The Marlovian Hero: A Fresh Reading of Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

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☐ ABSTRACT ☐

The article traces the moral and psychological growth of two characters, namely Dr. Faustus in Marlowe'S DR. Faustus and Stephen Daedalus in Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Yet, the choice of these two characters has not been at random: it emanates from a fact which is not yet discovered, namely, the fact that some of Dr. Faustus' characteristics are reincarnated in Stephen: for example, the latter's thirst for knowledge, his panting for individual freedom and unfettered liberty, hL5 desire to transcend all social limits and norms, and above all, his overwhelming wish to wrench himself from all social bonds. Such a telepathic transference of thoughts from Marlowe's mind to Joyce's mind. whether such a transference has been conscious or unconscious, is meant to be one of the focuses around which this study revolves, and that for two reasons: firstly, the study seriously argues the fact that literary tradition is an endless chain of corollary concepts which can never be isolated from each other; secondly. It highlights those Characteristics of Stephen, which summarize the Renaissance period, of which Dr. Faustus is held to be a major representative: in spite of the fact that Faustus' aspirations mirror The Renaissance Age, and Stephen's aspirations mirror the present Age, they still have many things in common.

In the Renaissance period. Man aspired for whatever he could acquire from knowledge available in his environment at that time. Similarly, in our age man's thirst for knowledge has been unlimited. Such a common interest in knowledge. However different in quality it may be, still reflects the common grounds upon which Man builds his ambitions. Therefore, the study is intended to discover the unusual scope, and the the interplay of the literary and historical approaches in the Renaissance and Modern Ages, in order to illustrate the uncovered parts of Man's intellectual life-style.

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"البطل المارلوفي: قراءة جديدة في رواية "الفنان وهو شاب"

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🗆 الملخص 🗖

يهدف هذا البحث لتقديم دراسة وافية عن شخصية ستيفن ديدلس بطل جويس في رواية "صورة الفنان وهو شاب"، حيث تظهر هذه الشخصية بصورة تتلائم مع أبطال روايات القرن العشرين، مع أنها شخصية ظهرت على مسرح الأدب في القرن التاسع عشر على يد كريستوفر مارلو في مسرحية "الدكتور فاوستس"، وقد جاء هذا التركيز على ديدلس بالذات لأنه شخصية غير اعتيادية، تستمد مقوماتها من مصدرين تاريخيين هامين، يعود أحدهما للقرن السادس عشر أعني "الدكتور فاوستس"، ويعود الآخر إلى القصة الأسطورية التي أوردها أوفيد عن المبتكر الأسطوري دييدالس وابنه اللذين احتجزا من قبل مجموعة من السحرة في متاهة يعجز على الإنسان العادي الخروج منها. وبعد مشقة وتفكير طويلين يتمكن هذا العبقري من اختراع جناحين من الشمع له ولابنه، فيتمكنا من الهرب من المتاهة التي حاك خيوطها لهما الأعداء. ولكن السوء الحظ يدفع الغرور دييدالس للتحليق على ارتفاعات شاهقة، حتى يصلا هو وابنه إلى منطقة قريبة من الشمس فيمقطا على الأرض ويموتا.

قصة الدكتور فاوستس معروفة تاريخياً، فهي تمثل قصة رجل طموح أراد الخروج عن العادات والتقاليد التي سادت في العصور الوسطى، فيتعلم السحر على يد ميفستوفيلس – الشيطان الأكبر – ويبرم عقداً معه لمدة أربع وعشرين عاماً يحصل من خلاله على ما يشاء من ملذات الحياة ومحرماتهان مقابل ان يبيع روحه في النهاية للشيطان. وهذا ما تم بالفعل.

