for his muse:

He passed unchallenged among the docks and along the quays wondering at the multitude of corks that lay bobbing on the surface of the water in a thick yellow scum, at the crowds of quay porters and the rumbling carts and the ill-dressed bearded policeman. The vastness and strangeness of the life suggested to him by the bales of merchandise stocked along the walls or swung aloft out of the holds of steamers wakened again in him the unrest which had sent him wandering in the evening from garden to garden in search of Mercedes. And amid this new bustling life he might have fancied himself in another Marseille but that he missed the bright sky and the sun-warmed trellises of the wineshops. (P 66; italics mine.)

While Stephen’s mind continues to grow apace, oustripping the ramblings of his father and the vague truisms of his teachers, growing in imaginative appreciation of the world about him, his heart and soul yet have to grow in strength and maturity. Stephen’s heart, like his soul adrift, is helpless in the presence of Emma: “His heart danced upon her movements like a cork upon a tide”. His soul finds itself for the
present, washed up with the thick yellow scum of the harbour, cut adrift and seemingly aimless, yet waiting for a coming role.

No more than Stephen could cork up the growing tides of his family’s increasingly squalid conditions (metonymically evoked by *yellow* removalist vans) can he contain his own emotions and lusts: two related but as yet in Stephen distinct qualities. His pent-up energies are pressurised by the excitements offered by the (literally) seedy side of Dublin, gaslit at night by *yellow* flames, (just as later, Lynch pollutes the language by swearing in *yellow*), and finally popped, in the carnal embrace of a prostitute at the conclusion of the chapter.

**Sleepers**

At the conclusion of Chapter One, two crucial chronotopic considerations came into temporary focus around the young boy: the embracing of responsibility, and a sense of history. In the second chapter, Stephen’s individuality and our third chronotopic consideration, creativity, begin to emerge. Stephen’s sense of responsibility is heightened by the crises of time-change but finds stern expression in uncompromisingly independent thinking, impelled by his growing perception of the shortcomings of others and by his own observations of historical change. Next, he is drawn to a sense of timelessness he perceives at the heart of the human condition. In his poetry he seeks to strip away all but the timeless essentials of his memory of Emma at the tram. He gives in to her “vanities” as “he”, some kind of everyman, has done a thousand times, over generations.

An early experiment in poetising experience is evoked beautifully in the symbolistic expression of his train trip to Cork. The company of “unseen sleepers”, the proximity of allied but alien souls, has filled him with dread, and a fearful Stephen in praying for the onset of daybreak creates a “trail” of words that is akin to the lyrical “verbal vesture of an emotion”.

His prayer, addressed neither to God nor saint, began with a shiver, as the chilly morning breeze crept through the chink of the carriage door to his feet, and ended in a trail of foolish words which he made to fit the insistent rhythm of the train; and
silently, at intervals of four seconds, the telegraph-poles held the galloping notes of the music between punctual bars. (P 87)

As yet this is pure experimentation, devoid of social context, the mere exploration of vague emotions and senses, of the suggestivity of vowels, their sounds and colours: an emerging creative impulse that is not as yet chronotopically enriched.

In Chapter Two the individuating shape of the poet begins to emerge, firmly but as yet indistinctly. Through the evolving chronotope of interiority we become privy to the perceptions and sensations at the heart of his creative process, to his darkest sins and to the riot of his senses. Curiously, however, in the portrait of a gifted, honest and sensitive boy, the occasional use of free indirect discourse to convey the boy’s inner world is at times taken to be the authorial voice of Joyce himself, condemning Stephen for his coldness, detachment and his sins. In fact, a more compelling reading is that Stephen himself is the party lamenting the “cold and cruel and loveless lust” within his soul (96). To entertain the ambition of forging a conscience for one’s race, it is first necessary to develop one’s own, and his Jesuit upbringing will undoubtedly prove a great asset to the endeavour.

Here, Stephen, having the integrity and courage of objective self-scrutiny, laments a state of his soul that falls short of his own lofty aspirations. The narrative point of view is consonant with Stephen’s own, motivated in part by an internalised voice of reproachful guilt derived from his faith. Such a reading is more than amply supported by examination of the following chapter.

**Chapter 3: In retreat, the chronotope of devotion**

Stephen has faced the symbolism or the reality of death close at hand, before: in Father Connec’s study, Parnell’s death, the passing of his uncle Charles, and the passing of his own childhood in Chapter Two. Now he faces Death and destruction in a far more frightening aspect: apparitions of a fire and brimstone Hell, where, beyond merely personal mortality he faces eternal damnation of his immortal soul.
While Stephen’s sensuality and creativity have started to come to the fore in Chapter Two, it is the internalised voice of religious authority, which had impelled and shaped Stephen’s self-disgust, that comes to dominate the middle chapter of *Portrait*. So far as Stephen’s orientation to the “real world” is concerned (Stephen’s words), Chapter Three is the least dramatic of chapters, and the most interior. Starting within a classroom, it mostly switches between school and chapel, before the climactic yet entirely solitary interior drama in his bedroom. When Stephen flees home to walk the streets at night, he no longer seeks relief in a whore, but rather spiritual salvation in confession to a priest.

Again there are two sources to Stephen’s experience of these changes: the internalised resurgence of his feelings of guilt and shame are amplified by the fire and brimstone sermons of the retreat: this environmental threat turns him towards a retreat from the material world. In turn, this amplification loops into a kind of feedback mechanism where the signals are multiplied at an ever shriller and more frantic pitch, until they climax in the hallucinatory scene in his bedroom where Stephen faces imaginary but frighteningly vivid threats of physical and spiritual extinction.

This chapter, which sees Stephen so deeply alienated from the “real world”, is nonetheless profoundly chronotopic in its logic. During a previous crisis in Cork, Stephen had attempted to orient himself chronotopically in relation to his paternity, place, ancestral roots and names. Now he is caught in a dialectical journey between outer and interior space, figured towards the start of the chapter in an abstract problem, the schoolboy’s classroom equation unfolding like a peacock towards the stars, then collapsing back inwards to its centre (P 103). Stephen’s recent experience is captured in this dialectic: the outward thrust of his sensual sins, the starlike burning expenditure of his energy, is followed by a period of calm, stasis, where the soul too retreats on itself and finds a moment of introspection. The experiential journey towards infinity, “his own soul going forth to experience” (103) is soon supplanted by an encounter with the terror of eternity, as Stephen begins to apply the equations and tabulations of Church doctrine to their very limit, not so much solving the problem as achieving *ab-solution* at the end.
Responsibility

During this phase of living deeply within the chronotopic world of church doctrine, which occupies all of this central chapter, Stephen’s experience in terms of our three chief chronotopic attributes is revealing. Responsibility becomes a curiously simple matter: attempting nearly complete self-abnegation and strict obedience to the rules and routines of the Church, and in the event of default, submitting to the ritual of full confession and receiving absolution. Responsibility is reduced to the attempt to maintain a pure heart and to keep one’s deeds pure. These two strictures, strictly observed, ultimately will defeat Stephen’s strenuous aspirations and his best intentions.

Creativity

Stephen’s creativity is in overdrive here, a response to the vivid horrors and extremes of the sermonic vision of hell. His imaginings are by no means suppressed by his engagement with the Church: rather, they are stimulated, framed and refracted through the beliefs, strictures and routines of the Church.

At the climax in his bedroom, he endures a vision of hell inspired by Fr Arnall’s hallucinatory sermon: a world of “goatish creatures with human faces” moving in excremental fields, “their long swishing tails besmeared with stale shite”. The priest announces that the sermon on hell had been an exercise from a book of spiritual exercises: “the composition of place. We endeavoured, that is, to imagine with the senses of the mind, in our imagination, the material character of that awful place and of the physical torments which all who are in hell endure.” (P 127; italics mine.)

Terror-stricken, Stephen leaves his bedroom to make a confession and enters the Dublin streets, enduring what is probably the greatest crisis of disorientation of his life, admittedly with just a touch of disappointed hubris amongst the unfeigned humility.

A wasting breath of humiliation blew bleakly over his soul to think of how he had fallen, to feel that those souls were dearer to God than his. The wind blew over him
and passed on to the myriads and myriads of other souls on whom God’s favour shone now more and now less, stars now brighter and now dimmer sustained and failing. And the glimmering souls passed away, sustained and failing, merged in a moving breath. One soul was lost; a tiny soul: his. It flickered once and went out, forgotten, lost. The end: black, cold, void waste. *Consciousness of place* came ebbing back to him slowly over a vast tract of time unlit, unfelt, unlived. (P 141; italics mine).

At this moment Stephen’s disorientation is profound, his soul adrift in the immortal universe. A tentative way out of the crisis comes to him when “consciousness of place” returns to him. If the hellfire sermon’s *composition of place* has set Stephen’s imagination racing out of control, the antidote is this calming and settling apperception of reality, an antidote to the mental hell he is enduring. It is Stephen’s coming down to earth, his re-orientation to life that affords him the presence of mind to ask directions of a woman and thereby to find his way to salvation, in the form of the Chapel St church. His salvation is made possible by re-orientation to place, over the “vast tract of time” that his immersion in eternity has made him traverse (141).

It is an irony little commented in respect of Stephen, that the Church’s method for inflaming Stephen’s imagination resembles the most common critique of the imaginative faculty that has been made over centuries of debate: in John Locke’s formulation, the too free association of ideas leads to “habits of error and prejudice in their thinking” (Brett 16). It could be argued that it is Stephen’s too-extreme responses to the hallucinatory hell of the sermon that lead him to excesses of self-punishment and ritual devotions. And yet Stephen’s “sin” in this sense consists only in the fact that he believes too seriously and too deeply, without the ironic counterframings of the “marketable goodness” Joyce critiqued in the ur-*Portrait*. In this form, lesser beings have learnt to believe just a little, just enough to allow them to go about their own lives without much affecting their digestion (see discussion of the Malahide incident in Chapter Three).

For the apex of Stephen’s terror comes at the point of entry to his safest place, the bedroom. The chronotopic world of the church has penetrated his most private space, so that he has nowhere to hide. This reality has engulfed his everyday world and
indeed penetrates the depths of his soul, creating what modern psychiatry might call inappropriate frames of reference. Before his bedroom door, he hears voices talking about him, in an almost paranoid state, climaxing in a hallucination of hell.

Curiously, the concluding episode where, the morning after absolution, Stephen makes his communion, is framed entirely as a dream, as if the reassuring rituals of the church have now supplanted reality altogether. At the end, Stephen seeks to reassure himself of the one truth that deep down he doubts: “It was true. It was not a dream from which he would wake. The past was past.” (P 146)

Stephen’s orientation to social reality is never more distant than during this chapter. The lived life is supplanted utterly by the quest for the divine life to come; everyday life is supplanted by the abstractions of immortality and the “eternal death” of hell.

**Historicity**

Our third chronotopic criterion, historicity, is not so much overlooked as deliberately pushed out of the picture in this chapter. In one telling section of the hellfire sermon, in contrast to Stephen’s former interest in historical figures in Chapter 1, Stephen is moved to view the image of figures from history with pity, against the self-evidently more real, more powerful images of eternal life (126). Curiously, the pushing back of history is accompanied by a temporal incantation of finality. The prospect of salvation entails restricting the exercise of agency and free will: time has been shut down, closed off, against the self-indulgence of choice.

God, who had long been merciful, would then be just. He had long been patient, pleading with the sinful soul, giving it time to repent, sparing it yet awhile. But that time had gone. Time was to sin and to enjoy, time was to scoff at God and at the warnings of His holy church, time was to defy His majesty, to disobey His commands, to hoodwink one’s fellow men, to commit sin after sin and to hide one’s corruption from the sight of men. But that time was over. Now it was God’s turn: and He was not to be hoodwinked or deceived. Every sin would then come forth from its lurking place, the most rebellious against the divine will and the most degrading to our poor corrupt nature, the tiniest imperfection and the most heinous atrocity. What
did it avail then to have been a great emperor, a great general, a marvellous inventor, the most learned of the learned? All were as one before the judgement seat of God. He would reward the good and punish the wicked. *One single instant was enough for the trial of a man's soul. One single instant* after the body’s death, the soul had been weighed in the balance. The particular judgement was over and the soul had passed to the abode of bliss or to the prison of purgatory or had been hurled howling into hell. (P 112: italics mine.)

All of socialised time, an entire human life, is dwarfed by this temporal immensity and becomes meaningless against the construct of divine justice. Stephen’s apprehension of place has been reduced to a mere fuzzy backdrop against a vivid hallucinatory world. His senses, suitably mortified, have been relieved of their duties of presenting to Stephen images of the outside world, those “prison gates of the soul” (P 207). Time too has been cut away from his experience, replaced with the urgency of eternity.

Stephen in his piety is the very epitome and paragon of virtue. Although his imagination is running dangerously wild, untempered, he has never been less of an artist, and the chronotopic logic of *Portrait* at this point reflects this.

**Chapter Four: Temporal Punishment**

While the central, middle chapter of *Portrait* is dominated by Stephen’s soul’s renewed discovery of the church, the results of those preliminary classroom equations of body and soul with which Chapter 3 commences are not fully worked out until the following chapter.

It was his own soul going forth to experience, unfolding itself sin by sin, spreading abroad the bale-fire of its burning stars and folding back upon itself, fading slowly, quenching its own lights and fires. . . . At his first violent sin he had felt a wave of vitality pass out of him and had feared to find his body or his soul maimed by the excess. Instead the vital wave had carried him on its bosom out of himself and back again when it receded: and no part of body or soul had been maimed but a dark peace
had been established between them. The chaos in which his ardour extinguished itself
was a cold indifferent knowledge of himself. (P 103)

In due course, it becomes apparent that in the struggle within Stephen between
opposite sides of this equation, the spiritual life must bear integral relation to the
physical, and vice versa, and that removing one term or the other in the soul’s
Aristotelean equation of material and spiritual will result in chaos.

In some respects, Chapter 4 has features of what Bakhtin calls the novel of testing, as
it is focused on testing for vocation. Nominally, the vocation for which Stephen is
being tested is that of Jesuit priest. The Director of Studies forcefully argues the
seriousness of the decision: “But you must be quite sure, Stephen, that you have a
vocation because it would be terrible if you found afterwards that you had none. Once
a priest always a priest, remember” (P 160).

Stephen takes this abjuration entirely seriously, and at the start of Chapter 4 tests
himself for the Jesuit vocation. In the upshot, this proves only to be the warmup to the
business of testing for the vocation of artist.

Even the most casual consideration necessitates the conclusion that the Church
features very largely in Stephen’s young life. The middle chapter is entirely focused
on the battle for Stephen’s soul. Gabler (1975) has noted that Joyce was in the habit
of arranging certain elements in Portrait for chiastic effect, and it is unlikely that this
structural emphasis on the Church was not both deliberate and significant.

Two of three sections in the fourth chapter also are devoted to Stephen’s relationship
to the church, and unsurprisingly, Portrait, as reflection of Stephen’s consciousness,
is “supersaturated” with the language of the church, to borrow Cranly’s description of
Stephen’s language. The Malahide incident, and the extraordinary practices of
Chapter Four attest to the intensity of his faith. As Seed has suggested, Stephen’s
engagement with the church is dialogical, characterised by both rejection and
assimilation. Small wonder that Stephen’s true vocation emerges, couched in
sacerdotal terms: a “priest of the imagination”, seeking to create a conscience for his
race. Stephen is no Luciferian rebel, but rather is happy to refer to Newman, Aquinas
and others in the same breath as Byron. In the final chapter nonetheless, his intellecitive trajectory has reached the heretical realm of adopting a relativist approach to philosophies and theories: he will treat even Aquinas and Aristotle like “lamps” and adjust them or put them down according to how well they serve him.

The Stephen we encounter at the start of Chapter Four, however, would hardly entertain such heresies. A reading of the time-space relations of this chapter, in relation to the motif of contrasts in light and shade, helps us to understand some of the factors that lead Stephen to his change of attitude. The Church is portrayed as throwing not nearly enough light. More, it may not cast light into the areas where an artist needs it. Still more significantly, it is the shadows cast by Church lamps that will decide Stephen against his path: it is the path of self-repression, the punishment of one’s own body, the denial of one’s own true nature, that Stephen cannot countenance. Towards the end of the chapter, Stephen is drawn to an alternative source of light, symbolised by the sun, which in Ibsenian fashion symbolises openness to a renewed life of broader experience in the world (see Joyce’s description of *Brand*; CW 62, and the closing scene of *Ghosts*).46 It is at The Bull that Stephen truly finds his orientation, as he faces east, the figurative source of light, and turns his back on a life of gloom.

**Shifting chronotopes**

The fourth chapter marks an all-important turning point in Stephen’s career. In the first section Stephen applies his renewed faith to its full extent. Similarly to the argument of the 1904 essay, the narrative makes it clear that if Stephen causes angst by withdrawing from the church, few of his family, friends and associates can claim to have pursued their faith with such intensity and diligence as he had. His relationship with the Church has been intense, and in coming to leave it, he does at least know well, that which he finally rejects.

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46 In a review of the “New Drama” Joyce qualifies Beerbohm Tree’s claim that the function of art is to “give us light rather than darkness” with the stipulation that the quality of this light is governed not by idealism but by “eternal conditions” (CW 44).
In the second, middle section Stephen is tempted with the offer of a Jesuit vocation. It does not take him long to conclude that the destiny he had often sensed for himself is not of this kind, despite its promises: power, pride, comfort, status, access to secrets (159). After his interview with the Director of Studies, Stephen reverts to his characteristic Dublin space—walking about the city, alone. Having courageously rejected the temptations of this vocation, with its trappings of fine food and clothing. (“Fed up like gamecocks” according to his father, who also said that you could you “always tell a jesuit by the style of his clothes”), he faces the increasing squalor and apparent hopelessness of his own home.

In the final section of the chapter, Stephen gives vent to his impatient temper and walks off, alone with his thoughts, until he encounters some peers near Sandymount Strand, where he experiences a rapturous vision of “mortal beauty” that propels his acceptation of one true vocation: artist.

**The tabulated world**

Spatially, the first section of the chapter is marked by a continuation of the deeply interior space of the previous chapter: an atopia, a space where the real world hardly exists except incidentally, unless representing the dangerous world of temptation. The narrative chiefly consists of exposition of Stephen’s interpretations and applications of Church doctrine.

**Time**

This description also extends to the treatment of time, conceptually dominated by Catholic doctrine, which seemingly has designated every day of the week for a specific devotional purpose, and where the day itself is divided into various themes and dedications.

Time is not merely appropriated by the Church but also creatively twisted and bent, at least in Stephen’s elaborative engagement with its teachings. The process is similar to the kind of imaginative meditations exemplified in the retreat sermon’s “composition of place”. Stephen dwells in wonderment at the “simple fact” that God has loved him
throughout the ages, long before he was even born (149). Simple facts such as these
are echoed in his detailed understanding of lesser temporal units of computation also.

Thus, Stephen explores the “centuries of days” of remission that his devotions win
against the “temporal punishment” of those in purgatory. If Stephen in *Ulysses*
describes history as a nightmare, it can hardly hold a patch to the excruciating,
endless, ahistorical vision of hell in Chapter Three. Time, indeed, constitutes the only
meliorating difference between purgatory and hell in the Catholic vision: “purgatorial
fire . . . differed from the infernal only in that it was not everlasting”. In the thrall of
his religious vision he feels himself powerful now that he has approached closer to
eternity. He calculates the years of indulgence that his deeds are granting to suffering
souls, and pictures himself as having direct influence in heaven.

His life seemed to have drawn near to eternity; every thought, word, and deed, every
instance of consciousness could be made to revibrate radiantly in heaven; and at
times his sense of such immediate repercussion was so lively that he seemed to feel
his soul in devotion pressing like fingers the *keyboard of a great cash register* and to
see the *amount of his purchase* start forth immediately in heaven, not as a number but
as a frail column of incense or as a slender flower. (P 148; italics mine)

Stephen’s undoubtedly sincere beliefs in the potency of his prayer are not framed
within an objectively oriented narrative. Various clues in tone and point of view point
to the delusory nature of Stephen’s world view at this time, such as the risible imagery
of the devotional “cash register”. Unusually, narrative point of view appears at times
to contradict Stephen’s consciousness, even to introject notes of parody, if not actual
satire:

yet the spiritual triumph which he felt in achieving with ease so many fabulous ages
of canonical penances did not wholly reward his zeal of prayer, since he could never
know how much temporal punishment he had remitted by way of suffrage for the
agonizing souls. (P 147)
A similarly jarring effect in point of view had been announced in the second chapter when a less devout Stephen kneeling in church, wondered what uncle Charles prayed about. His innocent thoughts again lead to comical conclusions.

Perhaps he prayed for the souls in purgatory or for the grace of a happy death or perhaps he prayed that God might send him back a part of the big fortune he had squandered in Cork. (P 62)

In the next section, an explanation for this apparent anomaly in point of view is advanced.

