

## Disgust, Shame, and Guilt in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and “The Dead”: A Martha Nussbaumian Reading

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### ABSTRACT

The present research focuses on the role of disgust, shame and guilt in the identity formation of Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Gabriel Conroy in “The Dead” by James Joyce. In both, there is a quest for an independent, and authentic identity through gradual emancipation from the nets of family, religion, nationality, culture, and language and embracing life in total liberation, however, through different paths, leading into different destinations. While Stephen decides to leave the country and pursue his goals somewhere else, Gabriel stays at home and tries to follow a more liberal customized life in his territory. Benefiting Martha Nussbaum’s ideas in *Hiding from Humanity*, the current study explores the role of shame and guilt, as the controlling tools, in breaking individual’s defense mechanism and self-reliance by imposing the sense of inadequacy and inefficiency to make his/her mind malleable and flexible enough to absorb the desired values and standards. The present research reveals the equivocal and ambivalent nature of those nets, as both supporting and restricting. To find one’s voice and authenticity, the individual must liberate him/herself, fly over the labyrinthine maze of culture and tradition, and embrace self-alienation as an opportunity for self-realization. The ready-made identities the society gives, have not the capacity for a liberal life, where the individual actualizes his/her non-transferable and unique potentialities and talents. What the nets do, is normalizing the society to be a unified homogenous body at the cost of killing the very liberal and humanist soul of self-awakening.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, an autobiographic bildungsroman by James Joyce, narrates the story of a young man since his childhood, who is supposed to be brought up as a common patriarchic catholic Irish man but he disentangles himself from all the supporting yet confining nets and finds liberation in art. It is a quite long and painful journey, in which he undergoes emotional and physical struggle to fight against all the impediments on the way of self-refashioning and liberal identity formation. Since childhood, he seems to be an analytical, and critical thinker, who doubts in every different deep-rooted, time-honored, and well-established social faculty such as family, school, university, religion, language, and nationality. Seeing their very true essence, he finds a liberal perspective

on both life and art aesthetics and tries to live on his terms and rules.

As the novel is autobiographical, Stephen Dedalus is supposed as an alter ego for James Joyce, and the same liberalistic quest happens in his real life. In a broader context, it is associated to a movement, called theological liberalism or modernism, where emancipation of consciousness happened in the late 19<sup>th</sup> C. and people searched to substitute fanatic religious beliefs with new modes of thoughts. The liberals looked at everything with doubt and skepticism and reexamined everything by rationality. Instead of accepting religion without questioning, they decided to welcome and examine all the new rational and modern facts.

“The Dead” deals with the frustration and bitterness of a middle-aged protagonist, who has the same sentiments as Stephen but despite his scattered efforts to release himself and have a distinguished distinct liberal character, still lives under the net. Living

among the dead and being subjected to the confining nature of the different social faculties for such a long time has turned him into the dead, as well. This story emphasizes on this point that the presupposition of being liberal is living in a liberal society, where one can live free from the sense of shame and disgust and enjoy her/his individualism. Moreover, while artistic creativity plays a significant role in liberating Stephen from the outer world and build a rich inner world, Gabriel's vocations as a college professor and newspaper editor, although prestigious and distinguished, are not yet creative and innovative.

The liberal theme of Joyce's works roots in his liberal attitudes. Between 1907 and 1912, he wrote a series of political articles, published in the newspaper *Il Piccolo Della Sera*, criticizes the Victorian liberal ambience with a complex skeptical outlook. At that time, liberalism and Gladstonism were somehow identical as the dominant political perspective was under the influence of William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898).

Gladstone was a remarkable figure in England's political history. He served twelve years out of his sixty years of his political career as prime minister. The liberalism, he advocated was a well-polished one, full of beautiful and catchy sentences such as "Justice delayed is justice denied.", "We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace." Or "Be happy with what you have and are, be generous with both, and you won't have to hunt for happiness." (Platt, 1989, p.276). Being categorized as *l'homme du monde* or classic, his liberalism criteria could be defined through limited government expenditure, low taxation, stress on self-help and freedom of choice, free trade, and the equality of opportunity. He was a religious man and was against aristocracy and interested to take the working class's side. What Joyce tried to criticize in his articles was the empty beautiful liberal slogans, which weren't supported by any undertaken actions and pragmatic results. His attacks were aimed at the frustration and faithlessness that Liberal Party caused in people and its failure in keeping promises. People, particularly the new generation soon moved from skepticism to disappointment and lost their faith and trust. To Joyce, the highly-pitched sentimentalism and emotionalism mode of Gladstonian liberalism was not enough to keep the sacredness of agreement.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, there is a scene, where Stephen and his father visit Queen College, father's alma mater and he sobs nostalgically, and Stephen reacts coldly and distantly

to him. Emotionally, a shift of generation happens on Stephen's mind as if he is much older than his father and looks cynically and doubtfully to his dramatic sense of nationalism. His father's sense of faith and interest in liberalism and liberal faculties has no signification and value for him.