يعود جويس إلى شخصية هذين البطلين ليرسم معالم بطله ستيفن، فيجعله يخرج عن دائرة عائلته أولاً، ثم عن دائرة مجتمعه ثانياً، ليكون لنفسه عالماً خاصاً به، وشخصية متفردة بذاتها. بيحث عن المعرفة بطريقة فاوستس، ويصر على تحطيم القيود التي فرضها عليه مجتمعه بطريقة دبيدالس؛ يخرج على المألوف باستنباطه عالماً خاصاً به، عالماً حراً عنوانه الابداع، والفن، والفكر، ثم يقرر الاستقلال بذاته التي تتمرد على كل ما هو مألوف، واعتيادي، ومبتذل؛ ولكن ما يميزه عن شخصية فاوستس، بطل عصر النهضة في أروبا، وعن شخصية دبيدالس الأسطوري الذي أنهى نفسه بغروره، انطلاقه نحو آفاق المستقبل، واستمراره في نهاية القصة في العمل لتحقيق جميع طموحاته وأهدافه.

من هنا تأتي أهمية هذه الدراسة التي تسعى للكشف عن معالم هذه الشخصية المارلوفية، القديمة بنمطها، الحديثة بجديتها وطموحاتها وقدراتها على إثبات هويتها المعاصرة.

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The difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awreness of itself cannot show. 1

JOYCES's lines of origin and development help to create the difficulty in his works. Like, Pound, he had links with the Aesthetic movements of the past, something which can be strongly seen in his early poems and in some of the most evocative passages of his early- short stories (Dubliners, 1914). Moreover, the pervasive sense of incessant sinfulness and incessant redemption point to his roots in Catholicism. This makes us feel that no literary form can afford genius of extreme revolutionary nature, as it is very difficult for the best living novelists to escape, in one way or another, the influence of at least one literary tradition. Yet Joyce seems to be well ahead of any English novelist writing today, thanks to his technical innovations, which were the result of his view of man's nature, and which wrecked the whole structure of the novel, as we have normally conceived it. Moreover, if the novel is to fulfill its purpose as the agent of moral imagination, as Lionel Trilling contends, no later writer can afford to neglect the discoveries of such a novelist: 2 structure remains as necessary as everbefore, posing a problem the solution to which is probably vital to the future of the novel as a serious literary form.

Hence, the themes to which Joyce commits himself in his *Portrait* of the Artist are made meaningful through structure. The structure has been revealed by JoYce as the embodiment of an artistic proposition proclaimed by Stephen, the central character of the novel, towards the end, as the Climax of his research: "Truth is beheld by the intellect which is appeased by the most satisfying relations of the intelligible: beauty is beheld by the imagination which is appeased by the most satisfying relations of the sensible" (P., 207). Three things, he contends, define the needs of beauty "wholeness, harmony, and radiance." Thus, the novel attempts to combine both truth and beauty, conforming to the prerequisites of the intelligible and sensible.

THE first two pages of the novel introduce the major subject-matter motifs: family, friends, country, church, and Stephen's special responsiveness to music and language. Each of the novel's five chapters presents an aspect of these motifs in relation to Stephen's growth, and search for something more satisfying to the artist's necessity.

¹T. S Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual talent", Selected Essays, (2nd edn.). London: faber and Faber, 1934, P., 16.

²Lionel Trilling (1940), "Literature and Power", Kenyon Review, 2 (Autumn), P., 434.

These elements constitute part of his story of search and rebellion. The beginnings of the search are revealed through Stephen's unusual sensitivity to language. The shape of reality that gradually defines itself for Stephen is a shape determined primarily by the association of words. Fascinated with words, as a man of letters must be, he finds the necessity for escape in a series of terrible verbs, all imperative in mood: "submit", "obey", "confess", "admit". "apologize", "conform" (chap. II passim). The eagle, threatening his eyes unless he "apologized" represents all these imperatives. Heron's "admit", supported by cane and cabbage stump, is the second of these imperatives for Stephen, who is a proclaimed "heretic", and later on, an "outlaw"; while "obey", "confess", and "commune", are referred to in Father Arrnall's sermons.