Space

The Church’s encyclopaedic, or rather as Aubert (1982) might suggest, tabular mapping of knowledge, naturally extends beyond mere framings of time. Everyday space relations hardly exist in the first section of Chapter Four, as they are replaced by abstractions. Stephen’s mind runs through a hierarchically controlling doctrine, the kind of “mastering discourse” sometimes criticised in postmodern critiques of modernism. He lists and enumerates the composite parts of his faith, each detail mentioned constituting a separate affirmation of faith:

He offered up each of his three daily chaplets that his soul might grow strong in each of the three theological virtues, in faith in the Father Who had created him, in hope in the Son Who had redeemed him and in love of the Holy Ghost Who had sanctified him; and this thrice triple prayer he offered to the Three Persons through Mary in the name of her joyful and sorrowful and glorious mysteries. (P 148)

And again:

On each of the seven days of the week he further prayed that one of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost might descend upon his soul and drive out of it day by day the seven deadly sins which had defiled it in the past; and he prayed for each gift on its appointed day, confident that it would descend upon him, though it seemed strange to him at times that wisdom and understanding and knowledge were so distinct in their nature that each should be prayed for apart from the others. Yet he believed that at
some future stage of his spiritual progress this difficulty would be removed when his
sinful soul had been raised up from its weakness and enlightened by the Third Person
of the Most Blessed Trinity. He believed this all the more, and with trepidation,
because of the divine gloom and silence wherein dwelt the unseen Paraclete. (P 148-
9; italics mine)

Here again we see a disruptive effect of point of view: a tonal charge associated with
certain apparently disingenuous phrases suggests attitudinal reframing. In the passage
above: “though it seemed strange to him at times that wisdom and understanding and
knowledge were so distinct in their nature that each should be prayed for apart from
the others”, the effect on the reader is amenable to interpretations of pointed, defining
irony, even sarcasm.

Since Stephen himself is clearly immersed in his faith, either Joyce is using the
narrative voice to convey a countervailing thrust to Stephen’s thoughts, or this is an
unconscious subtext in Stephen’s thoughts: in Bakhtinian terms, an ambivalent inner
dialogue is voiced.

This latter view is consistent with our analysis of the design of this novel. It adds
considerable depth and detail to the psychological portrayal of Stephen, and in respect
of its narrative logic suggests a chronotope of testing: testing of one’s faith, which in
Stephen’s case must be seen as a profound faith that is nonetheless best by interior
doubts. These doubts will soon rise to the surface, and new voices will claim
Stephen’s allegiance. This development is foreshadowed, literally, in the passage
above: “He believed this all the more, and with trepidation, because of the divine
gloom and silence wherein dwelt the unseen Paraclete”. It is precisely the gloom and
silence against which Stephen’s soul will soon revolt; Stephen’s unconscious for now,
singles out as a strength, the fundamental weakness of the faith it has begun to
question, and here the innocent expression becomes the voice of unconscious
polemic.

Physical spaces inhabited by the Church are frequently characterised as shrouded in
darkness, the priests too. The priests are subject to frequent short bursts of
unconsciously based anger and resentment that the relatively innocent and
inexperienced Stephen finds himself incapable of, and wonders at. Stephen soon comes to perceive, if not yet solve, the spiritual calculus of a life-denying mechanism in the lives of these priests as being at the source of their deep anger. His own experiments with the practice of the devout life reveal a great deal to him, as he takes some doctrinal views to their extreme. Through his immersion in the unwordliness and deeply dis-oriented time-space of his religion, his thoughts take him to the boundaries of sense, to a world view that leads him to muse that “So entire and unquestionable was this sense of the divine meaning in all nature granted to his soul that he could scarcely understand why it was in any way necessary that he should continue to live” (P 150). Again, Stephen’s represented thoughts reveal a subconscious countervailing hostility to the faith that his conscious mind has adopted wholesale. The narrative thus embodies an unconsciously-based dialogue of contraries that prepares us for the revolt that will inevitably follow.

It is also during this renewed religious phase that Stephen first alights on the attitude of rapture (P 150), an interior state that distances oneself not merely from one’s external environment, but potentially from one’s self, in favour of a deeply experienced inner vision. It is portrayed in terms not dissimilar to the aesthete’s posture—“as of one about to swoon” (P 150), so that when Stephen at the climax of this chapter succumbs to just such a gesture, in the manner of aestheticism or the decadents, one cannot assign the effect solely to those latter influences.

This disengagement from the “real world”, resulting in Stephen’s inhabiting a “dry shore” (152) is achieved programmatically as he systematically works through the table of senses in order to mortify them, going to somewhat extreme lengths that again, are voiced in a tone that invites comical interpretation:

> To mortify his smell was more difficult as he found in himself no instinctive repugnance to bad odours whether they were the odours of the outdoor world, such as those of dung or tar, or the odours of his own person among which he had made many curious comparisons and experiments. He found in the end that the only odour against which his sense of smell revolted was a certain stale fishy stink like that of long-standing urine; and whenever it was possible he subjected himself to this unpleasant odour. (P 151)
After the trials and ordeals of this stint of experience with a distinctly counterintuitive way of life, taking doctrine to its extreme, Stephen does at last finally manage a bout of anger, something he has felt strangely removed from before. The experience of living the devout life has at last afforded him an inner-based understanding of the frequent “trivial outbursts of anger” he had noted among his masters (151).

**Gloom and light**

In the first two sections of this chapter, the Church is characterised in space chiefly in relation to darkness and gloom, the “vested figure” of the priest in the gloom between the two candles representing the new and old testaments, Stephen’s imagining himself at mass in the catacombs (147), the “divine gloom” within which the Paraclete dwelt, and the imagery amongst which the divine Trinity is “darkly shadowed forth” in devotional books (149), as well as the shadowed face of the Director (155) during his vocational interview—the setting, entropic late sun palely penetrating the dark parlour.

Not only has Stephen started to get in touch with the hitherto mysterious anger of emotion, but through his new experience he comes to sense the beginnings of emotional warmth within him (150), at the same time as he makes an attempt to merge with the common life. Some appraisals of Stephen have seen in his remoteness a token of his essential sterility, without adequately accounting for the framing influence of his religious philosophy. The narrative representation of Stephen’s devout practice makes it hard for us to see how he could during this phase enter with ease into the life of the world from which he is so profoundly disoriented. The inklings of Stephen’s new emotional experiences will contribute to his growing capacity for empathy, further evidence of which is found in the final section of the novel.

In the second section of Chapter Four, Stephen is asked by the Director of Studies to consider a religious vocation. Under a row of portraits of Jesuit predecessors, he senses himself invited to fashion himself as one within this tradition (154) and indeed
he entertains imaginatively the vision of a future life as “The Reverend Stephen Dedalus, S.J.” (161).

He is asked to respond to a seemingly casual comment about the garb of the Capuchins. Implicitly he is asked to consider himself in the guise of a fellow wearer of the cloth, a member of the clergy. However, the Director’s reference to “les jupes”, skirts, serves only to stimulate Stephen’s sensual imagination, thereby pointing perhaps to his unsuitability for the calling.

He emerges from the interview still savouring and preserving this new image of himself, and yet the “fantastic fabrics” of his mind are dispelled effortlessly by a casual refrain, and recede rapidly into the gloom of the life-denying “shadow of the life of the College” (161). Having mentally “tried on” one costume of many from the vestures of life’s possibilities, Stephen leaves it on the rack.

Leaving behind the rather desultory and lifeless interview, Stephen trudges home to the squalor of his family life. A symptom of his renewed interest in the outside world, Stephen communes with his siblings, joining them in song, and through this song and its timeless sentiments, penetrates the very depths, the tumult of humankind throughout the ages.

He heard the choir of voices in the kitchen echoed and multiplied through an endless reverberation of the choirs of endless generations of children and heard in all the echoes an echo also of the recurring note of weariness and pain. All seemed weary of life even before entering upon it. And he remembered that Newman had heard this note also in the broken lines of Virgil, giving utterance, like the voice of Nature herself to that pain and weariness yet hope of better things which has been the experience of her children in every time. (P 164)

Stephen has come back to earth. His consciousness begins to perceive as an artist would. From his apprehension of the voices of children, his brothers and sisters, suddenly he begins to penetrate the experience of the everyday, to apprehend a vision at the significant core of existence—a transient moment in time suddenly opening out onto a broad field of human understanding spanning time and space.
In the concluding section of Chapter Four, Stephen continues to open his eyes to the world around him, alike to the world within him. His perceptions and thoughts begin to blend material experience, the sharp observation of concrete and individual reality, together with the intellective dimension: the rich tradition, the cultural memory of literature, of society’s stories, history and mythology. While there is no seminary for instruction in the artistic vocation, Stephen’s pursuit of his true vocation is now represented as following two related paths: his intellective aspirations to a university education, and confirmation of his future as a “priest of the imagination”. Both paths symbolise courses of enlightenment, in contrast to the darkness that permeated the chronotope of devotion.

At the climax of the final section Stephen imagines his soul flying, like Icarus, towards the sun, and by implication away from his association of the Church with gloom. The process of individuation which began as early as his courageous moral act at the end of Chapter 1 proceeds rapidly as Stephen is reunited with his own senses and impulses and hearkens to an inner, still unformed sense of destiny (165). Thus empowered, Stephen begins to become like Mangan, that creature of lightning (CW 82-3).

Still unsure quite why he has rejected the Jesuit’s offer, and now seeing life through the eyes of one who clearly will not be outfitted so well as a Jesuit, Stephen passes a group of Christian brothers on the bridge out to the Bull, in their “loosely hanging clerical clothes”, humble collars and “topheavy silk hats” and imagines himself still lower down the rungs of social status, a supplicant to them in “beggar’s weeds”: no bad prolepsis of an artist’s pecuniary future, and indeed of Joyce’s period as a bank clerk in Rome, where he had been unable to remove his coat for fear of exposing his ragged trousers (Letters II 156).

Stephen loses no time in experimenting with the life of the imagination. In what is generally considered to be a reference to Mallarmé and Debussy, he imagines hearing an “elfin prelude”, before concluding with a quote from Newman (165), from his The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated (Gifford 218). Critics who refer to
Stephen’s aestheticist intertextual framings as evidence of his identification with this iron memorial aspect, the aesthete, tend to overlook the diverse balance of Stephen’s quoted sources. We know from his letters that Joyce did indeed consider Newman, master of “lucid supple periodic prose”, to be in some measure an artist (Chapter 2). A phrase Stephen draws from his “treasury” of words may sound aesthetic but is in reality a quote from a tract by Hugh Miller that attempts to reconcile geological and Biblical accounts of the Creation (Gifford 219). In his reading, Stephen retains “nothing of all he read save that which seemed to him an echo or a prophecy of his own state” (154/5). In this regard, Stephen resembles Joyce (see Kimball, Growing Up, 30-31).

Stephen explores the artistic vocation with the same assiduity and thoroughness with which he had pursued his religion. Doctrinal questions emerge: for example, in the phrase “a day of dappled seaborne clouds”, is it the colours these works evoke (after Verlaine?) that appeals to him most, the “poise and balance of the period” or their associations of legend? Or is it that he is less interested in the power of words to evoke the “glowing sensible world” than he is in “the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?” (167). It is strongly implied that Stephen’s answer would be the latter; thus he shows himself to be of sterner stuff than the aesthete: for Stephen, the way to greater knowledge begins with a grounding in self-knowledge, not with random images of beauty. Parrinder suggests that here Stephen systematically presents the dominant doctrines of nineteenth and early twentieth century romantics, before dismissing them for an expressionist model of language (“A Portrait”, 91-2). From a Bakhtinian viewpoint, however, Stephen engages with preceding discourses, absorbs their influences and possibilities before melding them into a new language of his own.

The chapter climaxes with the culmination of Stephen’s orienting trek eastward to the coast, where he encounters some schoolfellows, experiences an aesthetic vision of mortal beauty in female form, and, throwing himself into his new vocation as enthusiastically as he had into his faith, indulges himself in an aesthete’s swoon. This exuberant episode expresses his freedom and abandon. It does not brand Stephen as an aesthete for life, any more than his religious fervour in the Malahide wood confirms his enduring identity as strict devotee.
At The Bull, as he has done at other times, Stephen stares down an image of death at a crucial time of his development. He has resisted the trap of the living death that would have been, for him, the life of a Jesuit, and now he turns from the “corpsewhite” pallor of the bodies of his fellows and celebrates his liberation from the “body of death” that he now considers the Church to be: an institution of fear and shame. Stephen denies and turns his back on the death instinct Thanatos while having embraced Eros, in the form of romantic love (Mercedes, Eileen, Emma), sensual practice in the kips and now, in the aestheticised erotic vision of the wading girl. Unlike Mangan, who is afraid of life, Stephen is afraid neither of life nor of death. He is willing to seize the keys of hell and of death.

Orientation

Again, as he has done before in times of crisis, Stephen seeks to orient himself in space, according to names; now in historical as well as in mythical time. His musings on the passage towards the Bull have led him towards exploration of the history and nature of his “race”, while the calls of his classmates, playing with his name, lead him to reflect on his own identity in a mythical light.

From his vantage point at the sea he looks out at “the image of the seventh city of christendom” in the “timeless air”, finding it patient of subjection and weary just as in the times of Danish rule. He watches the clouds which have migrated from the east, as the Celts migrated in ancient times, both from “Europe of strange tongues and valleyed and woodbegirt and citadelled and of entrenched and marshalled races” (167), and beyond. His apprehensions of the moment compete with imaginings of the historic and mythical past.

While lost in these imaginings he hears himself called as if from afar, a different kind of “calling”; his name is cloaked in its ancient Greek origins: Stephanous, crown, and the “fabulous artificer” of his surname. Bous Stephanos figures Stephen as a kind of

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47 See Kenner’s (Dublin’s Joyce 113) analysis of the hangman’s noose that the Director of Studies had fashioned for Stephen from the sash of a blind.
sacrificial ox (Gifford 220), a martyr who perhaps will die for his race. He sees these unfashioned representatives of his race in contrast in all their “characterless” nakedness; another kind of garb he will abjure.

While his own mind soars with images and with the hallucinated sound of mythical wings, a prophecy of his future freedom and eventual triumph, his peers make a series of ejaculations that are frequently portrayed as hostile utterances bringing Stephen literally down to earth, or rather sea: “O, cripes, I’m drownded” (169). It would be curious indeed for this young intellect to be crushed by such happenstance utterances, devoid of malice, unaware of his private visions. A far more likely interpretation is that Stephen perceives in these voices an unconscious threat, the hint of future betrayal, of society’s hostility to his artistic aims, and just one of many reasons why he will need to fly the various nets flung at him.

Stephen has been damned for his arrogant abjuration of “the dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair” or of the “pale service of the altar”. It should not be forgotten however that he seeks to forge “out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being” (169, 170); that being is art, not himself.

The crucial elements of a superior chronotope have begun to combine in a new, more powerful way, clustered in Stephen’s artistic consciousness. His imagination, liberated from the interpretation and service of divine ends, finds an oriented, deep-rooted intensity and intellective scope at the climax of this chapter. His imagination engages with the history of his race; its ancient history, recent political history, its ancient and mythical roots (Ireland’s European/Eastern origins), and is spurred to vivid but lucid images.

He is socially and responsibly engaged, having found his vocation to answer the “call of life” and to forge “a new soaring impalpable imperishable being” (169). Above all, he still looks forward in a spirit of freedom to answering the call of this muse of mortal beauty, a figure similar to that in the 1904 essay: this girl whose eyes call him “To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life” (172).
This then is the nature of Stephen’s progress, prior to the climactic chapter of the novel, in his struggle to liberate himself “from the authority of the other’s discourse” (DI 348). For the artist, such a liberation consists of dialogical engagement with, incorporation of, the historic wealth of a traditional inheritance of words and symbols for his art. In the following chapter we witness the further progress of Stephen’s imagination and intellect, towards becoming an artist of the prosaic imagination.
CHAPTER EIGHT:

IN VOCATION: FINDING VOICE

Welcome, O life, I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience . . .

April 27. Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead. P 253

Only when it is separate from all things is the intellect really itself and this intellect separate from all things is immortal and divine”. (Joyce’s Paris notebook, quoting Aristotle. In Gorman 95).

In the previous chapter it was suggested that the narrative of *Portrait* can be analysed in Bakhtinian terms as Stephen’s struggle with ideological consciousness. This can be analysed as occurring in three stages, the first of which is being born into a context of social discourses. Secondly, Bakhtin suggests that in coming to ideological consciousness, “another’s discourse” exerts enormous influence (DI 348). The reading of Stephen’s progress in the first four chapters of *Portrait* (Chapter 7) chronicles these first two phases. From the first words, Stephen is born into an echoing field of discourses: story, myth, politics, religion, language itself. His
education then exposes him to formal instruction in various fields. The most influential discourse in Stephen’s life, however, proves to be that of the Church, and his engagement with the Church dominates the narrative, just as Stephen’s faith dominated the 1904 “blueprint”. The third stage Bakhtin describes involves struggling with another’s discourse so as to liberate one’s “own discourse and one’s own voice” from the authority of the other (348), and the first steps in this direction have been observed in Stephen’s receding from the “chronotope of devotion” and rejecting the trappings of a Jesuit vocation. A second movement of this stage is identifying and developing one’s voice, and Stephen, who has spent so much effort in his developing years attempting to penetrate the meaning of vocables and to assemble the weapons of an artist’s vocabulary, now strains to achieve his “vocation”, his calling, and with it his voice.

The process of liberating one’s own discourse and voice is of course not a transparent process. Bakhtin describes a process where a “variety of alien voices” will enter an individual’s consciousness at the point where they are finding their own voice. In this chapter, Stephen’s experiments with a number of “alien voices” are chronicled in a reading of the fifth and final chapter of *Portrait*: myth, history, aestheticism, romanticism, aesthetics, occult philosophies and various literary influences, all exert a shaping influence on the artist’s evolving soul. A refinement on Bakhtin’s model is that Stephen as an artist comes to appreciate that these discourses, which can be loosely subsumed under the term “history” in its ideological sense, are rich material for his own art, and thus he engages actively with history as integral to the artistic process.

Stephen’s artistic consciousness develops as an intersubjective entity in dialogue with all these “voices”, and towards the end of the novel a glimpse of Stephen’s futurity is spied as he is viewed in the “workshop of Daedalus”, exemplifying his own views on the “slow, humble, constant” labour of the artist as he turns his artistic focus to the labours of the prosaic imagination and the classical temper attendant upon it.
Relativism, relativity and chronotope

Thomas Jackson Rice (53) observes that little attention has been paid to the effect of Joyce’s “Roman holiday” on the recasting of *Portrait*. In comparison to Robert Spoo’s study of the effects of Joyce’s historiographic reading on *Ulysses* in particular, Rice applies a broader sociohistorical context to the shift in style and form from *Stephen Hero* to *Portrait*: an intellectual revolution associated with this time.

Given that Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope derives in part from mathematics, as part of the Theory of Relativity (DI 84), and given his interest in the novel’s work as a reflector of the times, and marker of chronotopic shifts in world view, it would not be surprising to find reflected in the radical chronotopic shift from *Stephen Hero* to *Portrait*, over the timespan from 1904 to 1914, which also witnessed the birth of Einstein’s theory of relativity, a shift in Joyce’s understanding of time-space relations. This is particularly so, considering Joyce’s expressed interest (after Pater) in engaging with the spirit of the times. Indeed, Rice suggests, given the parallel dates of Joyce’s and Einstein’s projects (1904-1914; 1905-1916 respectively), we can suspect a “deeper correspondence between these two men, a connection that is missing from our literary histories . . . both developed a new view of the individual’s relationship with phenomenal reality under the shattering impact of non-Euclidean geometries” (53).

It is, however, to the non-Euclidean theme of relativism, rather than the later theory of relativity it made possible, that Rice ascribes a philosophical change in Joyce. This theory, emerging from the 1880s, was perceived as an attack on all “received ideas” and philosophical givens (56), based on the fundamental shock that Euclidean geometry was not absolute: neither unique nor unchallengeable. Like Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, *Portrait* shows evidence of the growing trend to relativism, rather than an “Einsteinian vision of moral relativity” (57). Rice finds *Portrait* profoundly non-Euclidean in form and theme: the subject of that portrait, however, not so. Rice provides a reading of *Portrait* demonstrating the ironic parallel between Euclidean Stephen and non-Euclidean Joyce. In this chapter, a different reading of Chapter Five is attempted, within Rice’s broad framework. Stephen, in the phase of his life where
Chapter Five begins, is demonstrated also to be of a non-Euclidean persuasion, finding new dialogical relations to various discourses in an attempt to find a point of entry for his art. I take Joyce’s apparent awareness of this dramatic shift in philosophy to be part of a broader shift in his sense of epochal time, which is embodied in the chronotopic logic of *Portrait*. In this regard it resembles Bakhtin’s description of the fifth form of Bildungsroman (*Speech Genres* 23-4).

One might agree with Rice’s conclusion that Joyce’s solution to the challenge of radical subjectivity was that the individual can respond by “being objective about their subjectivity” (80). It is precisely the frankly objective rendering of Stephen however which is likely to impel reactive ironic readings of Stephen. Rice considers *Stephen Hero*, like *Dubliners*, to be “Euclidean” (54). As we have seen, however, Stephen in *Stephen Hero* is already well-versed in relativist ideas of framing (Chapters 1 and 2): he is well aware of the distorting effect of different lanterns, both cultural and discursive. Even the universal quality of passion takes on for Stephen a note of “relativity” as Stephen, in comparison to the feudal poets, finds it necessary to express love a little ironically: “This suggestion of relativity, he said, mingling itself with so immune a passion is a modern note: we cannot swear or expect eternal fealty because we recognise too accurately the limits of every human energy” (SH 174).

As an avowed “modern”, Stephen clearly is attracted to this radical thinking, just as Rice suggests Joyce may have been. In *Portrait*, Stephen is, particularly in the early stages, a product of his society, but he increasingly engages with its discourses dialogically. As an infant at Clongowes he is schooled within the Euclidean Jesuit curriculum. And yet he is already probing these teachings, effectively reaching towards the non-Euclidean concept of infinity:

> What was after the universe?
> Nothing. But was there anything round the universe to show where it stopped before the nothing place began?
> It could not be a wall; but there could be a thin thin line there all round everything.
> (P 16)
Stephen’s casual attitude towards the treatment of the “lamps” of Aristotle and Aquinas in his discussion with the Dean of Studies (discussed below) in Portrait is distinctly relativist, and his scrutiny of the confusion over the word “tundish” provides an insight into linguistic relativism. Stephen clearly sees that an Irishman is able under some circumstances, to understand the “received” English language better than some native English.  

April 13. That tundish has been on my mind for a long time. I looked it up and find it English and good old blunt English too. Damn the dean of studies and his funnel! What did he come here for to teach us his own language or to learn it from us. Damn him one way or the other! (P 251)

While Rice suggests that Stephen may have been inattentive in the physics lecture given by the reputed “atheist freemason”, steeped in non-Euclideanism (76), Stephen has already applied himself diligently to creative equations of his own in the classroom (see discussion, Chapter 7) and now, both fascinated and jaded by what he hears, he at least goes to the trouble of making an urgent plea for writing paper, records the helical coiling and uncoiling calculations and in reverie contemplates an infinite, non-Euclidean universe: “plane to plane of ever rarer and paler twilight, radiating swift eddies to the last verges of a universe ever vaster, farther and more impalpable” (P 191).

Rice applies that freethinking professor’s distinction between “elliptical” and “ellipsoidal” to the structure of Portrait which, possessing two parallel foci (Stephen and the representation of Joyce himself) can be viewed in terms of either geometrical form. An ellipsoid can be explained in relation to Riemann’s “geometry of spatial curvature”, where parallel lines (contrary to their behaviour on a plane) on the surface of a sphere, meet at either pole (Rice 63–4). In Rice’s view, “the non-Euclidean geometries of A Portrait and Ulysses are . . . Riemannian” and yet part of the irony of Portrait consists in the fact that while Joyce cast the book in a non-Euclidean light, Stephen is “unself-consciously Euclidean” in his views (66).

48 In this respect I take a divergent view from Rice (77), who considers that Stephen does not appreciate such perspectives on language.
The Riemann ellipse of *Portrait*, the “geometrical form with two foci” (76), which expressed in three dimensions becomes an ellipsoid, Rice takes to consist of the reader’s relationship to the central character Stephen. The reader’s sympathy is initially joined to Stephen, as “everyboy”, and is increasingly alienated, diverging from Stephen’s path as he grows into a “precocious yet presumptuous” undergraduate (68). And yet the “convergence of distantly separated lines at an endpoint”, which concludes the ellipse at the end of the novel, is described not in terms of Stephen, but rather by an image of Joyce the artist himself. This equivocation between the starting point of the curve (Stephen/ “everyboy”) and its endpoint (Joyce/artist) demonstrates the critical and, I argue, unnecessary bending of a reading of *Portrait* in the service of defining irony.

![Figure 1. Riemannian geometry](image)

“The lines ACB and ADB on this sphere are parallel and perpendicular to the circumference (“equator”) of the sphere at points C and D, and yet meet (at points A and B) and enclose an area (the shaded sector ACBDA)” (Rice 63). Thomas Jackson Rice, *Joyce, Chaos and Complexity*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997.

Classically, the central relation in a novel is the relationship of the “hero” or protagonist to society. We have seen that Joyce’s design involved portraying a consciousness, a soul, and clearly this entails describing a curve from the artist’s birth, initially closely associated with society (as Rice notes), and progressively embarking on a diverging path of individuation. However, as a reading of the final chapter of *Portrait* demonstrates, Stephen himself is indeed following the path of a Riemannian double ellipse in curving back towards society, as his swaggering poses and
uncompromising attitudes are replaced by a studious and probing attention to the everyday matter of life, the aesthetcian supplant ed by the artist of the prosaic imagination.

In Rice’s view, Stephen’s attempt to efface the “author” in his celebrated discussion of the dramatic form is an “artful dodge”, the function of his inattention to the physics lecturer’s distinguishing between elliptical and ellipsoidal, an attempt to avoid the non-Euclidean complexities of twin focuses in a text. From a Bakhtinian perspective however, the author can be evoked but not portrayed in the novel (Morson and Emerson 430). Thus, Stephen’s figure can be taken as anticipatory of the artist of the prosaic imagination that he now perceives he may become, but which cannot be represented directly in the novel itself.

The central narrative ellipsoid in the novel, from a Bakhtinian perspective, is undoubtedly the parallel paths of the hero and of society. One way we can trace their curve is in relation to the motif of vestiture. In Portrait the artist’s soul describes an elliptical path with society: joined at the beginning “overture” where the soul, to revert to Pater’s metaphor, is “born clothed” in the vestments of social discourse. Gradually the soul diverges on an individuating curve, symbolically rejecting family expectations, the uniform of Jesuit, and, by the beginning of the final chapter, swaggering about with an ashplant as his chief self-fashioning signature; symbolic perhaps of the Dionysian thyrsus. And yet it is during Stephen’s Retreat, from society and from life in Chapter Three, that the curves traced through these twin focuses are most divergent. Despite Stephen’s determination to escape the radiating nets flung out to imprison his soul, in Chapter Five Stephen’s movement towards chronotopic re-engagement with social discourses, steered in part by Stephen’s powerful sense of history and the plastic power of his creativity, is traceable.

In the first section of this chapter Stephen’s attitudes are discernibly relativist. He devises a Thomist aesthetics without adherence to the principle that underpins Aquinas: God, the Absolute. Questions of beauty and truth are relativised to the

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Stanislaus Joyce describes the effect of Joyce’s “bohemian” garb in Dublin: “flowing butterfly bow”, ashplant, Protestant-style wide brimmed hat (MBK 249)
process of apprehending them and to the responses that an image evokes in the perceiver, rather than to any external criterion. Beauty and truth have no absolute basis but subsist in the relativist paradigm of “rhythm”: the relations of part to part, and parts to whole.

Having turned his back on the Church, Stephen now needs to find and develop his own voice, while negotiating the obstacle of social discourses which are frankly hostile to his views: on God, on art, on politics. In discussion with the dean he deflects the implicit non-Euclidean charge of “freethinking”, while seeking to protect his intellective project under the patronage of Aquinas.

In the second section he finds a “place of composition”, as in reverie he composes a poem. Stephen’s soul is charged with a pregnant, enchanted stasis in this episode that is dialogically intertwined with the language and imagery of romanticism: imagination and inspiration. In this timeless state, Stephen manages to extricate himself, temporarily at least, from the “nets” of society and its temporal concerns: “In a dream or vision he had known the ecstasy of seraphic life. Was it an instant of enchantment only or long hours and years and ages?” (P 217).

Ultimately, however, Stephen’s intentions lie beyond the purely romantic, and his artistic temper begins to resemble the “romantic grown old”, as the tempers of Ibsen and of Goethe grew old (CW 99), curving forward in a trajectory that will lead him through the classical temper back towards imaginative engagement with society, directed in part by a powerful sense of historicity.

The third section climaxes with a dramatic denial of the Absolute as Stephen leaves the Church altogether. At the same time Stephen redefines his relationship with society, chiefly in terms of the quest for freedom: he declares for himself the freedom to defy convention, to be alone and to make mistakes, even great mistakes.

These freedoms won, as Stephen records in a late diary entry in the final section, he finds recourse, in this radically subjective state in which he now finds himself, to make the materials present to him, “the reality of experience” (253), the object of a prosaic form of creativity. The hero’s elliptical parallel path to society on the curve of
his development begins to curve away from self-obsession towards imaginative engagement with society, with the everyday.

At the same time, the problematic potency of his individual and modern attitudes is evinced by antagonistic relations with others: with the Church, with his peers, with Emma and with Stephen’s “confessor” Cranly. The narrative of Chapter Five is structured to build to a climax of centripetal force impelling his exile.

State of relativism

Time space

Time is a dominant motif in Stephen’s consciousness in the first section of Chapter Five: Stephen is seen to be out of step with his world, caught between a modern relativist consciousness and a countervailing sense of the unique dimensions of everyday reality. The long first section unfolds in just one day, in a series of segments, as Stephen walks around Dublin—his characteristic, restless spatial mode, in the company of his chums and confidantes.

From the first, time is out of joint, and Stephen with time. The home has continued to fall on hard times, almost literally, signified by the battered family clock which needs to be kept on its side. The clock is running fast so that Stephen needs to make mental adjustments in an attempt to synchronise with the weekly university timetable. As he walks to the college, he seeks an orienting fix on the time, and peers into a dairy. The clock here is no more helpful as it reads “five minutes to five”. Stephen thus of necessity takes recourse to an interior chronotopic sense: he guesses that it is eleven, and this is immediately confirmed by a hidden clock somewhere striking eleven chimes, suggesting that Stephen is better served attending to the beat of his own time sense. This he later demonstrates in composing the poem, where he feels “the rhythmic movement of a villanelle” pass through him.) There is a break where the rhythm dies out, the “cry of his heart” is broken and in the hiatus he attends once more to the rhythms from the ambient world: “A bell beat faintly very far away. A bird twittered; two birds, three” (P 218). Thus Stephen’s art proceeds by alternations
between internal and external rhythms, like those which have impelled his development (Chapter 7).

For the present, however, so disoriented is Stephen that he is not even clear what day it is:

Eleven! Then he was late for that lecture too. What day of the week was it? He stopped at a newsagent’s to read the headline of a placard. Thursday. Ten to eleven, English; eleven to twelve, French; twelve to one, physics. (177)

Stephen has knowingly missed what should surely have been his central university subject, English, a sure sign of the independent nature of his vocational instruction. He distrusts the rather stodgy and wooden approaches of his lecturers to this vital art:

. . . nominal definitions, essential definitions and examples or dates of birth or death, chief works, a favourable and an unfavourable criticism side by side. (P 178)

Later, MacCann sternly scolds Stephen: “Late as usual. Can you not combine the progressive tendency with a respect for punctuality?” Stephen rules this comment, like time itself chez Dedalus, “out of order” (P 196). While Stephen is “progressive” in a more helpful sense than the family clock, he is also, in respect of society’s norms, habitually late or absent: missing in time, space or both.

He is also “out of time” with his society in two other senses. So far as epochal time is concerned, Stephen’s intertextual favour is oriented to the Elizabethan era, its songs and poetry. His reading is portrayed as “monkish learning”, in comparison to Mangan’s lack of such attributes (see Chapter 4); he is cloistered away from the hustle of society, and he announces his unworldliness to a flower seller: he will never have any money. His self-directed learning in aesthetics is “held no higher by the age he lived in than the subtle and curious jargons of heraldry and falconry”(180). His learning is worthless, relative to societal norms.

His sense of historic time also sets him apart. The laying of a slab to Wolfe Tone is a memory that reminds him of Dublin’s dismal neglect of its own historic figures: a
tawdry tribute having been afforded the man at a little-attended commemorating ceremony (184). In both these senses then Stephen resembles the author of *The Use and Abuse of History*, who, steeped in antiquity and with an alternative historicity, senses himself operating as a noble corrective, forging a consciousness that is outside of the preoccupations of the times (UAH 3-4).

Space too has been made relative for Stephen now, favourite haunts on his walks being associatively linked with favourite authors and their works: Hauptmann, Ibsen, Jonson and others (176) as Stephen’s self-instruction sees him steeping himself in the long history of literary tradition.

One curious effect of his sense of alienation is that aspects of Ireland, in his own perspective of its history, seem to have receded not only from time in memory but also from space, an effect he observes (characteristically for Stephen’s encounters with history and tradition) in a corridor, at the university:

> The corridor was dark and silent but not unwatchful. Why did he feel that it was not unwatchful? Was it because he had heard that in Buck Whaley’s time there was a secret staircase there? Or was the jesuit house extra-territorial and was he walking among aliens? The Ireland of Tone and of Parnell seemed to have receded in space. (P 184; italics mine)

In this vision Stephen sees his own disorientation, not in terms of his inability to engage with society, but rather as a function of his intellective divergence, an effect of perspective that has created an island of unreality between his own perceptions and those of others. Space, in Stephen’s impressionistic reframing of a physics lecture of potentially non-Euclidean import (Rice 76), through the mind of a fellow outsider, an “atheist freemason” professor, momentarily becomes a mere abstraction wherein one might explore the time-space of a day idly:

> O the grey dull day! It seemed a limbo of painless patient consciousness through which souls of mathematicians might wander, projecting long slender fabrics from plane to plane of ever rarer and paler twilight, radiating swift eddies to the last verges of a universe ever vaster, farther and more impalpable. (P 191)
While Stephen’s reading and knowledge are characterised as slight, his interior sense at times is prone to splendid illuminations so profound that the very world recedes, and he is deeply self-absorbed in the romantic experience of interiority. Nonetheless, in the wake of these profoundly alienating moments when the whole world perishes and he is far removed from others, the orienting curve of his intellect sets him back towards the life of the everyday world, the very kind of life that ultimately he sets to memorialising in his diary.

His thinking was a dusk of doubt and self-mistrust, lit up at moments by the lightnings of intuition, but lightnings of so clear a splendour that in those moments the world perished about his feet as if it had been fire-consumed; and thereafter his tongue grew heavy and he met the eyes of others with unanswering eyes, for he felt that the spirit of beauty had folded him round like a mantle and that in revery at least he had been acquainted with nobility. But when this brief pride of silence upheld him no longer he was glad to find himself still in the midst of common lives, passing on his way amid the squalor and noise and sloth of the city fearlessly and with a light heart. (P 177)

**Stephen’s aesthetics**

Despite their being couched within the radiance of the lamps of Aristotle and a curiously post-Euclidean Aquinas, Stephen finds that his modern ideas become the field of an ideological battleground and are met with pointed ideological resistance (as with the dean), or alternatively with apathetic animosity, in the case of Lynch. The aesthetics are based on Joyce’s jottings, but are now reframed and now for the first time are presented in an integrated fashion (in the extant fragment of *Stephen Hero* Stephen issues a series of expositions of his views, in different episodes).

Before unburdening his ideas onto Lynch, Stephen has a preliminary skirmish with the dean, who is repeatedly referred to by title rather than name, to emphasise the formal nature of Stephen’s interrogation and testing. And yet the text silently evokes the dean’s name from *Stephen Hero*: Fr Butt, by reference to his four candle-butts. The narrative background, of the dean’s lighting a fire (in which context the name
“Butt” is cruelly suggestive, not merely of the undignified position of the servant on his “hunkers” in service of the flames, but also of the extinguished residue of the flame of faith he attempts to rekindle in Stephen) foreshadows Stephen’s later reference to the Shelleyan metaphor of the imagination as a faintly glimmering coal, and his implicit support for a disreputable artist. This is not an association he would feel at liberty to broach with the dean, however, whose self-appointed role as practitioner of the art of fire lighting, consists of doing all in his powers to dampen rather than ignite Stephen’s creative fire.

The dean’s testing of Stephen’s artistic leanings canvasses a few themes, starting with his ironic opening gambit contrasting the “useful” and the liberal arts. Next, he tests Stephen’s ability to respond to his inquisition.

— You are an artist, are you not, Mr Dedalus? said the dean, glancing up and blinking his pale eyes. The object of the artist is the creation of the beautiful. What the beautiful is is another question.
He rubbed his hands slowly and drily over the difficulty.
— Can you solve that question now? he asked. (P 185)

Stephen can indeed, enlisting on the way the unassailable authority of Aquinas. The dean thus far can find no point d’appui with which to challenge the presumptive heretic. Can Stephen then define the quality of beauty possessed by fire? Stephen can, again quoting Aquinas. Still finding no toehold, the dean tries another gambit: when might the college hear a paper on “the aesthetic question”? Here again Stephen is wily, deflecting the apprehended threat of exposure.

The dean, undeceived, resorts to a few pre-emptive shots and in response Stephen confesses to using the philosophical “lamps” of Aristotle and Aquinas as mere tools: a declaration of philosophical relativism and intellectual freedom. He will, he avers, trim or adjust the wick, or pick up alternative tools as the occasion demands. The dean cagily retorts that one should power one’s lamp only with the pure oil; in addition, a modicum of fuel only should be applied. The dean’s rhetorical thrust aims to control the source, quality and force of Stephen’s artistic flame.
He follows this with another challenge, one that comes closest to penetrating and testing Stephen’s ambitions.

— These questions are very profound, Mr Dedalus, said the dean. It is like looking down from the cliffs of Moher into the depths. Many go down into the depths and never come up. Only the trained diver can go down into those depths and explore them and come to the surface again. (P 187)

Stephen indeed seeks to plumb the depths: of the human tradition, the long deep corridors of history echoing with language and human error, the timeless depths of mythology and tradition, the deep well of human consciousness. His reply to the implicit charge of “free thinking” is profound and insightful, at the same time deflecting rather than denying it, and demonstrates that Stephen more than most, is well equipped to make such forays into the depths of the human condition:

— If you mean speculation, sir, said Stephen, I also am sure that there is no such thing as free thinking inasmuch as all thinking must be bound by its own laws.

Stephen’s apparent familiarity with relativistic thinking is balanced with a commendable degree of objectivity and self-reflexiveness. Perhaps Stephen in Ulysses, when he tells Haines that he is a “horrible example of free thought” (U 17), is also speaking a little ironically. Unlike that generation Joyce criticised, who throw away precision with the old values, Stephen’s explorations are disciplined and self-aware: they are not unboundedly free; rather, he seeks the freedom to frame them in new ways.

Still the dean fires two more volleys: the artist needs to “distinguish between the beautiful and the sublime . . . to distinguish between moral beauty and material beauty” (P 190). Stephen lapsing into silence at this point, the dean indulges in a couple more flourishes: some diluting practical advice about finding one’s vocation, literally by (university) degrees, and raising one final threat: the danger of “perishing of inanition”.
Stephen’s artistic ideas are under siege from the church. His refusal to sign the petition for the Tsar also suggests that his reasoned perspectives will not bend to popular political or nationalist views. Some critics take Lynch’s surly and dismissive attitude to Stephen’s aesthetics as a defining irony. (“What do you mean, Lynch asked surlily, by prating about beauty and the imagination in this miserable Godforsaken island?” P 215), just as they take MacCann’s assessment at face value: “Dedalus, you’re an antisocial being” (177). Similarly to the voices of his peers at The Bull, which are portrayed as “drowning” Stephen’s aspirations, Lynch however is better perceived as expressive of ambient hostility to what Stephen represents.

— The Greek, the Turk, the Chinese, the Copt, the Hottentot, said Stephen, all admire a different type of female beauty. That seems to be a maze out of which we cannot escape. ( P 208)

Stephen is just about to launch a triumphant hypothesis solving this observation of cross-cultural relativism when a hellish racket of auditory sense erupts from a long dray loaded with old iron, the apprehension of which has the exact opposite of pleasing, and with notably kinetic results (Lynch’s swearing and rudeness). It is not until Lynch regathers a degree of emotional stasis that Stephen is able to continue. In short, the incident serves as illustration and confirmation of Stephen’s theory, at the same time as it dramatises Dublin’s hostility to Stephen’s views.

— This hypothesis, Stephen repeated, is the other way out: that, though the same object may not seem beautiful to all people, all people who admire a beautiful object find in it certain relations which satisfy and coincide with the stages themselves of all esthetic apprehension. These relations of the sensible, visible to you through one form and to me through another, must be therefore the necessary qualities of beauty. (P 209)

Seeking a way out between the post-Euclidean threat of a formless lack of classical precision and the materialist threat of “dreary eugenics”, Stephen finds a solution to artistic perceptions as being bound in “relations” of different approaches to, different
manifestations of the apprehensive process itself. Extended to Stephen’s artistic practice, the implication is that whether he engages in the more conventional realm of romantic beauty, as in the villanelle he will write, or the apparently unpromising realm of “the sluggish matter of the earth” (P 169) associated with the workshop of the prosaic artisan, he can create an art that expresses “certain relations” capable of satisfying the apprehensory processes.

**Chronotopicity of the imagination**

The first section of the final chapter of *Portrait* is devoted chiefly to the intellective helix of Stephen’s development, the exposition of his aesthetics and their hostile reception, where Stephen veers into a divergent curve of his own fashioning. The second follows the imaginative helix, as he writes a poem. Before we examine that episode, a review of Stephen’s chronotopic attributes at this juncture.

**Responsibility**

Stephen’s ultimate stance of “*non serviam*” in regard to the Church is no mere pose of defiance, not laziness nor the *fin de siècle* weariness that he sometimes affects, but an artistic necessity. We can infer some of his reasoning from his analysis of Davin’s representative views:

> His nurse had taught him Irish and shaped his rude imagination by the broken lights of Irish myth. He stood towards the myth upon which no individual mind had ever drawn out a line of beauty and to its unwieldy tales that divided against themselves as they moved down the cycles in the same attitude as towards the Roman catholic religion, the attitude of a dull-witted loyal serf. Whatsoever of thought or of feeling came to him from England or by way of English culture his mind stood armed against in obedience to a password; and of the world that lay beyond England he knew only the foreign legion of France in which he spoke of serving. (P 181)

Davin is subject to five tyrannies: firstly the Roman Catholic church, toward which he has “the attitude of a dull-witted loyal serf”; secondly the unwelcome yoke of England. A third is his commitment (like Mangan), to “the sorrowful legend of
Ireland” and its broken myth, upon which “no line of beauty had ever been drawn”. A fourth is his loyalty to Ireland, entailing a reticence and unwillingness to engage in speculation or to look any further than Ireland except, perhaps, a job with the French foreign legion.