These imperatives are the nets about which the outlawed heretic and self-proclaimed artist must fly in order to find the "unfettered freedom that the Marlovian hero demands: we see the outer self of Stephen as trying to control the inner, as the voice of the inner self is left implicit, caught and held in the mystic moment of an overpowering vision: "This was the call of life to his soul, not the dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair, not the inhuman voice that had called him to the pale sevice of the alter ..." (P. 170).

THIS brings us to the issue of the Marlovian hero, who wants to "wrench himself free" from all forms of subjection, namely, nationality, language and religion: "I will not serve that in which no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church ..." (P. 247). It seems that Dedalus wants to stamp his image on time and space. Therefore, to make such an enduring mark in the world, he decides, like Rarabas in Jew Of Malta and TUMBERLAINE to attain "a world of profit and delight, of power, of honour, of omnipotence" (DR. FAUSTUS, I, i, 52-53). This is because Dedalus wants to give life a shape, in order not, in Barabas's words, to "... vanish o'er the earth in air,/ And leave no memory that e'er I was" (J of M, I, ii, 269-270).

Dedalus relationship to knowledge is strikingly similar to almost all Marlowe's protagonists: he uses up experience to embark on his extraordinary pursuit of knowledge. Similarly, Faustus, in his opening soliloqey bids farewell to each of his studies in turn as something he has used up. This approach extends to Tamburlaine, as well, who exults in using up his defeated enemies, in his power to "conquer", "sack", and utterly "consume", cities of his enemies (2 Tam, IV, iii, passim).

Faustus, like Dedalus, needs to cherish his mind with fresh supplies, as the next moment cannot be fully grasped until the last is destroyed. Therefore, we find Dedalus testing, and responding to words and conducting his research: "words which he didnot understand he said

over and over to himself till he had learnt them by heart, and through them he had glimpses of the real world about him" (P. 62). As the remainder of the novel makes clear, each of Stephen's wanderings, like those of Faustus, is a manifestation of his seeking of comfort from inner and outer turmoil.

Every attempt to wrench himself free from the grip of his social boundaries is an act of destruction of the traditional norms and canons of his social life. It becomes evident for him that "to live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life", is absolutely something necessary.

JOYCE seemingly fashions his hero in "The Portrait of the Artist" on the model of Marlowe's heroes, "in loving not submission to an absolute authority, but in self-conscious opposition: Tamburlaine against heirarchy, Barabas against Christianity, Faustus against God" (P. 66)³. To Stephen Daedalus, the artificer, Daedalus, ⁴ represents the major motif of his thirst for knowledge, as he sees himself the artificer who seeks from the word whatever artistic forgings his soul could achieve: "This was the call of life to his soul, not the dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair, not the inhuman voice that had called him to the pale service of the alter ..." (P. 170).

In one sense, Dedelus seems to jeopardize his soul, as did Faustus. A precise analogy can be conducted between them on the basis of their progress from triumph to disappointment. Dedalus, for example, in the second chapter gets his idealistic longings for beauty and purity fulfilled in a vaguely erotic fantasy of the dream girl, Mercedes; this vision develops towards synthesis and integration with another image at the end of the chapter, that of the prostitute's embrace, to resolve Dedalus' emotional crisis. It is sin that triumphs, giving more scope for the human environment which gets more affirmed here: sin is sublimated as something pure, gentle, beautiful and emotionally securing. In the third chapter of the book, the exhortations and warnings to which Stephen listens in the course of the sermons pull him down, as he finds himself engulfed with a multitude of horrors, which jeopardize his immortal soul.

In alike manner, Faustus moves from self-confidence to utter disappointment and vice-versa, as the action of the play unfolds itself gradually. Faustus, for instance, seems all the more potent before the demon makes his due appearance in (Act I, iii, 19-34), first as a dragon, and then in the garb of a friar. But his over confidence vanishes very quickly when he comes to realize that the demon's appearance was not as

³Richard Wilson and R- Dutton. New Historicism and Renaissance Drama. London: Longman, 1992 P., 66.