The fifth tyranny is less obvious, yet perhaps the most virulent of all: Davin’s need to be forever fighting reactively against all things English. The net effect of these five yokes would have served to condemn the artist to an insular and hostile environment, writing only in the far less rich tradition of the Irish tongue and clutching at mere shards of myth, his art in effect constricted to a small readership in this “afterthought of Europe” that is Ireland (SH 53). Stephen’s individualistic credo, “I shall express myself as I am” (P 203), is necessary to the nurturing and enrichment of his art. It need not entail his utter divorce from the society that created him and indeed, by formalising his own conscience, others may follow suit: clearly an end integral to his mission of self-expression.

**Historicity**

Stephen’s thinking has become thoroughly imbued with a sense of historicity. In his cool appraisal of Dublin’s denizens, Stephen sometimes furnishes a speculative, contextualising history, employed in the service of empathy. The dean for example: how did he come to adopt his vocation, at a time of a “welter of sectarianism and the jargon of its turbulent schisms, six principle men, peculiar people, seed and snake baptists, supralapsarian dogmatists?”:

His courtesy of manner rang a little false and Stephen looked at the English convert with the same eyes as the elder brother in the parable may have turned on the prodigal. A humble follower in the wake of clamorous conversions, a poor Englishman in Ireland, he seemed to have entered on the stage of jesuit history when that strange play of intrigue and suffering and envy and struggle and indignity had been all but given through—a late-comer, a tardy spirit. (P 189)\(^5\)

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\(^5\) cf. Joyce’s written comment in a letter to Stanislaus from Rome, regretting that he could not “gain for myself from historical study an accurate appreciation of an order like the Dominicans” (*Selected Letters* 109).
A sense of history is also applied to the language of his friends and acquaintances, which Stephen clearly apprehends to (in Bakhtin’s phrase) “carry with it where it has been”, as in his analysis of the dean’s surprise at the Irish usage “tundish”. Variations in the language of his native country also prove to be revealing. Stephen compares two of his peers:

Cranly’s speech, unlike that of Davin, had neither rare phrases of Elizabethan English nor quaintly turned versions of Irish idioms. Its drawl 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 flatly by a Wicklow pulpit. (P 195)

Stephen’s sense of history is pervasive and at times profound, while it certainly does not represent that state of the “overuse” of history that Nietzsche criticised. Rather, he engages with it critically, dialogically applying it to artistic exploration of the world about him and his fellows. Stephen contextualises the world about him through history; he is conscious of the debts incurred by his ancestors, who have thrown over their own language for a foreign one and allowed themselves to be subjected to a foreign regime. The pursuit of reactive or earnest causes clearly is not his vocation; nonetheless the artistic interpretation of everyday life must be relative to history.

**Intentive rays**

Stephen the aesthetician of applied Aquinas is succeeded in the second section of Chapter Five by the applied poet. We have witnessed his musings in the classical realm, as Stephen offers an analytical description of perception and reality. However, for Joyce, the highest classical art must derive from a rich admixture of the romantic: the realm of the imagination, and Stephen too is keen to develop this side of his talent by means of poetry. As we have noted, Hegel considered the poetical imagination and intellectual portrayal to be the “proper medium of poetical representation” which runs through all forms of art (96).
However one evaluates the worth of the poem itself, the evolved sensibility of Stephen to which the episode attests, its loving account of Joyce’s central theme—the artistic process—suggests a positive augury of Stephen’s artistic future.

At the end of his long exposition of theory (at the close of the previous section of Chapter 5), Stephen had been confronted with that untheorised object of creative urgency, the artist’s source of inspiration. He and Lynch had ended their philosophical walk at the library.

Some girls stood near the entrance door. Lynch whispered to Stephen:
— Your beloved is here.

Stephen took his place silently on the step below the group of students, heedless of the rain which fell fast, turning his eyes towards her from time to time. She too stood silently among her companions. She has no priest to flirt with, he thought with conscious bitterness, remembering how he had seen her last. Lynch was right. His mind emptied of theory and courage, lapsed back into a listless peace. (P 215-6)

Stephen’s exposition of his aesthetics had induced in him a condition of stasis: “Stephen paused and, though his companion did not speak, felt that his words had called up around them a thought-enchanted silence”. Thus he was in a position to appraise silently the silent object of his admiration, against the background gassing of the other students. In full apprehensive contemplation he had absorbed a spectrum of sensory inputs: sounds, gestures and, in particular, “an exhalation [that] was breathed forth by the blackened earth”, from the fragrant bushes strewn with diamond water drops. The outcome of this series of aesthetic apprehensions is a question that is part image, part moral question, and a departure from his habitual kinetic emotions of jealousy and bitterness:

And if he had judged her harshly? If her life were a simple rosary of hours, her life simple and strange as a bird’s life, gay in the morning, restless all day, tired at sundown? Her heart simple and wilful as a bird’s heart? (P 216)

It is this stimulus from life, this series of images and thoughts that triggers Stephen’s dream, which sees him the next morning awaking to a charged field of enchantment
and inspiration. The dream, like the creative mind, can serve to “express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul” (P 207) an image of beauty. In witnessing the composition of the villanelle, we are afforded a glimpse into Stephen’s imaginative process as he works to ex-press an image of the beauty that he finds, despite himself, still irresistible in Emma.

Rays of rhyme and reason

We have noted Bakhtin’s description of the intentive field of creation and interpretation in terms of a directional ray of light, spectrally dispersed in a dialogical, socially contested field of counter words, value judgements and “accents” that make the word “sparkle” (DI 277: see Chapter 2).

The model is more than apposite to, indeed imagistically fused with, Joyce’s account of creative composition. Joyce’s model is more elaborate, as he employs it in service of the drama of creative conception, gestation and reproduction that Stephen had promised Lynch to enlarge on some other day. Stephen’s poem is conceived in a charged creative state, not in quiescent stasis: a slowly gestating idea becomes interpenetrated with a crowd of memories and associations—memories of Emma, images and other sensory inputs inspired by his sighting of her at the library steps the day before, literary and individual associations of thought. Finally, the poem is “reproduced” in full at the conclusion of this episode.

Stephen awakes at dawn, his soul “dewy wet” like the fragrant exhaling bushes that gave silent witness to the departing figure of Emma the day before: “A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water, sweet as dew, moving as music. But how faintly it was

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51 In this respect, Joyce’s account resembles Freud’s theory of the dream: for it has been inspired by a “day residue” (Freud 247-8).

52 According to Robert Spoo “. . . there is no doubt that Joyce took these correspondences [to embryonic growth, in his conception of the Oxen of the Sun episode] to some extent seriously” (1994 141).
inbreathed, how passionlessly, as if the seraphim themselves were breathing upon him!” (P 217).

The waking Stephen attends to other real, imagined or remembered sensory inputs: the memory of music from his dream, the sensation of his soul awash in cool waters, waves of light flowing over his limbs, a spirit being breathed into him. Amidst these sensations, Stephen’s mind begins to awaken slowly to an abstract image of understanding, a “morning knowledge” that echoes Joyce’s Trieste notebook jottings (Chapter 6). There is in this state, resonance with the “primordial artist” of Nietzsche’s description, found in a “contemporary compendium of Nietzsche’s thought” (Aubert 119).

Anterior to any intentive rays, and surrounding this quiescent focus of stasis, is a field charged with creative energy, with quasi electrical potential, here metaphorised as gathering clouds.

The instant of inspiration seemed now to be reflected from all sides at once from a multitude of cloudy circumstances of what had happened or of what might have happened. The instant flashed forth like a point of light and now from cloud on cloud of vague circumstance confused form was veiling softly its afterglow. (P 217)

This inspiration point has built up in Stephen gradually, like a storm, firstly experienced purely in sensate form, now mixed with memory or daydream, now with Stephen’s gradually awaking consciousness. The flash of lightning that he experiences still does not provide pat, the apprehended vision that is the nub or germ of the poem. Instead, it illuminates the still hazy field of creative intention: “from cloud on cloud of vague circumstance confused form was veiling softly its afterglow”, and the poem is realised only gradually, piece by piece in a “natural” evolution.

As elsewhere in Portrait, Stephen’s psyche actively absorbs sensory messages from the world, real or imagined: incense, light, the rippling of water, the sounds of birds and bells, the rhythm of the words themselves. These envoys from the “real world” mingle and collide with the intellective and imaginative faculties: swarms of images, words, interpretations of words or images, emotions and memories; and direct, divert
or reshape the intentive rays of Stephen’s attempts to penetrate and imagine the
mysteries of Emma’s bird-like heart and soul.

Stephen as poet has his perceptions tuned to a rich palette of inputs. Words are in no
sense his sole plaything but are rather a conduit by means of which he tries to convey
a much richer world of sensation and inquiry:

The verses passed from his mind to his lips and, murmuring them over, he felt the
rhythmic movement of a villanelle pass through them. The rose-like glow sent forth
its rays of rhyme; ways, days, blaze, praise, raise. Its rays burned up the world,
consumed the hearts of men and angels: the rays from the rose that was her wilful
heart. (217-8)

Genre, form, speaks to him suggestively through the rhythm of the villanelle.
Thoughts become spoken words imbued with an image of rhythm, and yet it is not
mere words nor the form of the poem that impel these intentive “rays of rhyme” but
rather his image of the roselike radiations of Emma’s “wilful heart”.

Stephen’s emotions and thoughts form a kind of lattice around which senses, images
and memories twirl, proceeding in series from contemplation of Emma’s strange and
wilful heart, through praise, anger, homage, jealousy and despair and, finally, desire.
The composition of the villanelle is hardly the bored experiment of an aesthete.
Earlier, as Stephen began to hammer out the principles of his art, he had posed
himself the question whether “he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the
glowing sensible world through the prism of a language many-coloured and richly
storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored
perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?” (P 166-167). This episode confirms our
presumption in favour of the latter. To acknowledge that it is this latter which gives
Stephen the greater pleasure however, is not to deny the potency of the former, as
images of the world are also powerfully attractive; here again the disciple of Bruno is
very comfortable with the coincidence of contraries.
In-spiration time

This period of inspiration is overwhelmingly characterised by time, in several senses. In a *metaphorical* sense, this is the dawn of Stephen’s artistic career, figured in the rosy light of dawn and climaxing in a full burst of radiative daylight. This dawn answers Chapter Four’s epiphany on the strand at the setting sun, where Stephen has turned his back on the shadows and gloom of his former life and embraced the vocation of artist with his face towards the realms of the rising sun.

Time itself becomes a peculiarly charged dimension that alters the very nature of the world and its possibilities. Mysterious and intoxicating, it embodies a spirit that opens up obscure and recessed doors of the world’s potential. *In-spiration time* breathes mysterious, magical qualities into the world, as Shelley’s fading coal of the imagination responds to a breath (Eide 313); it charges the imaginative stasis with joyful energy and frees the mind from wakeful boundary-framings of sense, including sense of time.

His soul was waking slowly, fearing to awake wholly. It was that windless hour of dawn when madness wakes and strange plants open to the light and the moth flies forth silently. An enchantment of the heart! The night had been enchanted. In a dream or vision he had known the ecstasy of seraphic life. Was it an instant of enchantment only or long hours and years and ages? (217)

The seeds of inspiration having been sown in the obscure realms of the night, in dream, in the timeless realms of the unconscious where it is impossible to tell an instant from an age, Stephen awakes to images that the waking mind would suppress: madness, strange plants, the flight of moths. The poem germinates in this magical “morning inspiration” time, free of the net of self-censorship, of repressive internalised voices, as Stephen starts to find a creative voice.

The *prosaic, everyday time* of composition is “the day after” a meaningful event: his sighting of Emma. Just as the dream is a meaningful response to sometimes obscure stimuli (Freud), so is Stephen’s dream-fired poem an attempt to understand this object of his disappointed passion, to express an image of her wilful heart.
The poet must, in Nietzsche’s terms (UAH) first forget, in order to create, and
Stephen in writing his villanelle is portrayed as losing sense of worldly time (see
Chapter 8), while keeping step with the rhythm of his own heartbeats. Poetry, in
Joyce’s view, accords equal temporal sense to the pulse of a heartbeat—the time of
emanation of an “intuition”—as to six thousand years (CW 81). Stephen in this
romantic state of composition is removed from worldly time altogether: “An
enchantment of the heart! The night had been enchanted. In a dream or vision he had
known the ecstasy of seraphic life. Was it an instant of enchantment only or long
hours and years and ages?” (P 217)

One last strand of time is notable here:

He had written verses for her again after ten years. Ten years before she had worn her
shawl cowlwise about her head, sending sprays of her warm breath into the night air,
tapping her foot upon the glassy road. . . . Ten years from that wisdom of children to
his folly. (P 222)

This time motif of ten years is significant in Joyce’s life, just as it is in his fiction.
From Paris, Joyce had written to his mother in (1903) that in ten years he would write
a major work of aesthetics: “This must interest you” (Letters II 38). In Ulysses,
Mulligan mocks Stephen: “Ten years, he said chewing and laughing. He is going to
write something in ten years.” (U 236/246) Of course, Joyce himself called attention
to developmental time in framing the text of Portrait with “Dublin 1904-Trieste
1914”.

Ten years to hold a creative flame for this girl is a very long period in the young
man’s life; it is a long time to wait before he can gather the creative power to address
it in a demanding verse form like the villanelle. In this long span of developmental
time both poet and poem have developed markedly. Ten years ago his first fumbling,
halting poem barely managed to come off, and then only “by dint of brooding on the
incident” and thinking himself “into confidence”. Stephen was indeed far more
derivative a poet as a young boy, as Booker (1997) notes, titling the poem with a
Byronic flourish “To E—C—”, and, much more surprisingly, framing the poem
circumtextually with two habitual but discordant dedications: the Catholic schoolboy’s inscriptions: AMDG and LDS; evidence of the enduring framing influence of Church discourse on his consciousness.

The poet of the villanelle clearly has a more assured, more deeply penetrating, richer creative approach, in part facilitated by his philosphical investigations of the artistic process, of art and aesthetics.

Ex-piration

It is also possible to apprehend this sequence, as some have done, as conclusive proof of Stephen’s final failure as a poet, the “ex-piration” of his talent in one abjectly onanistic ejaculation (or, in Kenner’s slightly more charitable formulation, a “wet dream”: 1955, 123), or as evidence of his fatedness to be a belated aesthete or decadent (see, for example, Harkness).

Stephen’s artist-in-becoming, on the curves of his intellective and imaginative helices, clearly is making notable progress. The account of his poetic process at this point shows evidence of the sensitivity, receptiveness, perceptiveness and analytical mind of the good poet. Certainly it is thoroughly imbued with the romantic language of imagination and inspiration. In the final section of the novel, his imaginative helix has progressed to a new point on the curve.

This novel is the portrait of an artist, not necessarily of a poet. At this point it is not yet clear if Stephen’s true calling is poet, any more than Joyce’s was. Yeats indeed had assessed Joyce at a similar age as having clear talent, but in Stanislaus’s estimation, had divined as early as 1903 that Joyce’s true metier was prose (MBK 207). In the following section it is demonstrated that the gathering cluster of artistic attributes and approaches invites the suggestion that he will most likely turn his talents towards the classical yet romantic penetration of the prosaic.
Bakhtin stresses the importance of separateness to an individual’s creative understanding: a person must be “located outside the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture” (Morson and Emerson 230). Stephen, whose perspective is already distanced from yet threatened by society decides to leave the Church, abjures popular causes and generally prepares himself for a distanced yet engaged re-orientation to that society for which he seeks to forge a conscience.

The third, penultimate section of this chapter is dominated by Stephen’s defining act of freedom: the consequences of refusing his Easter duty. Two themes dominate this section: the hero’s struggle for freedom of self-expression, and the motif of testing, as Stephen’s friend Cranly probes whether his loss of faith is genuine. It is testimony to the depth and seriousness of his former faith that Stephen sees the need to confide in his “confessor” and formalise his decision in this way.

At the outset of the chapter Stephen is agitated and seeking stasis, having argued with his mother over the Easter duty; he urgently desires to consult with Cranly.

The apostate’s attributes

A review of Stephen’s chronotopic attributes at this point reveals the nature of his evolving artistic purpose. His emerging sense of history, as we have seen, extends beyond the visible effects on his environment and its people, to history embodied in the language. Now, in deciding to leave the church he is fully cognisant of the weight of “twenty centuries of authority and veneration” that it carries; in Nietzschean terms, he has engaged critically and deeply with this tradition before ultimately rejecting it.

Stephen’s sense of responsibility comes to the fore. Just as he did in Fr Connée’s office, he again faces the spectre of death (in the form of Cranly’s cranium; see below) at the crucial moment where he seizes the opportunity for life and personal growth. His goals are similar to Joyce’s: firstly, he wants to mount an intervention in the lives of Ireland’s patricians: “How could he hit their conscience or how cast his
shadow over the imaginations of their daughters, before their squires begat upon them, that they might breed a race less ignoble than their own?” (238) Secondly, as he has already vowed to Lynch, he will express himself as he is, freely and without repression. His spirit and soul will be free (P 246). From the church he has learnt the moral that true salvation can never be found amongst lies and their kindred: compromise. Thirdly, he will avoid pursuing kinetic, temporal causes with their transient triumphs and unceasing struggles, mere deflections from his true purpose. In response to a point blank query from Cranly he announces the credo that will underpin his artistic practice:

— Look here, Cranly, he said. You have asked me what I would do and what I would not do. I will tell you what I will do and what I will not do. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning. (246-7)

His sense of responsibility is now bound with a new time-sense. Stephen’s observations of the birds outside the library, in reference to the philosophy of Swedenborg, lead him to compare a life in nature against a socially defined life. Birds live in harmony with the world, whereas humans are ruled by “reason” and are ill synchronised with the seasons and cycles of nature.  

A phrase of Cornelius Agrippa flew through his mind and then there flew hither and thither shapeless thoughts from Swedenborg on the correspondence of birds to things of the intellect and of how the creatures of the air have their knowledge and know their times and seasons because they, unlike man, are in the order of their life and have not perverted that order by reason. (224-5)

Swedenborg notes that those other winged creatures, angels, have no sense of time or space; instead they have consciousness of “state”: states of love, faith, wisdom and intelligence (75-90). So too has the progress of Stephen’s soul been drawn primarily in accordance with similar changing states. Clearly Stephen is no angel, unless that

53 Parrinder (“A Portrait” 121) identifies this as a Yeatsian viewpoint.
fallen member who, like Stephen, uttered “non serviam”, but in this latest phase, or state of his soul, his artistic vocation begins with a renewed innocence and wonder, with the “forgetting” that Nietzsche stressed is essential to happiness and to life, preparatory to reorientation to life. He now intends to live if not like St Francis, then at least in accordance with an understanding and acceptance of his own nature, and that of others. Emma too may be after all a simple bird-like soul living in accord with her own nature.

His time-sense is in part an evolution of that theme which, we have suggested, took such a dominant role in Stephen’s younger life: change over time. As Cranly performs this exit interview from the Church, his inquisitional barrage constitutes a narrative of testing: not for vocation but for loss of faith. Stephen responds frankly, without pretence or imposture. Under pressure, he admits that he had had faith once. In response to whether he had been happy then:

— Often happy, Stephen said, and often unhappy. I was someone else then.
— How someone else? What do you mean by that statement?
— I mean, said Stephen, that I was not myself as I am now, as I had to become. (240)

Stephen appears to endorse the Aristotelian, entelechial view of individual potential, in accord with that inchoate sense of destiny that he has felt since a child. At the same time, Stephen’s credo affords him great freedom: the freedom to embrace fates that many others could hardly face: to be alone, to be spurned, and to make great mistakes. Stephen’s future corresponds with Bakhtin’s notion of historicity; it is open and replete with potential. The freedom to live outside of the boundaries of one’s social inheritance is indeed a profound one, and yet it can only be attained by a spirit stronger than Mangan’s. If Stephen can use this freedom to re-engage with the richnesses of tradition, for we cannot live without history (UAH 12), this may one day result in great achievements; and that is this artist’s responsibility.

54 Also, in *Ulysses*, Stephen asserts that “A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery”. 
Much as the villanelle-writing episode is depicted in the language of romanticism, of inspiration, Stephen shows emerging signs of more prosaic forms of creativity: a daydreaming, wondering everyday labour allied to the classical temper, working to shape a penetrating and imaginative representation of real life. Spying the “captain” whom he encounters in the library, he muses upon rumours of his dark origins and conjures up the imaginary scene of an incestuous tryst by a lake. He conjures the world of Dowland, Byrd and Nash “from the language of memory” and, Bakhtin might add, from the history that is bound up with memory in language (DI 233).

Stephen’s artistic interests are hardly restricted to the languid shaping of the odd villanelle: the world about him has become his subject. As an examination of the final section of this novel reveals, his imagination is developing towards what Bakhtin has labelled the “prosaic”: he responds to the world around him, finding ways to work this sluggish, resistant material into shapes it has never assumed before.

**In the workshop of Stephen Dedalus**

**Art and life**

Just as the “overture” of the novel is composed of a series of short impressions, the finale brings together a string of fragments, which Michael Levenson has demonstrated to refer closely to the first section. Levenson comments that this concluding section, generally referred to as a diary, has the “rare distinction” of being virtually unannotated in Joyce criticism; when it is not neglected, it tends to be treated dismissively (184) or in service of the “sentimental view” of an expression of Stephen’s rebellion. Levenson’s detailed discussion shows the diary as balancing a developmental account of Stephen against a contrary pattern of circularity and repetition, while conceding that on balance, the weight of his argument favours an ironic reading of Stephen (196).