⁴Joyce borrows a line from Ovid to use it as an epigraph for his novel, which reads "And he turned his mind to unknown arts". There is reference here by Ovid to the artificer, Daedalus, who wrenches himself and his son free from the labyrinth contrived by his enemies. Similarly, Stephen wants to wrench himself free from the bonds and ties of society by turning to "unknown arts".

he had wished him to be; this was the first of Faustus' disappointments, which was immediately solaced by the delight Mephostophilis was giving to him. This to and fro movement continues throughout the actions of both works, namely, in *DR FAUSTUS* and *PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST*, till a tragic conclusion is reached on part of Faustus, and wholeness and complete freedom on the part of Dedalus. The former has fallen into the dark depthes of hell, destroyed by his misdeeds, while the latter gets himself free by "refining himself out of existence" (P.214).

THE fruit of experience for the Marlovian hero, from Faustus to Barabas, is disillusionment, something which Joyce seems to have rejected: Joyce is essentially pessimistic; this allows his characters to have more Capacity to grow and change. Stephen, unlike Faustus, is far being a God-like-hero. Groping painfully toward understanding of himself and his place in the world, he tends more and more to be almost a quasi-divine superhuman, who aspires to face the world alone. This conviction is strengthened more after the composition of the villanelle. He stands on the steps of the library, ash-plant in hand, watching the flight of some birds; the act of contemplation itself leads him to a chain of other queries about himself, something which makes him think of other counterparts, namely, the mystical patron, Daedelus, and Thoth, who is very similar to Stephen. Thoth was the scribe of the Gods; she possessed wisdom, invented speech and letters: One at whose words everything was Created Thus Thoth seems to be emblematic of Stephen himself, the artist as a young man, observing, recording, and creating. Moreover, Joyce, while maintaining Greek Deadalus, Stephen's principal archetype, elsewhere in A Portrait of the Artist, relates him to Egyptian Thoth, God of writers.

In alike manner Marlowe's protagonists donot simply act out their individuous self-comparisons with the gods, though from AEneas to Faustus, they see themselves deified in one manner or another. Faustus, the Evil Angel, holds out the hope that he will be "on earth as Jove is in the skie", lord and commander "of all elements" (Faustus, I, i, 75). Ignoring his good Angel and the threat of "Gods' heavy wrath" (701), Faustus envisages a hierarchy of spirits, which could answer his queries more sufficiently than ever before:

I'll hauve them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the Ocean for orient pearle,
And search all concerns of the new found world,
For pleasant fruits and princely dedicates.
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk,
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad.

(1, ii, 81-84 / 89-90)

Faustus' characteristic accomplishment was, to borrow Harry Levin's terms, "aeromancy or the magical power of flight", which⁵ Joyce uses as an epigraph for his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Stephen doesnot do violence to nature, however, as did Faustus, who aspires to be as great as Lucifer, to arrive at some kind of ambiguous greatness:

Mephostophilis: Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring

Is stoutly to abjure all godliness

And pray devoutly to the prince of hell.

(Faustus, I, iii, 52-64)

On the contrary, Stephen never expresses doubt of the existence of God nor of the essential validity of religious tenets: his Non servium" is not the Marlovian "Non Credo" of Faustus (Portrait, 277).

When Stephen is deepest in sin, he is most thoroughly a theologian. This fact can be seen in Chapter III where the dominant theme of the chapter seems to be sin, on one side, and the church on the other. More than one-sixth of the book is devoted directly to this conflict. The length and intensity of this section is proportionate to its effect on Stephen, as Joyce presents here a quiet, gentle sequence to contrast with the aggressiveness of the sermons on hell⁶. A paragraph of gloomy introspection reveals Stephen's puzzled mind, as he awaits the preacher:

...is baptism with mineral water valid? ... if the wine change into vinegar and the host crumble into corruption after they have been consecrated, is Jesus Christ still present under their species as God and as man? Here he is! Here he is! All the catechisms were opened and all heads bent upon them silently (106-107).