An alternative reading is advanced here, which favours the developmental trajectory; this final section of the novel demonstrates Stephen to be a neophyte prose artist in his workshop, labouring away “slowly, humbly, constantly”. The numerous echoes in
this diary of other sections of the novel serve comparatively to show Stephen’s contrasting new perceptions. Past moments of Stephen’s consciousness, past phrases and images, in this final section are voiced in the present, and reframed according to new moments in Stephen’s consciousness. The recursive reframing that Levenson identifies, where each entry re-interprets former moments (190), is not a dialectic of reversal or mere regression, but is precisely the artist’s work of labouring on and reshaping, materials present to him or her, including memory.

While the overture introduced story time, myth, and the child’s work of relating story to present reality, the diary section also combines diverse strands: sources such as the Bible, Greek mythology and dreams, in treating the prosaic events of everyday life: the drama of leaving the church, Stephen’s encounter with and possible betrayal by Cranly, his abiding and still unresolved obsession with Emma, his ambitions.

According to Morson and Emerson (243):

Bakhtin apparently wants to construct an alternative to received models of the creative process, both “Romantic” (or “inspirational”) and “classical” (or “formalist”). The inspirational model . . . denies the importance of methodical work and of the moment-to-moment process of making decisions. In this respect it is at odds with Bakhtin’s prosaics.

Indeed, in Bakhtin’s non-romantic model, creativity “grows out of the fabric of daily life”, it “is rooted in the real actions of real people, who use the resources provided by the past, which is to say of earlier creativity” (Morson and Emerson 414). Bakhtin challenges the Romantic view of creativity as an event outside the normal “causal chain” (45): “exceptional, mysterious, and, most important, beyond human agency”. Morson and Emerson cite Shelley’s image of the fading coal, the same quoted by Stephen himself, as an example of the kind of model of creativity that Bakhtin would refuse.

Stephen too, in the late pages of this novel, has moved on from the purely aestheticist approach. To decide that Stephen is essentially a Romantic or an aesthete is to forget that Stephen’s final image in the novel is as a diarist, working on those events present
to him: the sluggish, everyday, *prosaic* materials out of which the artist will forge “a new soaring impalpable imperishable being”. The prophetic image of the artist in his workshop at the climax of Chapter Four becomes a reality in the closing pages of the book, where the reader becomes privy to the artist’s prose sketches.

In an expression of the aestheticist facet of his personality, we saw Stephen’s imagination inspired in a conventional kind of way, by his muse. It is not at all clear how much time has passed since the time of writing the villanelle, as chronological time is not measured in the narrative; only in reference to change. As he continues to develop, Stephen’s methodology and materials change markedly, the romantic temper growing a little older, and he finds inspiration in a very different way, even in respect of Emma. In the final section of the novel then, one enters the workshop of Stephen Dedalus, the artist-apprentice who has confided to Lynch:

—We are right, he said, and the others are wrong. To speak of these things and to try to understand their nature and, having understood it, to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand—that is art. (P 206-7)

Stephen’s lecture theme in *Stephen Hero* was “art and life”, and Richard Ellmann’s biography is based on the close links between Joyce’s art and his life (JJ 3). In one small glimpse, in the first diary entry, we are afforded a unique opportunity to compare these two qualities: artistic sketches drawn from Stephen’s life. The final section of the novel is so contrived that the first diary entry allows the reader to compare Stephen’s prosaic sketch recording his thoughts in the upshot of his encounter with Cranly, to the detailed account which closed the previous section. The mass of details of their conversation are not chronicled: rather, Stephen sets to work on constructing a rich, allusive narrative framework out of small details and imaginative speculation.

The unadorned details of Cranly’s background quickly develop into fantasised images of his family members, expanding its reference into much broader social and historical forces, and weaving into the fabric, literary allusion, Stephen’s own themes
and predilections. Cranly’s insistent harping on the “mother” develops by association into an exploration of the mothering theme in the Catholic Church, one that Stephen contrasts to his own interest in the fathering theme. A reflection on Cranly’s aged parents suggests intertextual associations with the Bible, resulting in a train of thought representing Cranly as St John the Baptist, presumably to Stephen’s Christ. None of these matters were the subject of Stephen’s conversation with Cranly; they are exploratory sketches, the artist working the raw material that presents to him into unexpected structures that resemble a little the refracted rays of Bakhtin’s intenitive model, emitting unexpected lights and colours in the crowded field of contested and interpenetrating values.

Diary as form

Classically, the diary of course is a peculiarly chronotopic genre, dedicated to detailing the events of days in series, events pertinent to the chronicler’s life and to the wider world in their perceptual ambit. It can serve to import into the novel what Bakhtin has called “historical time”, that object of high praise in respect of Goethe’s Bildungsroman, *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*.

Joyce himself, while pouring scorn on the diary form to his brother (JJ 133) did, we know, begin in his late teens a process of gleaning and developing materials out of everyday life, most notably with the epiphany. Indeed, some of Stephen’s diary entries are derived from Joyce’s epiphanies. In a previous chapter the importance of the epiphany form for Joyce’s imaginative development has been established (Chapter 3), and so to witness Stephen working these vignettes must be considered highly significant; an endeavour at the heart of Joyce’s creative progress. Similarly to the epiphany, some of these diary entries record dreams.

Joyce chose the diary form for a reason, and yet there is no narrative framing to suggest Stephen’s purpose. Are these snippets simply exercises, or are they raw materials for some project, future or present? The divergence between actuality and text in relation to the first entry (discussed above) affords some invaluable clues: it indicates that they are selective, divergent, elaborative, symphoric. This last term is
coined by Senn (“Symphoric”): “the activity is ‘sym-ballein’—a bringing together of separate pieces” (Senn, “Challenge”, 134).

So far as his muse is concerned, Stephen makes no further attempts at poetry but wonders idly if Emma would like the prose fragment of dream he has written, and seriously contemplates sending it to her: an envoy of his enduring affection. He also writes *inter alia* about his decision to leave the Church, discussions with his mother and with Cranly, dreams, his vocation, further changes in attitude towards Emma. Perhaps he is planning a self-portrait of some kind. At any rate, we are clearly in the workshop of Dedalus. These entries are valorised in the same way as Joyce memorialised his aesthetics jottings: with an appended date, to mark some sense of their historic significance.

For a work that is designed to afford detailed and frank insights into the protagonist, the diary form might be considered tailor made. Rather than asking why Joyce used it at the end of the novel, as some critics have done, we might instead ask why he did not use it much more?

**Historicity**

Stephen’s early experience of change as threat, it has been suggested (see Chapter 7) has led him to embrace change as future, time as the necessity of change. This does not indicate that he is turning his back on the past or the present however. On the contrary:

> The past is consumed in the present and the present is living only because it brings forth the future. (P 251)

He now resembles Bakhtin’s interpretation of an historically steeped creative practice, where creative decisions arise as a response to the present conditions of life, in order to provide for futurity (Morson and Emerson 414), just as Stephen’s mission is for his race’s futurity. The creative person uses the resources of the past. Stephen has bettered the aesthetic aims of one of the characters in Yeats’s work, from some short
stories that Joyce had praised highly and that at one stage of his life, had enthralled his imagination (“The Tables of the Law” and “The Adoration of the Magi”).

April 6, later. Michael Robartes remembers forgotten beauty and, when his arms wrap her round, he presses in his arms the loveliness which has long faded from the world. Not this. Not at all. I desire to press in my arms the loveliness which has not yet come into the world. (251)

While he claims to have read little and understood less, clearly Stephen has read enough to know the nature and the extent of the history of Western thought; he is aware of just how much there is to know and to read. He is also aware both that English, his first language, is a foreign and an enemy tongue, and also that “our” church, as Cranly calls it, was “invented” by Rome (P 249). Characteristically, Stephen’s plumping for a future of free individual expression, engaged with and informed by history, but not paying fealty to its ossified forms, is described in terms of an encounter with death, suggested by an image of Cranly’s gaunt cranium: “Also, when thinking of him, saw always a stern severed head or death mask as if outlined on a grey curtain or veronica” (248).

Stephen is now free to choose his own future. “Free. Soul free and fancy free. Let the dead bury the dead. Ay. And let the dead marry the dead” (P 248). Gifford (281) traces a source for the first sentence in the bible, where Christ said “Let the dead bury the dead: but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God”. Christ’s injunction is a stern lesson to stick unswervingly to one’s vocation, and the parallels to Stephen’s choice work well enough. However, an even more suggestive source for the quote is in response to Nietzsche’s irony in *The Use and Abuse of History*. He attacks the monumental attitude to history of people who have a secret distaste for the present and yet:

. . . develop their tastes to a point of perversion that they may be able to show a reason for continually rejecting all the nourishing artistic fare that is offered them. For they do not want greatness to arise . . . . whether they wish it or no, they are acting as though their motto were: “Let the dead bury the—living” (UAH17).
Joyce improves on Nietzsche’s ironic treatment of those who secretly hate the present, as so many of Joyce’s compatriots did, and those who would seek to suppress the emergence of great art, by suggesting that those who choose to live dull lives of conformity too, are dead: “let the dead marry the dead”.

**Creativity**

It is surely no coincidence that in the diaristic fragments of Dedalus and in the earlier scene of his composition of the villanelle, Joyce drew on materials from the first major breakthrough in his own imaginative career. For example, the scene of Emma at the library steps that triggers Stephen’s dream, actually derived from Joyce’s own Epiphany Number 25 (Scholes and Kain 35). In the writing of the villanelle, a second epiphany about Emma is used: (Number 26; Scholes and Kain 36). The diary fragments draw on Epiphanies Number 27, 29 and 30. Two of the diary fragments are reported dreams, utterances from the unconscious creative mind. Stephen, like Joyce (after Freud), has begun to turn his mind to the dream as a “royal road to the unconscious”.

One dream in this final section of *Portrait* echoes Stephen’s past encounters with destiny. Stephen finds himself in a curved gallery full of “images of fabulous kings, set in stone”, these kings are troubled and wearied by constant pillars of vapour billowing up, representing the mistakes of mortals (Epiphany 29). He is confronted by the speechless faces of barely human figures emerging from the dark:

> Strange figures advance as from a cave. They are not as tall as men. One does not seem to stand quite apart from another. Their faces are phosphorescent, with darker streaks. They peer at me and their eyes seem to ask me something. They do not speak. (249-250)

Here, Stephen is privy to a vision of history along its great curve of time, and understands the weariness of its leaders, those burdened souls condemned to lives of unceasing kinesis and toil. While the images of these great figures are literally set in stone, they are beset by an unrelenting assault of errors, the constant eroding daily
comedy of the secular life etched in their faces, these old “men of action”, to borrow Nietzsche’s phrase.

The “cave” figures are creatures of the dark, so unused to the light that their skins have become phosphorescent, like exotic creatures of the depths: like fish or, perhaps, like bats. They are unable to stand tall; indeed it seems that they are even unable to stand apart from their fellows, to be individuals and to take action for themselves. Instead, they fix Stephen with a mute, dumb appeal that they are too paralysed to voice.

This is an imaginative evocation of Stephen’s sense of destiny, told in images rather than in stirring revolutionary words or vague abstractions. It shows his vague prophetic intimations now able to be fleshed out in artistic, compressed form, in comparison to the inflammatory rhetoric with which the ur-
*Portrait* concluded.

The passage resonates strongly with another section of Nietzsche’s attack on the monumental view of history (UAH 13):

> Dull custom fills all the chambers of the world with its meanness, and rises in thick vapour round anything that is great, barring its way to immortality, blinding and stifling it. And the way passes through mortal brains! Through the brains of sick and short-lived beasts that ever rise to the surface to breathe, and painfully keep off annihilation for a little space.

Joyce, however, improves on it considerably. While Joyce’s passage is derived in part from Epiphany 29, thought to be a dream-epiphany, it is entirely possible that Joyce’s dream itself had been inspired by his reading of Nietzsche, since we know he was reading Nietzsche at least as early as 1903. The Epiphany is undated. As for the figures of his fellow men, they closely resemble Nietzsche’s description of modern man as suffering a “weak personality” (UAH 28). They become mere “shades and abstractions” (29) because the weight of history has extinguished their instincts so that they become “shrouded figures” or mere “men in uniform” (30), like the Jesuits and the Christian brothers in *Portrait*, whose life Stephen had opted to shun.
Still on the theme of antediluvian instincts, further evidence of Stephen’s maturing literary instincts comes in his response to a story told by Cranly about the crocodile and the mother. He reframes this story in the intertextual light of another text associated with the crocodile, Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, and turns it into a parable about his relation to his own land, of which he has said earlier: “This race and this country and this life produced me . . . . I shall express myself as I am” (P 203).

This mentality, Lepidus would say, is indeed bred out of your mud by the operation of your sun.

And mine? Is it not too? Then into Nile mud with it! (250)

The diary entry following this quote notes however: “Disapprove of this last phrase”. The developing artist disapproves not only of the dismissive sentiment but also of a certain glibness and ineffectuality. But this is the artist’s work in the artist’s workshop, worrying away at materials, shaping and reshaping, experimenting, discarding those parts which do not work, creating new parts which will. It would be drawing too unnecessarily close an identification with Joyce to assume that Stephen is the implied future author of *Portrait* (Parrinder, “A Portrait”125) but clearly Stephen has embarked on the prosaic path.

If a nation continues to breed a mentality out of its native mud and the operation of its ruling suns, Stephen considers himself right to intervene in the transmission of such mentalities. This is the purpose of his work, to forge in the smithy of his soul, the “uncreated conscience of my race”. To fashion new possibilities and a new future that might yet breed a new consciousness that transcends the Irish “hospitable bog” (*Selected Letters* 197).

**Portrait of the artist as unfinalisable component**

At some point Joyce needed to draw a boundary in time and space as to how far, and under what narrative circumstances, he could allow Stephen’s story to continue. A rare intermediate fragment of *Portrait* demonstrates that at one stage he had intended
to represent dramatically a scene where Stephen argues with his mother over the Easter duty, and that Stephen’s exile was to have been propelled by an argument with a prototype of Buck Mulligan (Litz 132). The detailed reasons for Joyce’s drawing the narrative boundaries where we find them can be left for analysis another day. It is enough for the present to take a reminder from Bakhtin’s formulation: the author is not represented in a work but is at best an “unfinalizable component entering into a work” (*Art and Answerability* 430).

At the conclusion of the novel, we see the most powerful chronotopic conjunction yet in Stephen: a deep sense of history, of the past, and of the present that “is living only because it brings forth the future” of his race; a creative art that penetrates surface reality and pierces it with myriad textual forces to create new associations, new forms, the germs of beauty never before seen in the world. To produce these images of underlying truth is the responsibility of his destiny. It is not the purpose of this thesis to attempt to assess the extent to which Stephen’s destiny resembles that of Joyce. However, we have sought to trace the manner in which the unfinalisable component of Joyce’s self-reflection on the artistic process has served to elucidate some crucial aspects of the development of the artist, and of the artistic process.
CHAPTER NINE:

TWO TEXTS OF ROME

To date, our developmental and inceptional history of *Portrait* has focused on texts internal to the work’s composition: letters, aesthetics, critical writings, earlier drafts. In this chapter we seek to cast further reframing light on *Portrait* by scrutinising two external texts: a Papal decree against Modernism, and Nietzsche’s paper on *The Use and Abuse of History*. These suggest the play of some forces that were influential in the intensive field of Joyce’s creative aspirations, and that resulted in his adopting a revised attitude to history which would in turn pave the way towards a new chronotopic approach to *Portrait*. Rejecting the monumental and antiquarian approaches to history that partly embodied Joyce’s “nightmare”, he adopted the critical approach, which entailed a contestatory engagement with history, informed by a deeply rooted sense of self-knowledge.

Criticism moves in constant pursuit of the text’s lost and unrealized points of reference—all the verbal and eventual matters of fact which constitute the work’s complex symbolic networks, and without which criticism cannot hope to reconstitute those networks. Jerome McGann (*Historical Studies* 15)

— I cannot encourage you to disseminate such theories among the young men in this college.
— You think my theory of art is a false one?
— It is certainly not the theory of art which is respected in this college.
— I agree with that, said Stephen.
— On the contrary, it represents the sum-total of modern unrest and modern freethinking. The authors you quote as examples, those you seem to admire—
— Aquinas?
— Not Aquinas; I have to speak of him in a moment. But Ibsen, Maeterlinck— these atheistic writers— (SH 91)
A period of breakthrough

It was noted in the introductory chapter that the history theme is embodied in this thesis, in three ways: firstly the developmental and inceptional history which occupies Part One; secondly Joyce’s belief in the need for the Irish artist to engage with and reshape the sorrowful historic inheritance of his own “race”, a breakthrough with which, it has been suggested, was a defining moment for the reconception of Portrait (see Chapter 1); and thirdly the implicit or explicit theory of history which according to Bakhtin, is embodied in the novel narrative, and which we have examined in relation to Portrait by analysing the processive narrative in terms of shifts in a cluster of key chronotopic relationships (Chapters 7 and 8).

In relation to this third point, a few related themes emerge from a reading of Portrait. Firstly, the framing of Portrait is historically conceived: we are to read the portrait of an artist diachronically and synchronically, according to the “rhythm” of his developmental growth, in addition to the rhythm of his component attributes. Secondly, Stephen’s attitudes to history undergo change, primarily from what Nietzsche describes as the “monumental”, towards a critical view of history. The critical view that Stephen adopts does not mean that he shuns history, however, as the more detailed discussion of this chapter indicates. Stephen’s analyses of the prosaic everyday world are thoroughly imbued with an historical dimension, while, as we have seen in relation to the diary fragments, the everyday is mingled with a still richer mix of speculation, association, myth, legend and so on.

This chapter casts further light on the second history theme by speculating on the detailed considerations that led to Joyce’s historiographical shift in attitude towards his art. There are no new critical papers to mark the breakthrough, no aesthetics jottings, not even a book review. There is the evidence of “The Dead”, that Joyce after his Rome sojourn had found a way to develop the short story form powerfully, towards greater richness, or we might say in Bakhtinian vein, broader and deeper intentionality (see JJ 243-253 for further commentary on “The background of ‘The Dead’”). From March 1907 there are no letters from Joyce to his brother to illuminate the breakthrough, as the two were reunited in Trieste. And his brother Stanislaus (who had strongly approved of the satirical Stephen Hero and who appears to have argued
against James’ new plans, only offers sketchy details of the new outline for the work, and no details of the process by which Joyce arrived at the new approach.

So that, on the paper trail of the aesthetic instinct, we return to Rome, where various evidentiary avenues converge in a curious turn of the century chronotopic conjunction. While to date we have focused primarily on texts internal to Joyce’s development and to the inceptional/compositional history of *Portrait*, attention is now paid to two external texts which can be resonated against what we know of Joyce’s design, in an approach not dissimilar to Booker’s comparison of Joyce’s works to other literary paradigms and sources.

The first text examined expresses aspects of a force that Joyce, like Stephen (in both *Ulysses* and in *Portrait*) considered a repressive master over the soul of his race. The papal edict, St Pius X’s “Oath against Modernism” is in part a distillation of two previous pronouncements, and rails against certain prevailing heresies, touching upon a number of themes which were of close interest to Joyce. This text casts a great deal of light upon some of the socially contested values which, Bakhtin suggests, exert force on intentionality in the compositional field.

Jean Kimball (2003) has drawn out the lines of a most intriguing “text”, a narrative of correspondences between Joyce and his namesake Freud, which also centres on Rome at this time. There is not space in this thesis to enlarge on this text, which she has detailed so thoroughly, and to draw some further illumination from them. There are many striking parallels between the medical scientist with the literary and mythological bent (Freud) and the literary artist with a scientific bent, the failed medical student with a strong interest in Western mythology.

For the present it is enough to note that these namesakes and contemporaries shared an interest in a revolution of consciousness, and that Rome figured largely in both their respective careers: Freud having long found a source of philosophical inspiration

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55 Kimball suggests that Freud’s portrait of Leonardo had a late influence on the first section of *Portrait*, but otherwise dates Joyce’s active interest in Freud to about 1910, beyond the scope of this study (*Early Freudians* 21).
in this city, while for Joyce it stood as a symbol of repressive forces with which his artistic soul had to come to terms.

Our second text involves a more detailed look at Nietzsche’s essay on *The Use and Abuse of History*, which illuminates not only Joyce’s historiographic thinking but also its implications for his creative practice. It is suggested that Joyce took up Nietzsche’s challenge in adopting a critical perspective on history: for “the Delpian God cries his oracle to you at the beginning of your wanderings: ‘Know thyself’”(UAH 72)—a classical reference Freud (1976) too would doubtlessly have appreciated, as he analysed his own dreams.\(^{56}\) The result is a new approach to “history” that is based on a dialogue between the individual utterance and social discourses. The former for Joyce, as for Nietzsche, and naturally Freud, were based in “instincts, intuitions, impulses, ideas” (see discussion of Joyce’s letters, Chapter 2), which must be pitted against social actuality, the palpable presence of history past, present and future in its various forms: discourses associated with church, politics, morality and nationalism, the weight of history assumed by each, and their forcible effects in refracting authorial intentionality.

Both texts assist our aim of understanding some of the intellectual context of this time, and Joyce’s intellective and imaginative growth, to (in McGann’s words) recover something of the “text’s lost and unrealized points of reference” (*Historical Studies* 15). They are applied in relation to a speculative history of Joyce’s attitudinal progress, in sequence: firstly, Joyce’s initial repulsion at Rome, his reaction to its repressive force; secondly, his being thrown back upon his own creative and psychological resources, a period wherein he came to appreciate the artistic potential of Rome’s classic, artistic, and literary heritage: not merely its ancient history and literature, the immortal art of the Renaissance and the formidable living tradition of the Church, but also the more recent example of the Romantic poets, symbols of the imagination and of lives lived to the full (CW 82), reminders of whom he quickly encountered in Rome.\(^{57}\) Thirdly, a period of philosophical re-engagement with

\(^{56}\) Spoo documents some intriguing correspondences relevant to Joyce, Freud and Rome (*James Joyce* 14).

\(^{57}\) Uniquely among cities, since the Romantics generally shunned the city, “Rome attracted to herself—to the idea of herself, perhaps we should say—nearly all the great figures of the Romantic
history, accompanied by what Spoo refers to as Joyce’s “celebrated” attitude shift toward his native Ireland: a softening in attitudes and a renewed respect for its positive attributes, which may be taken as a symptom of the newly engaged, critical view of history that he was now exploring (e.g. *Selected Letters* 109-110).

**First impressions**

Praz notes that Victorian reactions to Rome often deflated the reputation of this most Romantic of cities, with its “filth and its beggars and its disgusting smells” (146). Joyce, however, who took a keen interest in odours, Dublin’s smells of offal and ashpits for example (*Selected Letters* 79, 89-90; and see Power 93) may have found his initial reactions flavoured more by anti-Papal bias, inspired by Ibsen (Francini Bruni, quoted in JJ 256). Certainly his initial reactions to Rome were unfavourable.

Joyce in Rome was confronted by a triad of forces anathema, as he saw it, to the creative instinct, in a city that for centuries had been the centre of power and money, and which he may have seen, like London, as a place where writing could never be important enough (Power 64). He was confronted by the overwhelming weight of monumental history, that litany of the deeds of the “man of action” (UAH), and the crushing weight of tradition associated with it. He was living in the capital of that Roman church which he claimed was the greatest oppressor of his own race. That same institution was at the centre of a constricting doctrine that sought to exert a tight rein on the sexual instinct; that which Joyce considered to be one of the eternal qualities of the human condition, along with the imagination (Power 74). Lastly, he was everywhere affronted by the frightening spectre of the mortality of the artist (a theme which is a central motif in *Portrait*: Chapters 7 & 8), including the images of the immortal Shelley, and Keats in “memorial aspect”.

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Movement”, even Wordsworth. McGann (*Beauty of Inflections* 313).
1. The grave of history

Joyce went to the bank the day after he arrived in Rome, passing a plaque commemorating Shelley’s writing of the *Cenci*, and *Prometheus Unbound* on his way there (Melchiori 14). While Shelley had been able to write in Rome, Joyce would fail in that regard. A few days later, Melchiori (15) records Joyce’s first sightseeing: “St Peters, the Pincio, the Colosseum and the Forums”. Having spent his first days serving capitalism, yet another oppressive master, a phase which was accompanied by, and perhaps occasioned, a renewal of interest in socialism (Melchiori 15, Manganiello 1980), Joyce next entered the headquarters of the living “master” of the Irish soul, before viewing the ruined magnificence of Imperial Rome, and what Nietzsche called its “crushing force” (63).

Joyce disliked the heat, the confusing run of streets, the lack of a decent café. In Aeolus, musing on “THE GRANDEUR THAT WAS ROME”, Professor McHugh is less than complimentary:

> — What was their civilisation? Vast, I allow: but vile. Cloacae: sewers. The jews in the wilderness and on the mountaintop said: It is meet to be here. Let us build an altar to Jehovah. The Roman, like the Englishman who follows in his footsteps, brought to every new shore on which he set his foot (on our shore he never set it) only his cloacal obsession. He gazed about him in his toga and he said: It is meet to be here. Let us construct a watercloset. (U 108)

Rome was replete with witness to its greatness, but equally to the transitoriness of secular power; confirmation of Joyce’s stance in not engaging in battles against British tyranny. While the Roman Church, having already endured for some two thousand years, aspired to timelessness and in its doctrine sought immunity against history (see below), secular Empires certainly could not achieve this; eventually they all fall. Perhaps, following Joseph Conrad’s recent example, in *Heart of Darkness*, Joyce began to find, with the present example of the Tiber and his memory of the Liffey, that there is nothing easier than to “evoke the great spirit of the past” from the knowable memories that an historic river conveys (Conrad 6). Marlow’s images of Romans penetrating England “1900 years ago”, located at Gravesend, his reflections
on the “spectral city”, the “brooding gloom”\textsuperscript{58} of London against a history of darkness and Roman conquest, contrast suggestively to Stephen’s reflections on Sandymount Strand, near Ringsend and near the mouth of the Liffey, likewise at sunset, and just east of the city that, Joyce had written to Stanislaus in 1905, was “the ‘second’ city of the British Empire” (\textit{Letters II} 111). “A moment before the ghost of the ancient kingdom of the Danes had looked forth through the vesture of the hazewrapped City” (P 169). This is at a point where Stephen has embraced the vocation of artist, and has begun to find a creative space, an apprehensory stasis, chronotopically straddling myth and legend, history long past and history present.

As with \textit{Heart of Darkness}, Joyce’s chief interest was in the heart and soul of humanity, more specifically of his “race”, ultimately not in the works of empire and the like, which as Marlow wryly notes, are not a pretty thing when you look at them too closely (10). In the \textit{Walpurgisnacht} scene of \textit{Ulysses}, Stephen is at the centre of a catastrophic vision that, quite apart from the Blake and Wagner references (Joyce saw a performance of \textit{Twilight of the Gods} in Rome: \textit{Selected Letters} 150), was very possibly inspired by his seeing the ruins of Rome, the Eternal City which gave witness to the collapse of historic time and space.

In this nightmarish dramatisation of Stephen’s earlier reflections on history and classical times, in the classroom at Dalkey (U 20), Stephen deliberately smashes a decorative source of light; the chandelier classically is associated with opulence and luxury, the trappings of empire. In this hallucinatory image, Stephen engages in a chronotopic act of mastery, obliterating time and destroying the architecture of space: “Time’s livid final flame leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry” (U 475-6). He is attempting not so much to “escape” the nightmare of history here (for his celebrated quip is frequently taken at face value), as, masterfully, dionysian staff in both hands, to seize his artistic freedom.\textsuperscript{59} The \textit{thyrsus} of course is associated with the Dionysian instincts, with creativity, the imagination, with the celebration of life and with the phantasms of the

\textsuperscript{58} “Brooding” was a favourite word of Joyce’s: Aubert (114)

\textsuperscript{59} Spoo suggests that Stephen thus becomes the “anarchistic Siegfried of [George Bernard Shaw’s]\textit{The Perfect Wagnerite}” (\textit{Language of History} 20).
mind. Armed with a destructive weapon akin to Nietzsche’s indispensable philosophical tool, the hammer, Stephen’s creative instinct faces history and destroys its image, thereby to create the conditions wherein it can create.

This fantastic and improbable scene can be taken as emblematic of my argument: it presents an image of the resurrection of Joyce’s creative instincts in 1907 when, after having faced the ruins of Rome and the ruinous prospects of his own tilt at immortality, Joyce needed to find the chronotopic space wherein he could create. Rome whose physical space oppressed him with images of mortality and decay, Rome which took all his time when he took up his first fulltime job, so that by the end of his stay he would mournfully report on the low state of his imagination (see Chapter 2).

Art is the truly immortal quality in an entropic, rotting world. The Church endured as Stephen’s most virulent oppressor (U 17) and yet, what was truly eternal and immortal in the Eternal City, Joyce must have come to appreciate, was not its history but its art: the visible presence of great works of art, and in particular of the Renaissance, and the equally tangible presence of the classical literary tradition upon which he would draw for both Portrait and Ulysses (Ovid, Greek myth, revisited by Roman authors, the Odyssey). The Renaissance, Joyce opined to Power (92), like Rome, also never set foot in Ireland.

2. The Church

Speaking with Stephen on the question of freethought, and of freedom of belief—or from belief, the English interloper Haines well-meaningly suggests: “After all, I should think you are able to free yourself. You are your own master, it seems to me.” Stephen retorts:

— I am a servant of two masters, Stephen said, an English and an Italian.
— Italian? Haines said.
A crazy queen, old and jealous. Kneel down before me.
— And a third, Stephen said, there is who wants me for odd jobs.
— Italian? Haines said again. What do you mean?
— The imperial British state, Stephen answered, his colour rising, and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church. (U 17)

Freedom is precisely the quality that the artist must have: freedom of thought and expression, freedom to devote one’s time and energies to one’s art and only to one’s art. Freedom of instinct, freedom from those nets which in Portrait Stephen finds it necessary to fly by.

One aspect of Joyce’s immediate reaction to his advent in the headquarters of the Church is evidenced by the fact that he took up with alacrity the reading of socialist and anti-clerical magazines. Melchiori records that these two causes had become linked, because the church had shown signs of increasing political interference, allying itself with the ruling class “against the spread of socialism” (56). Joyce was “tremendously” excited about the “idea of the black pope”: the election of the head of the Jesuits on September 8, 1906, exactly one year before the papal decree against “the errors of modernism” was issued (analysed below). Generally, his critical interest in the Roman Catholic church is in Melchiori’s assessment, “nearly morbid” (59).

Ellmann suggests that his socialism climaxed and then waned during his period. A turning point appears to have been the letting off of a bomb at a café too close for comfort. The violently kinetic bomb served as a reminder of his aesthetic principles, that art is not meant to serve dogma, even a revolutionary one. Dogma too is the deprivation of freedom and pre-empts the aesthetic stasis.

His autobiographical character in Stephen Hero had informed his mother that he was fashioning a “torpedo” for the Pope, Ibsen-style. Within approximately a year of having written these words, Joyce was in Rome when a literal bomb was let off in St Peters. Melchiori records that Joyce visited the church that afternoon of 18 November 1906 (17), perhaps to see the results of his unconscious wish-fulfillment?

Joyce, prone to superstitiousness, might have viewed as divine retribution, the fact that the proposed first US edition of Dubliners was torpedoed en route from Dublin (Groden, “Textual History”) after the onset of war.
After Dublin’s Abbey Theatre riots of early February 1907, which affected Joyce profoundly (JJ 239-40), his distancing from socialist and anti-clerical interests appears to have advanced rapidly in favour of tending to those wounds which events back home inflicted on his peace of mind. On the 6 February he stopped buying the socialist paper *Avanti!* and on 17 February an anti-clerical procession in honour of Bruno gave him little pleasure (JJ 240).

3. Mortality

A third source of oppression to Joyce was reminders of mortality, everywhere evident in Rome. This theme, we have seen, was a preoccupation of Joyce’s (Chapters 2, 7, 8) and is a central theme in *Portrait*, as well as in his paper on “James Clarence Mangan” (Chapter 6). His impressions of the morbidity of the Eternal City appear to have been the strongest force, inducing a strong sense of repugnance.

This fear of mortality of course was intricately linked to a greater fear: of not achieving immortality. The drudgery of work, which still yielded no relief from his chronic financial circumstances, forced Joyce to face the threat of ignominious mortality head on, and led him to the crisis point where self-declaredly he had to make the choice between being an artist or merely a “patient Cousins” (JJ 240).

Monumental history

Although Nietzsche’s essay “On the Use and Abuse of History” is sometimes portrayed as being a tirade “against” history, in reality Nietzsche stipulates firmly that “The fact that life does need the service of history must be as clearly grasped as that an excess of history hurts it” (12). Nietzsche outlines three forms of the use of history: the monumental, antiquarian and critical views, all of which are equally subject to possible abuse. I discuss the first form here; the latter two are explored below.

Joyce’s initial reactions to the monumental presence of Rome pay witness to his fears of its deadening effects on the creative instinct, and on life, as in Nietzsche’s critique (Nietzsche 6), because an excess of history (which Rome is particularly prone to)
weakens the “personality” and arrests the instincts (28). Nonetheless, the
monumental, by dint of its reference to great deeds from the past can serve the “man
of action” in particular as an example for future great acts: whatever was, can be
again. Joyce applied an analogous principle in setting himself to emulate the heroic,
nonconformist examples of dramatist Henrik Ibsen (who had exiled himself to Rome)
and of the supreme poet Dante, in creating an uncompromising art form of his own
(Aubert). There was the example of Shelley too, about whose grave he would write in
1913 in some notes for his drama Exiles. The setting is Rome by moonlight, that
“most explicit of Romantic signs” (McGann, Historical Studies 315): Shelley is rising
from his grave: “He has fought in vain for an ideal and died killed by the world. Yet
he rises.” (Exiles 152) While Joyce had rejected for himself the role of revolutionary
“man of action”, nonetheless he saw the example of Shelley, Ibsen and other writers
such as Blake, as essentially heroic (e.g. CW 101) and besides, he felt that the ancient
Romans knew, better than anyone, that “the men of action and men of imagination are
the complement of each other” (Power 73).

As Ellmann attests, Joyce around the time of the Rome sojourn suffered repeated
doubts about heroism even in the face of his convictions about his own heroes (see
Chapter 2). His aspirations clearly still led him along such paths, and Nietzsche’s
attitude must have appealed to him:

But the fiercest battle is fought round the demand for greatness to be eternal. Every
other living thing cries no. “Away with the monuments,” is the watchword. Dull
custom fills all the chambers of the world with its meanness, and rises in thick vapor
round anything that is great, barring its way to immortality, blinding and stifling it . . .
. For they want but one thing: to live at any cost. And yet there are always men
awakening who are strengthened and made happy by gazing on past greatness . . . and
the fairest fruit of this bitter tree were the knowledge that there was once a man who
walked sternly and proudly through this world, another who had pity and loving-
kindness, another who lived in contemplation, but all leaving one truth behind
them—that his life is the fairest who thinks least about life. (UAH 13-14: italics
mine.)

Mangan too, in Joyce’s view, did not shrink from the grave, although he had the
contrary defect of being a little afraid of life (CW 81). In the final, diary section of
the novel, as we have seen, Stephen has a vision of a chamber issuing pillars of vapours, that is strongly evocative of Nietzsche’s imagery; he thus figures himself likewise from the point of view of immortal attitudes, observing the follies of his fellows (see Chapter 8).

Prior to this, Stephen’s engagement with monumental history had begun at the end of the first chapter, where he drew inspiration from heads in history books, from “The Roman Senate” and from framed heads in noble portraits. And yet, Nietzsche suggests, even this form of history owes its greatness to an inner source, the “rare flash of light” (compare in Portrait, Stephen’s occasional lightning illuminations from his reading, the function of lightning in the villanelle sequence) which a privileged few find themselves illuminated by:

In this spiritualised form, fame is something more than the sweetest morsel for our egoism; in Schopenhauer’s phrase it is the belief in the oneness and continuity of the great in every age, and a protest against the change and decay of generations. (UAH 14)

Monumental history, moreover, is transmitted through the generations. It provides continuity of tradition in counterpoint to generational change, as a beacon of continuity, of the guiding and contextualising power of history. Joyce, like Stephen, was preoccupied with intervening in the conscience of his race at the point of generational transmission, but did hold strongly that the “modern” should not throw away precision or a sense of tradition, altogether (CW 101).

Despite his initial hostility, most likely after Joyce had left Rome, when his attitudes to the city had begun to mellow, he began to find in memory, suggestive strength in the monumental example of history. If Rome’s sacred and secular empires did not move him, there were reminders of still greater, more pressing examples there: its art, the classic writers, including Ovid, from whose Metamorphoses he would take Portrait’s epigram (something that was planned some time after his return to Trieste, as it is found in the Trieste notebook: Scholes and Kain 94), Bruno, whose brooding statue stood in the Campo dei Fiori, Shelley, Byron, D’Annunzio. While the “men of
action” in history are frequently blind, as Nietzsche suggests, poetic vision can ensure immortality in art.

Pope St Pius X’s Oath against modernism

We conclude this survey of Joyce’s initial reactions to Rome with discussion of two texts published some months after Joyce had left Rome, and a detailed reading of a followup text, “St Pius X’s Oath Against the Errors of Modernism”, (which is reproduced in full in the Appendix). The first of these texts was St Pius X’s “Lamentabili Sane”, published on July 3 1907, less than a month prior to Lucia’s birth. The document notes that:

> With truly lamentable results, our age, casting aside all restraint in its search for the ultimate causes of things, frequently pursues novelties so ardently that it rejects the legacy of the human race. Thus it falls into very serious errors, which are even more serious when they concern sacred authority, the interpretation of Sacred Scripture, and the principal mysteries of Faith. The fact that many Catholic writers also go beyond the limits determined by the Fathers and the Church herself is extremely regrettable. In the name of higher knowledge and historical research (they say), they are looking for that progress of dogmas which is, in reality, nothing but the corruption of dogmas. (1)

The pursuit of “novelties” pursued by these Catholic writers (not to mention their pursuits in the novel) is specifically curtailed by the condemnation and proscription of a series of propositions. The propositions of greatest interest to my research are those chiefly associated with the framing and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and with Divine inspiration. These in turn were crystallised into a followup statement in September of that same year (Pius X, “Pascendi Dominici”), again attacking the spread of “novelties” by enemies of the human race, the practitioners of “arts”.

> The office divinely committed to Us of feeding the Lord's flock has especially this duty assigned to it by Christ, namely, to guard with the greatest vigilance the deposit of the faith delivered to the saints, rejecting the profane novelties of words and
oppositions of knowledge falsely so called. There has never been a time when this
watchfulness of the supreme pastor was not necessary to the Catholic body; for,
owing to the efforts of the enemy of the human race, there have never been lacking
"men speaking perverse things" (Acts xx. 30), "vain talkers and seducers" (Tit. i. 10),
"erring and driving into error" (2 Tim. iii. 13). Still it must be confessed that the
number of the enemies of the cross of Christ has in these last days increased
exceedingly, who are striving, by arts, entirely new and full of subtlety, to destroy the
vital energy of the Church, and, if they can, to overthrow utterly Christ's kingdom
itself.

Of great interest is that the attack has now broadened from focusing on “Catholic
writers” to artists: practitioners of “arts, entirely new and full of subtlety”, like
perhaps the uncertain arts of the ur-Portrait, a novel art that proceeds by a process “as
yet untabulated” (Scholes and Kain) if not indeed by the kind of “obscure arts” that
Ovid, in the epigraph to Portrait, records that Daedalus devoted himself to.

A couple of weeks after the issue of the “Syllabus Condemning The Errors Of The
Modernists: Lamentabili Sane” in July, Joyce fell very ill with rheumatic fever: an
effect Ellmann attributes to his “carefree nights in Roman and Triestine gutters”.
Upon the release of the followup document, “Pascendi Dominici Gregis: Encyclical
Of Pope Pius X On The Doctrines Of The Modernists” in September, Joyce had
begun to recover, and it is likely that he heard of this document around this time, if he
did not in fact actually read it.

Given Joyce’s lifelong interest in the Church, and his recent history of close attention
to the Church during his stay, it is extremely likely that he would have been,
nonetheless, familiar with many if not all, of the doctrinal viewpoints contained
therein61, and thus the document casts light on the context of ambient Church
ideology, its force and its convictions. While Joyce is unlikely to have been aware of

61 Writing to his Aunt Josephine in 1904 defiantly, in relation to his having eloped with Nora, Joyce
wrote: “In conclusion—I spit upon the image of the Tenth Pius” (Letters 1: 58). Another example of
Joyce’s interest in Church tracts is Joyce’s extensive use of obscure Jesuitical tracts for the sermons of
Portrait, as James Thrane has demonstrated.
this document on the precise day when he announced plans to recast *Portrait*, he almost certainly was aware of the tenor of Church attitudes expressed therein.

The “Pascendi Dominici Gregis” is a somewhat lengthy document, of broad scope, and there is not space here to discuss it in full. The later followup document issued in 1910, (“Oath”) is a concise distillation of the themes, and merits a detailed reading.

The artistic vocation in the non-Euclidean age is a confrontation with infinity, in a field of only relative values: the field open to the artist is wide as the universe, and potentially chaotic. We have seen that around the turn of the twentieth century, the young artist Joyce sought direction from aesthetics and philosophy, from the “new drama”, from poetry and from the broader literary tradition. Most importantly of all, he found direction through developing a broad artistic platform, an aesthetics, and through introspection, much like Stephen in *Portrait*.

Literary form in the non-Euclidean age also is open to reinterpretation and reworking, as it implies a breaking up of the social and cultural values that, in Bakhtinian terms, are embodied in form, the weight of cultural history bound up in genre. The non-Euclidean perspective implies a re-evaluation of the form and logic of the novel, since the form and logic of the world are now framed differently; for a novel’s evolution reflects changed social values underpinning it, Bakhtin notes. Well before a change in the literary arts would be framed under the title of “Modernism”, the Church had adopted this term as a summation of perceived, threatening ideational forces within the institution itself.

In the intentive field of this Oath, in contrast to Joyce’s prose, the intention of the author is overwhelmingly focused, tightly restricted and unambiguous. This fact alone is strongly suggestive of a radical disparity in world view between the Joycean narrative and the Church imperative: between the former’s attitude of affirmation of life, openness to life’s broader possibilities, a deep engagement with the history of literature and ideas, his catholic range of reading (including doctrinal tracts), as opposed to the Church’s attempt to define and control life, history, thought, practice; and even breath (see Appendix). Joyce himself wrote, in respect of students being
forbidden to see *Othello*, due to some coarse expressions: “The exercise of authority might be sometimes (rarely) questionable, its intention, never” (Scholes and Kain 62).