The conflict here is between the phantasmal and the real. What is real, from a psychological point of view, is Stephen's anguish and remorse, and its context in the life of the flesh. What is unreal is his emotional involvement with the horrors of hell, and search for salvation through the Church and "the good life" of the priest. Here the Marlovian

⁵See Haryy Levin's, *Christopher Marlowe: The Overreacher*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), especially (P., 142), for further information.

⁶For further illustration of this point, see Richard Ellman's *The consciousness of Joyce*. London: Faber and Faber, 1977, pp., 71-2, 77. Ellman refers in his *The consciousness of Joyce* to Stephen's dilemma, as a reaching out after the fervour of real life and "high spirits of youth" (P., 75). Hence, the impulse to all art, becomes coeval with life: "We1come, oh, life" (P., 148)

hero reaches out after orthodox salvation, as Father Arnall's religious Sermon helps him achieve understanding of concepts of morality and materiality of Dublin and Dubliners.

Accordingly, he walks to a chapel in a distant part of the town and makes a full confession of all his sins, including his sins of anger, envy, gluttony, vanity, disobedience, and sins of impurity with himself and women: "His sins trickled from his lips, one by one, trickled in shameful drops from his soul, festering and oozing like a sore, a squalid stream of vice, the last sins oozed forth, sluggish, filthy" (144).

The experience seems to urge him against the acceptance of the preacher's proposal, and to harden his stand more and more as an individual destined to learn his wisdom apart from others; he strongly feels that "his destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders", something which leads immediately afterwards to the climax of the novel and the turning-point in Stephen's spiritual development. Stephen's meeting with the Christian Brothers on the bridge is a finely executed piece of transitus symbolism: he finds himself marching towards individuality and isolation, while, by contrast, the priests towards collective life. This episode has been designed to represent the growth and development of some spiritual power which has been taking place within Stephen. Like the Marlovian hero here, whether it be Faustus, Tamburlaine or Barabas, Stephen has mastered the wishes of his soul; and now he is ready to take leave of "the snares of the world" (see "end" of chap. III)

When Faustus has mastered the liberal arts, the learned Professions, and the experimental sciences of his day; he, like Stephen, decides to take leave of existential knowledge, heading towards some further end to gratify his thirst for knowledge. Literally, as his academic career proceeds, his conscience hardens more by emphasizing the personifications of the world, the flesh, as does Stephen, and the Devil.

So much hee profites in Divinitie.

Excelling all,

Till swolne with cunning of a self-conceit,

His waxen wings did mount above his reach,

And melting heavens conspired his overthrow.

(Faustus, 1, i, 16-22).

The last three words which represent a Marlovian idiom for the counteraction of antagonistic Forces, occur in *Tamburlaine*, where Phaethon rashly attempts to drive the fiery chariot of the Sun. In A Portrait of the Artist it is the wise artificer, Daedelus, who falls prey to

fate, as he falls down forgetting that he had wax wings, and could not fly so near to the Sun. Stephen, by contrast to these images, having seen himself the artificer or the winged man, must make sure of his wings before flight; this is because, in each instance, it is the question of flying too high which brings about the down-fall of heroes from the loftiest positions imaginable.

THAT is why Joyce presents Stephen in the last chapter as completing the serving of ties, analyzing and testing the artistic and intellectual equipment which will carry him on this flight: "Now, as never before. ... Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air" (P., 169). Here Stephen sees himself flying upwards like the mythical Daedalus. He had heard the call of life to his soup and became conscious of his identity as an artist, who "would create proudly out of the freedom and Power of his soul a living thing, impalpable, imperishable" (P., 169).

Similarly, Faustus' claims in the first Chapter that the world created by the artist gives freedom and power to the soul, as he makes references to magical art. In the following lines, it becomes difficult for us to decide whether the speaker (Faustus) was a scholar, or a cornjurer or, like Stephen, an artist, as the Marlovian artist is figured as an omen portending that of Joyce:

> O what a world of profit and delights, Of power, of honor, of omnipotence Is promised to the studious Artisan? (Faustus, 1. i.. 52-54)

Joyce answers Marlowe's question by stating that the world awaiting the artist is present in the hero's name, Daedalus, referred to in the epigraph and in the closing words of the book, where the artist could "refine himself out of existence."

In Spite of Stephen's desire to "wrench himself free from the grip of the squalid family ties or the duly gross voice of the world of duties ... or the pale service of the alter" (p., 170), yet he remains an Irish Daedalus as well as a Greek one. Having put aside his biological father and fatherland, he is free to choose a mythical father in the land of his spirit: "I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience ... Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead" (153).

At this climatic moment Joyce, unlike Marlowe, seems to offer his hero a spiritual birth to go with the physical birth obtained earlier in the novel. Joyce seems to turn to Homer and Shakespeare to find archetypes for his characters, rather than to Marlowe, as the former submits material with which Wet begin, while the latter submits material with which we end. When Hamlet dies at the end of the play, we are left with fertile memories of Hamlet's struggle to uncover the secret of his father's death; while in *The Iliad*, we are given hope for a better future, when Aeneas struggles to revive new hopes, through cherished aspirations which emerge at the close of three action in the epic.⁷

In Marlowe, unlike Joyce, the action Spills over remorse and desperate repentence, as the presumptuous scholar, who once dreamed of becoming a JOVE on this earth, absolutely breaks down:

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is APOLLO'S laurel-bough.

(Faustus, V, iii, 20-23)

Though the rebellion of Stephen Daedalus comes to an end, as the story was over, his search for a form sufficient to forge the uncreated conscience of his race has just begun. Joyce presents in the novel the potential artist, the young man not fallen, but getting ready for flight, called but not yet chosen. Daedalus, always present in the hero's name, referred to in the epigraph and in the closing words of the book, reminds of the power of such an artistic endeavour; similarly, descriptions of birds and water and music, allusions to golds and augurs, to the "liquid joy" of words, to Thoth, (see 160-170), and above all to Ovid's line used as the epigraph for the book, serve the same purpose:

... a wild spirit posed over his limbs as though he were Soaring sun-ward His soul was soaring in an air beyond the world and the body he knew was purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes and wild his breath ... (169).

Though "Ecstasy" is the keyword in the last chapter it connotes a riot of feelings which suggests an onward motion: "On and on and on he strode far out over the sands, singing wildly to the sea . ." (172). This onward motion brings us to the issue of the MARLOVIAN HERO, Who still finds some grounds with Joyce, in spite of the different ends to which

⁷For further discussion of this point, see William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, *Modern Criticism:* A Short History, especially Part I (P., 3-18); and part II (Neo-Classicism) especially (P., 178-80, 187-91).

⁸Joyce uses Ovid's line as an epigraph for his novel to remind us that the flight of Daedalus is not only an escape, but a widening of consciousness and an investigation of the unknown: "ET ignotâs animum dimitti in ates", (and he turned his mind to unknown arts).

both the heroes come: as the former lays stress on escape, investigation of the unknown, "wilful arrogance of Ovidian sensualities", perception and defiance of universal laws, though all the attempts were turned down at the end of the play; the latter stresses the same elements, but portrays his heroes with objective standards of the artist who has "refined himself out of existence", "transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of ever-living life" (215, 247).

⁹D. J. Palmer, "Marlowe's Naturalism", in *Christopher Marlowe* (ed. Brian Morris). London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1968, P., 160.

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