A reading of this document makes clear the imperatives for Joyce of leaving a Church for which he still had remnant admiration, and in the activities of which he continued to take a close interest. For the formerly devout believer, who cannot only half-believe, the Church not only expresses contrary views, that a syncretist like Bruno, or dialogician perhaps could happily live with, but coercively seeks to suppress opposing viewpoints: non-Euclideanism, psychology, history, pantheism etc.—in most of which, Joyce took an interest. Indeed, in its very title this acutely monological, hierarchical document seeks to rule out even the possibility of “error”: that ultimate power Stephen would arrogate unto himself: to make mistakes, even great mistakes (P 247).

The social contextual framing of this decree, of the text as “event”, is coercively powerful. For the object of this decree is to enlist and conscript believers, to make a compact with their souls and to prescribe and proscribe what thoughts can be entertained in the psyche. The text is designed to be a sworn speech event, inscribed on the soul with the purpose of shaping the soul, the form of the psyche. An event formalised with the name and designation, the undivided monological subject of the swearer, and capped by the dramatic exhortation to maintain these beliefs “up to the last gasp of my life”. With this final expiration then would go any last gasp of hope, of poetic aspirations to ins-piration, the like of which Stephen entertains in writing the villanelle (see Chapter 8).

**A Reading Of The Oath**

The text of Pope St Pius X’s oath against Modernism is found in the Appendix. For reference’s sake, each paragraph has been numbered in Roman numerals.

*Cartesian certitude*

Primarily, the oath is a Cartesian affirmation of certainty, reinforced by Euclidean finititude: God, “beginning and ending of all things, can be certainly known, and
therefore also proved” (Paragraph I): the truths set out by this document are not merely a matter of faith but they are supported by inductive “proof”. The origins of this knowledge however are neither scientific nor inductive but the fruits of “received knowledge”, the inspiration of the “divine deeds”.

The oath stipulates that faith consists in assent to “the truth received from outside through the ear”. Thus the subject of faith is figured hallucinatorily, just as Stephen hears voices at the climax of his fear in Chapter Three, when he is all alone in his bedroom. Generally, however, Stephen Dedalus in Portrait is portrayed as receiving images of the world (in the broadest sense of the term) through all senses, especially in Chapter One. From an early age, Stephen is portrayed as balancing sensory input from the outside world with input from within, as he opens and closes his ears to compare the sensations (P 13).

The epistemological basis of this doctrine is curiously balanced between pure received knowledge, essentially an item of faith, and its logical and provable basis in the “natural light of reason”. If this is the tenor of the Church’s self-representation, then Stephen’s discussion of the modern spirit, in Stephen Hero, as analysing phenomena (SH 86) in the “light of day” constitutes a contestatory grab for the same Aristotelean territory: to create the necessary “proof” of his artistic faith by the exercise of the “natural light of reason” in relation to questions of truth and beauty. As we have seen, the Church is figured metaphorically in Portrait, in terms of flickering fires, lamps and smoke: its claims to the “natural light” are figuratively dismissed.

Despite the bold assertion of transparent, provable truth, nonetheless this faith is at the same time, not to be subject to the “freedom of judgement wherewith any secular monument is usually studied” (VIII): that is, this logical proof is not to be put to scientific test in defiance of sacred authority. Paradoxically, it is both logical and provable and yet not to be subjected to scrutiny along those lines.

The epistemological basis of the church rests not merely on the “visible works of creation” and its interpretations based on them. For one also must accept the “most certain signs of the divine origin of the Christian religion the external arguments of revelation, that is, the divine deeds, and in the first place the miracles and prophecies”
In short, despite its aspirations to scientific proof, the faith of the church resides solely in faith.

Stephen’s faith on the other hand, is not received truth but Aristotelian inductive and deductive truths gleaned from his investigations and his readings: his findings confirm an inner sense, resonating “echoes and prophecies” of his inner state, received by his inner ear from an inner voice, the fruits of his intellective and imaginative curves rather than sacred whispers poured through the helix of his ear; his sources of knowledge are both agnostic and gnostic.

The church’s assurance of the “supernatural” provenance of truth, its inductive basis in “miracles and prophecies” is also underpinned by what could be construed as a veiled threat: the “divine promise of a help for the perpetual preservation of each one of the revealed truths” (VIII). Woe betide those who teach or write about theology, who would defy such authority.

**Time and history**

The document’s treatment of time and history stands in sharp relief to Joyce. Against Joyce’s interest in expressing the spirit of the time, the Church stresses timelessness: “not so that what is maintained is what may appear better or more suitably adapted to the culture of each age, but so that the absolute and unchangeable truth preached by the Apostles from the beginning may never be believed or understood otherwise” (9). Indeed, the “errors of our time” start with the very error of considering that ideas about faith might change with time. In contrast, the form of *Portrait*, it has been demonstrated, is predicated to embody the force of time as change in an artist’s life; with time, so too does the complexion of the artist’s faith change.

If faith is not subject to time, nor is it subject to the contextualising gaze of history either, or to the kind of populist force that would tear down the monument from its unassailable pinnacle on a mountain top. While claiming its foundations in the “real and historical Christ” himself, the oath demands obedience to further strictures:
I also condemn and reject the opinion of those who say that the more learned Christian has a two-fold personality, one of the believer and the other of the historian, as if it would be lawful for the historian to uphold views which are in contradiction with the faith of the believer, or to lay down propositions from which it would follow that the dogmas are false or doubtful, as long as these dogmas were not directly denied. …. (VI)

The mere existence of the “divided subject” (see Aubert 57), which we have seen to be the mode of Stephen’s consciousness precisely at the time of his reprision of the religious way in Portrait (see Chapter 7) would pose the danger of dialogue, of relativist reframing. At the same time as the Church doctrine is portrayed as provable and historical, the edict in effect denies the validity of both those disciplines which putatively support it: science and history, the methodologies of both of which entail scrutiny, the power to reframe the object and thus see it in a perspective other than that officially sanctioned. Science has freedom to judge any “secular monument” objectively, but not the sacred and supernatural “origin of Catholic tradition”.

Stephen adopted a motto of silence, exile and cunning. Such a powerful adversary as the Church, so adept at sophistic contrivance, is likely to inspire the resort to such strategic weapons. So strenuous and controlling is the tenor of this oath that it even seeks to control the development of views that have potential to “lay down propositions from which it would follow that the dogmas are false or doubtful”. Small wonder that Joyce at times resorted to the cryptic, unassailable, unframed utterance, all the more to elude the tight nets of hostile dogma.

Perhaps Joyce came to reflect that, if the Church were so opposed to historical scrutiny, history must have potential strategic value for himself.

*Hermeneutics*

The Church also outlaws “unlawful” acts of interpretation of Scripture by rationalists “recklessly upholding the critique of the text as the only and supreme rule”. Thus it extends its authority to all matters of framing and interpretation of texts, a draconian imposition on this most intertextual of artistic sensibilities. In direct contrast to the
central theme of becoming in the *Portrait* essay, as in the novel, and Joyce’s theme of the evolution of the artist and the artistic process itself, the oath swears against the “heretical invention of the *evolution* of dogmas, to the effect that these would change their meaning from that previously held by the Church” (IV; italics mine). Dogma is not to be seen on a curve but only in iron memorial aspect, and to imply evolution is to subvert its unshakeably absolute character.

Church doctrine militates against creativity, as doctrine and interpretation are fixed and not subject to creative reinterpretation: certainly this is anathema to the writer who would make an art form of the reshaping and intertextual reinterpretation of many works: from the sacred and profane through the sublime and the tawdry. A related force is that of strictures restricting the humanist emphasis on *consciousness*, where the “divine deposit . . . would be replaced by a philosophical invention or a creation of human consciousness, slowly formed by the effort of men and to be henceforward perfected by an indefinite progress”. Gone is the chance for Joyce to forge a new “conscience” for his race, based on introspection into his own consciousness, and the “perverse devil of my literary conscience” (*Selected Letters* 110).

**Pantheism**

Lastly, in its crushingly comprehensive iron fist, the Church denies the possibility of alternative faith:

> Lastly, I profess myself in everything totally averse to the error whereby modernists hold that there is nothing divine in sacred tradition, or, what is much worse, that there is, but in a pantheistic sense; so that nothing remains there but the bare and simple fact to be equated to the common facts of history. (IX)

Proscribed is that “pantheistic” sense Joyce found so inspiring around 1903, that principle he had sensed to be immanent in the spirit of his race, the possibility of creatively exploring a broader sense of the sacred and spiritual.
In sum then, this document gives an overwhelming sense of the nexus that Stephen in *Stephen Hero* apprehends between the “priest” and the policeman (see discussion, Chapter 2). The former is equally controlling, but as the interpreter of divine law, it is in the role of lawgiver, more than enforcer. Stephen in *Stephen Hero* suggests it is as absurd “for a criticism itself established upon homilies to prohibit the elective courses of the artist in his revelation of the beautiful as it would be for a police-magistrate to prohibit the sum of any two sides of a triangle from being together greater than the third side” (80). Joyce holds, on the contrary, that every age must look for its sanction to its poets and philosophers (CW 82), and that truth and beauty must be re-viewed and reworked in every age, according to the classical and the romantic synthesis.

In Stephen’s alternative credo, the poet is the “intense centre of the life of his age to which he stands in a relation than which none can be more vital”. Further:

> When the poetic phenomenon is signalled in the heavens . . . it is time for the critics to verify their calculations in accordance with it. It is time for them to acknowledge that here the imagination has contemplated intensely the truth of the being of the visible world and that beauty, the splendour of truth, has been born. The age, though it bury itself fathoms deep in formulas and machinery, has need of these realities which alone give and sustain life and it must await from those chosen centres of vivification the force to live, the security for life which can come to it only from them. Thus the spirit of man makes a continual affirmation. (SH 80)

The “continual affirmation” Stephen refers to is not of a *constant* but rather is a re-invention, a rediscovery of “realities” that smacks of Nietzsche’s Eternal Recurrence: a continual yet changing affirmation of the “spirit of man” (sic) as opposed to the mechanistic controlling forces of “formulas and machinery”.

The artistic vision then according to Stephen is clearly chronotopic in character, a product reflecting relational contexts of time and space. But the poetic phenomenon is not so much an attempt to assess and measure the temper of the times: rather, an appropriate artistic practice *embodies* such a spirit and becomes in itself the reference point against which critics must take measure.
Stephen in Portrait, as we have seen, does not engage in such a blatantly defiant manifesto but allows his stance to be summarised under the cursory but firm “non serviam”. Against the overwhelming force of Church dogma, in Portrait Stephen resorts to strategies of silence and cunning.

My reading of Portrait has demonstrated that Stephen’s progress can be charted against certain key chronotopic attributes. His least creative phase, we have seen, was during his reprise of devoutness. His creativity during this phase was closely confined within the credo and consisted chiefly of daydreaming reinterpretations of dogma. Responsibility consisted simply of adhering to an established creed and closing his mind to all external circumstances and countervailing considerations, to history, science, relativism, and broader spirituality. Within the church tradition, there is to be no history, only timelessness, and finitude, “till the end of time”. Thus there is no futurity either except as a continuation of the past.

Analysis of this document has revealed some of the reasons why Stephen’s battle for the independence of his soul occupies centre stage in the narrative of Portrait. At stake is the battle not only for his soul, but also the battle for freedom of expression and for the free run of his creative instincts. This fight for creative independence is acutely chronotopic: at stake are issues of Euclidean absolutes and certainties versus relativism, unchallengeable timelessness versus creative infinitude, responsibility as servitude versus answerability, servitude to the past versus creation of a future.

While no claim is made for the direct influence of this particular document in respect of the recasting of Portrait, a pleasant chronotopic coincidence which would undoubtedly have pleased Joyce greatly, had he been aware of it, is that St Pius X’s Pascendi Dominici Gregis was issued in 1907 on the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and on what would become Molly Bloom’s birthday anniversary: September 8. September 8 1907 is also the day when, in Ellmann’s account, Joyce announced his new conception of Portrait to Stanislaus: a book in five chapters, beginning with Stephen’s schooldays (JJ 264), and where the character’s surname would be “Daly”; a fleeting marker perhaps of the everyday and prosaic reality to which Joyce had begun to return his focus.
The use and abuse of history

Our second external text is that identified by Spoo as a likely influence on Joyce during his intense period of historiographic reading in Rome: Nietzsche’s essay on *The Use and Abuse of History*. Strong intertextual resonances between *Portrait* and Nietzsche’s essay have already been noted. A closer look at this essay shows that it is highly suggestive as a means of explaining Joyce’s new historiographic thinking when it came to revising his approach to *Portrait*.

“A Painful Case”

We do know that Joyce was revisiting Nietzsche soon after his arrival in Rome. Joyce reworked the story “A Painful Case” in August (Melchiori 15), when his reactions to that city were still raw. The character Duffy (who bears similarities both to Joyce and to his brother Stanislaus) has two Nietzschean volumes on the shelf: *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, and *The Gay Science*. According to Ellmann, Joyce added details of Duffy’s reading later, to make him a more intellectual and interesting character. He recounts that “Joyce considered this to be one of his weaker stories (JJ 229). Scholes and Litz also note that the most heavily revised page in what is extant of earlier *Dubliners* manuscripts is from this story (D 236). In his letters from Rome, Joyce testifies to the arduous and ultimately unsatisfying endeavour to perfect the story. Uncharacteristically, he even seems tacitly to admit defeat. He strives for perfection but finds it hard going: the story, it seems, resists his best efforts. He asks Stanislaus to send him the manuscript of this story, together with his Paris notes and some notes about Joachim Abbas; the latter he did not use (JJ 210). Some days later, he notes only that he has added a few paragraphs. Days later again, he has written five new pages, the content and tenor of which he does not specify. Again he expresses dissatisfaction with his output, but he is simply too fatigued to pursue perfection.

The story was based on an incident involving Stanislaus, but it seems to have grown into a greater resemblance of himself (MBK 158-160). Like Joyce in Rome, Duffy

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62 Magalaner (88) however characterises the development from one draft to another in terms of a reduction in autobiographical references; arguably a study of the design of *Dubliners* would test this
works in a bank. He has retreated into a (risible) kind of voluntary exile, like Joyce, since he chooses to live in Chapelizod, west of Dublin, a place which in his limited imagination resembles living “as far away as possible from the city of which he was a citizen” (D 107). Like Joyce, he appears to have attempted a translation of Hauptmann’s *Michael Kramer* and, in theory at least, he is something of an autobiographical writer. (Like Joyce at the time of writing, he hadn’t yet managed a satisfactory work on this theme however.) Rather like the writer of the 1904 “portrait” blueprint, he writes about himself in the third person and with a past predicate (D 108). And yet, while writing materials are always set up on his desk, like Joyce in Rome, he finds little opportunity or occasion to write.

Most strikingly, however, Duffy is characterised as being divorced both from society, and from his own instincts, living within a narrow routine and in the confines of his intellectual life. Unlike the married woman with whom he appears to have a sexless affair, Mrs Sinico, he appears unable to get in touch with his own sensual instincts or to heed her urging to “let his nature open to the full” (110) while he, unable fully to embrace life has thus “sentenced her to death”. Self-thwarted and self-pitying, he thus feels himself an “outcast from life’s feast” (117). He has apparently read, but failed to apply, some lessons from Nietzsche, for he resembles those creatures of Nietzsche’s critique who masquerade as men of culture and yet who, overshadowed by history and having “lost or destroyed” their instincts, have turned into “shades and abstractions” (Nietzsche 29-30): a recurring theme in this essay (42, 64). Duffy’s malaise is not caused by “history” so much as by his arid intellectual “freethought”. He represents, quite literally, Stephen’s ironic self-depiction to Haines in *Ulysses* as a “horrible example of freethought” and a clear contrast to Joyce’s own belief that the writer and thinker must be engaged with the everyday details of life, not cloister himself away from it.

Ellmann notes (JJ 252) that “A Painful Case” is another instance of Joyce’s obsession with the living and the dead, since it is about the relations between two dead people: Mrs Sinico, who appears to have become alcoholic and to have eventually suicided after Duffy broke off the affair, and Duffy, who continues to live but who is
effectively “dead” to the sources of life (symbolised by the “shallow” Liffey which he has followed West to Chapelizod) and to his own instincts. The story is a good deal less satisfactory or powerful than the story Joyce wrote after leaving Rome, also dedicated to “The Dead”, and the contrast in the two treatments of this theme provides a rough suggestion of the progress of the Joycean imagination during this period.

The spectre of “the dead”, it has been suggested, was at the heart of Joyce’s initial reaction of repulsion to Rome. Rome pimps itself to tourists, preserving the “corpse” of history as its ignoble chief asset, despite its putrescible qualities and its stench. Inevitably, it is ripe for Nietzsche’s critique of a society where “the unrestrained historical sense” uproots the future (42) and where the dead bury the living.

Antiquarian history

Nietzsche identified three forms of history, each of which has its “uses” and “abuses”. Joyce was initially overwhelmed by monumental Rome and, in effect, needed to tear down its oppressive edifices, the erections of Stephen’s “masters”: the Church, Empire, and that other master who wants him for “odd jobs” (capitalism), in order to create a new literary architecture, a new form, for himself.

As for the second form of history, the antiquarian, at face value this poses few temptations for Joyce. This form is “necessary to the man of conservative and reverent nature who looks back to the origins of his existence with love and trust” (UAH 17). He seeks to preserve all that “survives from ancient days” (18). This is the kind of glorified nostalgia that Simon Dedalus was prone to indulge in: Cork, his youth, the days of Parnell. Mangan’s wallowing in a piteous Irish legend can be considered tantamount to the antiquarian approach, and aspects of the Celtic Revival seemed to Joyce similarly retrograde.

Misapplied, antiquarian history results in life being trained in the service of the past: it “mummifies” rather than preserves life (UAH 20): a felicitous metaphor for Rome, and signified for many tourists by the Capuchin collections of bones (Praz 448); indeed, Nietzsche lumps antiquaries and gravediggers together (51).
On the face of it then, Joyce was the very opposite of an antiquarian since he saw the modern work as being to cast off tradition. At the same time however, in that same review of *Catilina* he criticises a generation which has cast off belief “and thrown precision after it” (CW 101).

Joyce encountered the antiquarian form of history everywhere in Rome of course: the preserved ruins of its imperial past, the plaques, the statues, the cemetery; the living, continuous tradition of the Vatican. The Roman, says Nietzsche, might well live in such a way that the history of their town becomes their own history, their own philosophy and way of life (18), but applied in extreme this form of history resembles “the mad collector raking over all the dust heaps of the past”, not valuing the creations of the present and thus promoting a kind of paralysis (20): surely anathema to the writer who had made paralysis his theme in *Dubliners*. Likewise, the antiquarian sense lacks perspective and context and in this sense also is diametrically opposed to Joyce (19), who sought to express the nature and spirit of his times.

And yet, appropriately applied, antiquarian history conforms to Joyce’s mission of forging a conscience for his race. Rather than conforming to the spirit of the “soul of his people from afar” over the centuries, as in Nietzsche’s critique (18) of the antiquarian, Joyce seeks to create a new spirit, to re-create this soul for the generations to come. Nietzsche figures the antiquarian as gifted with a sense of divination, according to the palimpsests and polypsests of “a half-vanished trail”. Just so, Joyce is fully cognisant, albeit critically, of the “broken light of Irish myth”, and equally conscious of what Nietzsche describes as the heroism of being an individual outside of one’s time; Stephen too, we have seen, knows that his monkish learning is of little interest to his time.

For Joyce, the antiquarian spirit stems not so much from the deep roots of the culture, which Nietzsche metaphorises as a tree (19) but rather from the depths of one’s own soul, in one’s instincts. From this base, Joyce seeks to unify his “race”, just as Nietzsche proclaimed German unity “in its highest sense”: that is, not political union but the unity of spirit and life (28).
Critical history

It is, however, the third “use” of history, the critical approach, which Joyce would find of greatest applicability. Joyce’s modern project of breaking up tradition resembles critical history. However, it goes far beyond merely rejecting or attempting to escape from history: properly applied, it involves deep, albeit critical, engagement with history. Nietzsche encapsulates the approach thus:

Man must have the strength to break up the past, and apply it too, in order to live. He must bring the past to the bar of judgement, interrogate it remorselessly, and finally condemn it. . . . It is not justice that sits in judgement here, nor mercy that proclaims the verdict, but only life, the dim, driving force that insatiably desires—itsel. (21)

Unlike Mangan’s experience, of allowing his imagination to be constrained by his nation’s mournful past, the poet with a critical approach to history must first “break up the past” before learning to live with it: “It requires great strength to be able to live and forget how far life and injustice are one” (21): this is the strength that Mangan lacked.

For Joyce, simply rejecting and ignoring history would result in the diminution of his creative powers. For, Nietzsche suggests, “as we are merely the resultant of previous generations, we are also the resultant of their errors, passions and crimes; it is impossible to shake off this chain. Though we condemn the errors and think we have escaped them, we cannot escape the fact that we spring from them.” (21) Stephen in Portrait, as we have seen, likewise expresses the sentiment “this society produced me. I shall express myself as I am” (see Chapter 8).

We must engage with the past in order to serve the present and the future, Nietzsche claims (22), but this must not come at the cost of weakening the present. Likewise Stephen concludes in his diary that: “The past is consumed in the present and the present is living only because it brings forth the future” (P 251). Nietzsche’s essay states that: “You can explain the past only by what is most powerful in the present” (40). History, it continues, “is to be written by the man of experience and character” (41) and Stephen, towards the climax of the novel likewise sets his mind to embrace
experience (see Chapter 8). Fortified by a great aim, Nietzsche suggests, to build up a future, you simultaneously avoid aridity in the present.

It is of interest to trace speculatively, in greater detail, how Joyce’s attitudes may have changed in the upshot of his Rome sojourn, from reactive railing against history, to critical and dialogical engagement. The process can be traced in three steps according to the terms of Nietzsche’s essay: firstly, the necessary step of “forgetting”, which had been prepared for by Joyce’s voluntary exile, and by shutting himself away from his country’s tyrannies. Secondly, an emphasis on becoming “ripe”: to achieve his artistic potential. Thirdly, a re-engagement with history in relation to what Nietzsche referred to as the “plastic power” of the strong spirit.

**Forgetting**

In 1902 Joyce expressed an attitude similar to Nietzsche’s, in his critique of Mangan. Nietzsche contrasts the medieval stress on the *memento mori* (which as we have seen, Stephen early in his life resisted in Fr Conmee’s office) with “the opposite message of a later time, *memento vivere*”. The Church attacks this life as it considers that “of all the hours of man’s life” the last are the most important (UAH 48-49) and it has in any case “prophesied the end of earthly life”. In contrast to Stephen’s Daedalean aims, it “opposes all flight” (italics mine) and is the enemy to all great aspirations. In Joyce’s view, Mangan is half in love with death, more afraid of life than of death.

To achieve the necessary freedom and creative space, one must face not only the fear of death, but also those forces which militate so strictly against life; in *Portrait*, Stephen’s fight to attain such freedom is the dominant narrative of the novel, particularly focused on Stephen’s grappling with the Church.

Joyce declared himself in the Mangan essay as one who was not afraid of death, nor of life. This attitude was perhaps more theoretical than applied. Certainly it seems to have been put to the test early during the Rome sojourn for, four days after his visit to the graves of Shelley and Keats, he reported in a letter postmarked August 19, on the
response of his unconscious to this encounter with the monumental nightmare of history, and the river that runs through it, which also frightens him\textsuperscript{63} (\textit{Letters II} 144):

Can you tell me what is a cure for dreaming? I am troubled every night by horrible and terrifying dreams: death, corpses, assassinations in which I take an unpleasantly prominent part. . . . (\textit{Letters II} 151).

Curiously, Joyce asks for a cure for dreaming rather than for nightmares. The contents of his unconscious at this point are so threatening that any dream is tantamount to nightmare. Joyce seeks a cure of forgetting, the same remedy which Nietzsche had prescribed, for art and for happiness. He has left Dublin in order to forget his “masters”, the burden of social expectations and mores, and yet is now reminded of them again in Rome.

Nietzsche comments that Greek civilisation was in its finest flower at the time when its powers of forgetfulness were highest (24, 51). Joyce quipped to Arthur Power that “classicism was all right when it was paganism” but had lost its purpose by the Renaissance (Power 102). The lesson equally can be applied to the individual. Happiness, or in Joyce’s terms “joy”, begins with this power of forgetting (Nietzsche 6). “Barbarism” in Nietzsche’s view consists of an external, essentially useless education into facts about the world, whereas true culture is \textit{internal}. The first step towards true culture then, and art with it, is the achievement of forgetfulness.

This Stephen achieves in a swoon at the climax of his epiphany on Sandymount Strand. This he achieves in the timeless space of composition when he writes the villanelle, a time where an aeon and the space of a heartbeat can be confused (see Chapter 8).

\textbf{Ripeness}

“Forgetfulness” is of course, only the first step. A second movement is the attainment of ripeness. For Nietzsche, as for Joyce’s 1904 theme, the artist is in process of

\textsuperscript{63} Joyce was frightened by the Tiber (JJ 225).
becoming. Similarly to Stephen’s horror of the “nets” flung at his soul, Nietzsche critiques the manner in which people are put into service of society:

Men are to be fashioned to the needs of the time, that they may soon take their place in the machine. They must work in the factory of the “common good” before they are ripe, or rather to prevent their becoming ripe; for this would be a luxury that would draw away a deal of power from the “labor market”. Some birds are blinded that they may sing better; I do not think that men sing today better than their grandfathers, though I am sure they are blinded early. (44-45)

There are resonances of this passage in the vocabulary of the 1904 essay, where Joyce recounts the horrors of a slated “clerkship in Guinness’s” against his own desire for an “arduous good” (Scholes and Kain 62). The play on light as a form of blinding, with which Nietzsche continues this passage, is reflected in Joyce’s play on light and dark in Portrait, a dominant motif associated with the Church (Chapter 7). Dull obligations, a too-constricting education, prevent the individual from ripening; this must be allowed to occur through other means.

Another force that militates against ripening is accepting the trappings of society, adopting for oneself various masks or uniforms. For Nietzsche, vestments ultimately represent nothing but “rags and coloured streamers” with which people present themselves as “a man of culture, a savant, poet, or politician (30). They mask the personality and instead we have people in uniform. Nietzsche portrays people as reduced to “historical pictures of the march of civilisation, and nothing but pictures and civilisation, form without any ascertainable substance, bad form unfortunately, and uniform at that” (32).

Thus, Stephen observes and wonders about the uniforms of the Jesuits and Christian brothers, the historical pictures in their corridors and studies, while ultimately rejecting the image of himself draped in such clothes. Stephen views vestments according to a relativist view, as symbols of social roles that mask personal reality and potential: jesuits could have been “higher ups” had they not adopted this garb. Also allied to the oppressiveness of history-as-regimen, as iconic image in uniform, is the regime of “facts”, which people set up as idols when in reality they are dull. Just
as Joyce declared in “James Clarence Mangan” that poetry is a revolt against the actual, to Nietzsche the virtuous person will “always rise against the blind force of facts, the tyranny of the actual, and submit himself to laws that are not the fickle laws of history” (53-4).

The path to “ripening” then is through freedom: taking on the freedom to be true to oneself, to assert one’s potency and virility, and the freedom not to accede to lies (30): this of course is the very path that Stephen sets for himself, to “fly by those nets” thrown at his soul and to “express myself as I am”, and most surely, the path Joyce set for himself.

**Plastic power**

One cannot live a true life without history; equally it is difficult to live with it. Only strong personalities can endure history, Nietzsche states. “History unsettles the feelings when they [personalities] are not powerful enough to measure the past by themselves”. Weaker people take uncritical recourse to history and “We see noisy little fellows measuring themselves with the Romans as though they were like them” (32); just so did the little fellow Stephen measure himself against the Romans in taking strides to right wrongs at Clongowes (see Chapter 7).

Ultimately, the strong personality must first find guidance from within, rather than in relation to history; otherwise, one becomes a play-actor in bit parts and bad parts (32). For this reason, Nietzsche claims that “The Delphian god cries his oracle to you at the beginning of your wanderings: ‘Know thyself’” (72). This approach, we have seen, was central to Joyce’s design as he sought to hold up a mirror to his fellows, that in beholding Joyce’s frank image they might also know themselves (Chapter 2), and the power of introspection features in the 1904 essay. Stephen’s withdrawal from society is not congenital aloofness but a corrective path of self-knowledge, defined in part as the pursuit of his vocation away from the distractions of his time. Duffy by contrast is a character divorced from his instincts and from his emotions. For this reason, he will seldom have cause to trouble the writing materials patiently waiting on his desk.
Ultimately, the work of the plastic power referred to by Nietzsche involves engagement and synthesis: synthesis of the “past and the strange” with one’s own self:

To fix this degree and the limits to the memory of the past, if it is not to become the gravedigger of the present, we must see clearly how great is the plastic power of a man or a community or a culture; I mean the power of specifically growing out of oneself, of making the past and the strange one body with the near and the present, of healing wounds, replacing what is lost, repairing broken moulds. (7)

Far from needing to run away from history, Joyce should measure his own capacity to make use of it, while simply observing the need for framing boundaries to be drawn about it, in a visible horizon:

The deeper the roots of a man’s inner nature, the better will he take the past into himself; and the greatest and most powerful nature would be known by the absence of limits for the historical sense to overgrow and work harm. It would assimilate and digest the past, however foreign, and turn it to sap. Such a nature can forget what it cannot subdue. (7)

Nietzsche’s advocacy of the role of history for “life” clearly lends itself readily to the purposes of art. Indeed, Nietzsche comments that art is perhaps best placed to make use of this plastic force. Naturally this entails quite a different approach to Joyce: rather than railing against history, it involves seeking to harness creatively, to engage dialogically with, the force of these discourses, rather than fearing engulfment by it. This is achieved by the means with which he frames history in narrative form.

In similar vein, for Stephen in Portrait, the final theme he lights upon is not the historic “thus it is” nor the moralistic “thus it should be” but rather the imaginative “thus it could be”. Stephen does not wish to find antiquarian forgotten beauty like Robartes, but rather to find new loveliness. The use of history is not, Nietzsche says, to “drag their generation to the grave, but to found a new one—that is the motive that ever drives them onward” (54).
FINAL FRAMES

Before the countenance of the hero finally takes shape as a stable and necessary whole, the hero is going to exhibit a great many grimaces, random masks, wrong gestures, and unexpected actions . . . think how many masking layers must first be removed from his face, layers that were sedimented upon his face by our own fortuitous reactions and attitudes and by fortuitous life situations (Bakhtin: Author Hero 6).

A soft liquid joy flowed through the words where the soft long vowels hurtled noiselessly and fell away, lapping and flowing back and ever shaking the white bells of their waves in mute chime and mute peal, and soft low swooning cry; and he felt that the augury he had sought in the wheeling darting birds and in the pale space of sky above him had come forth from his heart like a bird from a turret, quietly and swiftly. (P 226)

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to reframe our understanding of Portrait in terms of its design: a framing is a construction, and so no pretence can be made to furnishing a definitive reading. If it has served to open up the interpretative field, to activate some of the signifying potential of this work bound up in form, then a worthwhile end has been achieved.

Joyce’s artistic evolution, the inception of his first novel, and what they might tell us about Joyce’s theme of the “aesthetic instinct”, the artistic process, has been the subject of this inquiry. The evidence of Joyce’s intellective and imaginative progress has been traced, as has the inceptional history of Portrait from the first “Portrait” in 1904, through to the reconception of the novel in 1907. In reference to this latter, the focus has been on evolution in the signifying form of the novel, and the role that a shifting historiographic sense played in finding a form amenable to his design.
principles and purposes, in the sociohistorical context of the early twentieth century intellectual climate.

Joyce’s intellectual and imaginative proclivities, his instinctual interests, stood in direct opposition to the adamant doctrine of the Church; authorial intentionality encountered strong opposition in that electrically charged intentive field described by Bakhtin, which sees intention refracted or engulfed in shadows. In the 1904 “Portrait” the psychological self-portrait of his soul is couched chiefly in terms of his religiosity. In *Stephen Hero*, the turn rather is towards sacrilegiousness as Stephen fights reactively against “discourses of the other” rather than engaging strategically, as he does in *Portrait*, and as Joyce came to do himself. In this final form he finds a means of framing his own utterances within that contested intentive field, to give them the greatest chance of unfettered expression, and to afford himself the richness offered by tradition of many kinds: myth, history, Church doctrine, folklore and song among them.

Joyce comes to appreciate that the key to portraying Stephen’s heroism lies in his engaging with the deeply internal, linguistic, historical and psychological battle with those social discourses that threaten to imprison his soul, to prevent his “ripening”—in Bakhtinian terms, from actualising his creative potential and futurity.

The progress of *Portrait* beyond September 8 1907 is beyond the scope of this investigation. We know from Gabler’s studies that *Portrait* continued to evolve until about 1913, although we know little about the process. It need not be assumed that the new approach of 1907 constituted a comprehensive and infallible plan; more likely, it provided a workable way forward that would allow for continuing evolution within the broad lines established, lines on which Ettore Schmitz commented in stating that, so far as he could understand Joyce’s new approach, it relied on Joyce’s concentrating on “strong things” (JJ 274).

The lines of our inquiry—Joyce’s intellectual and imaginative development, the evolving design of his novel, the progress of his “aesthetic instinct” and his determination to succeed with history where Mangan had failed, converge in Rome, the Eternal City, where Joyce promptly became lost (*Selected Letters* 90), before he
found a way forward to achieving immortality. Here he re-engaged with history, here he reassessed the omnipresent reminders of the classical and the romantic, here he faced his spiritual and temporal masters, in answer to which he found his voice. And here he finally buried *Stephen Hero*.

His widespread reading of the novel in English during the Rome stay apparently provided no inspiration. At least, the shortcomings of *Stephen Hero*’s design must have started to become clearer to him. The satirical picaresque failed to promote joy, or a contemplative, charged stasis. It failed to achieve a satisfactory synthesis of the classical and the romantic; in particular, it failed to deliver the imaginative quality he so revered in Mangan and in Shelley. From the evidence of the extant pages, the “heroic” portrayal of Stephen fails to satisfactorily plumb his soul, let alone offer the makings of the conscience of his race.

*Stephen Hero* had failed to achieve the form, form that is the soul of a work, a work designed to portray an artist’s soul according to the design principles and aims of his novel. It fell victim to the welter of naturalistic detail, failed to penetrate to the realm of truth. This had been a failure of imagination to *subjugate* the comedy of everyday life, to actuate the revolt against actuality that poetry should constitute; *Stephen Hero* succumbs to that weakness of the classical school, in bending to the “materialism attendant on it”.

The actualised form of *Portrait* has been analysed in terms of its shifting chronotopic logic, and Stephen’s focal chronotopic attributes. Conventional representational narrative is eschewed and, in Aubert’s terms a “new concept of time” (and equally one might add, of space) is now exemplified in the logic of the narrative of *Portrait* (Aubert 23). The exploration of an evolving artistic consciousness becomes the narrative theme of *Portrait* and the arbiter of its form-shaping time-space relations.

*Creativity* is of course at the heart of the artistic endeavour, and the story of the development of Stephen’s soul is also the story of the growth of his creativity. The *responsibility* that Joyce had assumed for the artist was great: to forge the conscience of his race. In *Stephen Hero*, so long as Stephen engages in petty, reactive rebellions against society, the novel will fall outside the ambit of the promotion of joy, the
creation of aesthetic stases. The key is a renewed approach to history wherein the artist engages critically. The form of Portrait itself embodies a new historicity where the artist is to be read along the curve of a series of inter-related phases. The Clongowes activist, the religious devotee, the aesthete, the poet, the mystic and the aesthetician, are all related and component phases of the artist. One phase is not superseded by the other, so much as sublated into the multifaceted, evolving consciousness of Stephen. The evolving artist remains an artist of “becoming”, and need not be written off as a “disappointed Joyce”.

The virtue of the reframing endeavour, of re-viewing the work from the standpoint of its inceptional history, in a different perspective, light and frame, must surely be to derive a renewed appreciation of the intricate crafting of Portrait, that first novelistic labour of Joyce’s prosaic imagination, and of the theme offered by Joyce himself: the vagaries of the aesthetic instinct, the nature of the artist and of the artistic process.

A comment Joyce made to Arthur Power reveals his own mature perspective on Portrait; Power favoured Portrait for its romantic qualities. Joyce acknowledged this characteristic, but favoured Ulysses as a more mature, classical work. Indeed, Joyce referred to the romantic as an “exploded myth” (Power 99). At the same time, however, he still insisted on the importance of avoiding the “classical, with its rigid structure and emotional limitations” (95). In a spirit of objectivity, romantic strains of the novel seem perfectly appropriate to the portrait of an artist “as a young man” since, even for Joyce, it seems after all that the classical becomes the romantic temper grown old.

A parallel history of Joyce and Stephen has many framing limitations of course, and Mahaffey’s principle (“Giacomo Joyce” 412) must be taken as a given: Joyce modelled his characters partly on real people and partly on figures from the past; Joyce and Stephen Dedalus are by no means identical. Wollaeger (“Between Stephen”) likewise warns of the need to differentiate the two (344): Stephen lacks Joyce’s sense of fun, while both had notable moments of coldness, associated with the novelist’s hunger for experience (352). Bakhtin states that the character in art is not also in life (quoted at the head of the chapter) and likewise, that the novelist writing cannot be represented in the novel. Stephen Dedalus is principally based on Joyce,
but his evolving characterisation is dialogically interpenetrated with other texts, and subject to the shaping influence of the novel’s changing design. Stephen changes shape as the novel evolves, and so he may describe a Riemann elliptical curve a little away from his “fakesmiliar”, but it is by no means certain that he is doomed to failure as a result.

An in-formed, chronotopic reading of Portrait offers us the challenge to apprehend, with a charged aesthetic stasis, the wonders of the evolution of Stephen’s soul, according to the synchronic rhythm of his many complicated, often contrary and challenging, languages and behaviours, and according to the diachronic rhythm of his evolution. Ironic readings of Stephen are prone to overlook large areas of Stephen’s own potential and, vitally, the signifying potential of the novel itself. Stephen’s soul, like that of his maker, is finely attuned to life’s joyful wonders; it is incumbent upon us likewise to hearken to the design of its form, to en-joy Portrait, and Stephen, more than we sometimes have done.

A soft liquid joy like the noise of many waters flowed over his memory and he felt in his heart the soft peace of silent spaces of fading tenuous sky above the waters, of oceanic silence, of swallows flying through the sea-dusk over the flowing waters.

(P 225-6)
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Appendix:

Pope St. Pius X’s Oath Against The Errors Of Modernism, 1910
Pope St. Pius X’s Oath Against The Errors Of Modernism from the
Encyclical "Sacrorum Antistitum"

(To be sworn to by all clergy, pastors, confessors, preachers, religious superiors, and
professors in philosophical-theological seminaries.)

I. “I, __________ , firmly embrace and accept all and each of the things
defined, affirmed and declared by the inerrant Magisterium of the Church,
mainly those points of doctrine directly opposed to the errors of our time.”
And in the first place I profess that God, beginning and end of all things, can
be certainly known, and therefore also proved, as the cause through its effects,
by the natural light of reason through the things that have been made, that is,
through the visible works of creation.

II. “Secondly, I admit and recognize as most certain signs of the divine origin
of the Christian religion the external arguments of revelation, that is, the
divine deeds, and in the first place the miracles and prophecies. And I
maintain that these are eminently suited to the mentality of all ages and men,
including those of our time.

III. “Thirdly, I also firmly believe that the Church, guardian and teacher of the
revealed word, was immediately and directly instituted by the real and
historical Christ himself, while dwelling with us; and that it was built upon
Peter, prince of the apostolic hierarchy, and his successors till the end of time.

IV. “Fourthly, I sincerely accept the doctrine of the faith handed on to us by
the Apostles through the orthodox Fathers, always with the same meaning and
interpretation; and therefore I flatly reject the heretical invention of the
evolution of dogmas, to the effect that these would change their meaning from
that previously held by the Church. I equally condemn every error whereby
the divine deposit, handed over to the Spouse of Christ to be faithfully kept by
her, would be replaced by a philosophical invention or a creation of human
consciousness, slowly formed by the effort of men and to be henceforward
perfected by an indefinite progress.

V. “Fifthly, I maintain in all certainty and sincerely profess that faith is not a
blind feeling of religion welling up from the recesses of the subconscious, by
the pressure of the heart and of the inclination of the morally educated will,
but a real assent of the intellect to the truth received from outside through the
ear, whereby we believe that the things said, testified and revealed by the
personal God, our creator and lord, are true, on account of the authority of
God, who is supremely truthful.

VI. “I also condemn and reject the opinion of those who say that the more
learned Christian has a two-fold personality, one of the believer and the other
of the historian, as if it would be lawful for the historian to uphold views
which are in contradiction with the faith of the believer, or to lay down
propositions from which it would follow that the dogmas are false or doubtful,
as long as these dogmas were not directly denied.

VII. “I likewise reprove the method of judging and interpreting Holy Scripture
which consists in ignoring the tradition of the Church, the analogy of faith and
the rulings of the Apostolic See, following the opinions of rationalists, and not
only unlawfully but recklessly upholding the critique of the text as the only
and supreme rule.

VIII. “Besides, I reject the opinion of those who maintain that whoever teaches
theological history, or writes about these matters, has to set aside beforehand
any preconceived opinion regarding the supernatural origin of Catholic
tradition, as well as the divine promise of a help for the perpetual preservation
of each one of the revealed truths; and that, besides, the writings of each of the
Fathers should be interpreted only by the principles of science, leaving aside
all sacred authority, and with the freedom of judgment wherewith any secular monument is usually studied.

IX. "Lastly, I profess myself in everything totally averse to the error whereby modernists hold that there is nothing divine in sacred tradition, or, what is much worse, that there is, but in a pantheistic sense; so that nothing remains there but the bare and simple fact to be equated to the common facts of history, namely, some men who through their work, skill and ingenuity, continue in subsequent ages the school started by Christ and his apostles. Therefore I most firmly retain the faith of the Fathers, and will retain it up to the last gasp of my life, regarding the unwavering charisma of the truth, which exists, has existed and will always exist in the succession of bishops from the Apostles; not so that what is maintained is what may appear better or more suitably adapted to the culture of each age, but so that the absolute and unchangeable truth preached by the Apostles from the beginning may never be believed or understood otherwise.