Another reference to the liberal political situation in both *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is the concept of debt. There is a network of borrowing and lending money in both, where the issues of credit and debt are references to the nation's unfulfilled demands due to the government's betrayal and broken promises in a greater context.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

According to Martha Nussbaum, shame and disgust, as two significant anti-liberalistic and anti-humanist concepts, are used for stigmatization, humiliation, punishment, marginalization of the marked group or individual through harming human dignity. Some people advocate the revival of shame and disgust in favor of morality promotion in the society and use it to homogenize people and make them into moral, obedient social creatures, who always remain under the control of authorities. In the case, shame, sense of guilt, and humanist disgust are used, or better say, misused as a tool of power to uniform the society and make it homogenous and identical. An equalized unified society can be more easily controlled and ruled.

### a) Disgust

According to Nussbaum, disgust, etymologically comes from the Latin word, *caecum*, which means filth. From morning to night, disgust is a powerful emotion that shapes our life structure. Our cleansing rituals are based on making ourselves more agreeable and taking care of ourselves against all those little obscene experiences that may humiliate us in front of the others (For example, we go to the bathroom or check our nose in the mirror to be clean, in private).

What we consider as animalistic substances, e.g., feces, urine, corpse, and rotten meat, are commonly defined as disgusting, and we normally want to ward them off. What is abnormal is when disgust is misused in some societies to condition the majority to hate and marginalize some minorities, who are supposed to contaminate society and threaten its health and homogeneity.

Disgust is expressed by strong reactions and has "a complex cognitive content, which focuses on the idea of incorporation of a contaminant." (Nussbaum, 2004, p.87). According to Freud, the history of disgust coincides with the time that human being

learned to stand upward and keep his/her nose high. Since that time, he lost his connection to sexuality through smell, which used to interconnect him/her to the other animals. Its residue remained in the collectivistic unconscious of the later generation, and the civilized man has taught his/her children to disgust certain objects that are mostly related to genitals and sexuality.

In another level, disgust is related to the concepts of death and decay. It reminds us that we are ephemeral, vulnerable and mortal. Since infancy, human being shows some limited forms of disgust, e.g., some facial expressions on eating something bitter, but around the age of three or four, the social system begins to teach him/her the dominant attitude toward what is supposed as filthy. Disgust in its very essence is made of fear and indignation. These two serious and powerful emotions create a strong rejection to what is perceived as threatening and contaminating.

#### b) Shame

The primitive shame associated with the failure of narcissistic omnipotence and being self-consciousness about our sense of inadequacy and insufficiency. The overwhelming sense of defeat and void shapes primitive shame. The primitive shame is not directly related to sex but our constant and insatiable sexual needs. It aims our wholeness, and implies how imperfect, inadequate and handicapped we are. It begins by the first interruption in our joy and pleasure. Therefore, every human would meet it very soon by his/her unfulfilled expectations.

To put things very generally, shame, as I shall understand it here, is a painful emotion responding to a sense of failure to attain some ideal state, Shame, as is generally agreed by those who analyze it, pertains to the whole self, rather than to a specific act of self. (Nussbaum, 2004, p.184)

Social learning has a significant role in the development of the shame. Shame is defined as the sense of exclusion and separateness from the good whole, to be an outcast or outlander. In different societies, what are considered as disgusting or shameful are quite different. While in limited cases, shame is constructive and may encourage individuals to try harder and catch up with the rest team members, in most cases, it is paralyzing, particularly, if it is caused by another person(s). It diminishes self-respect and self-confidence and aggravates everything. Sometimes, parents use shame as a tool to impose their ideals and expectations to their

children. Beside its side effect as making the child perfectionist, it dangerously can harm her/his self-dignity and pride.

Shame can be used to stigmatize the minorities in society, as well. The dominant discourses define the criteria of normalcy and whoever deviates, is stigmatized as abnormal or unusual. While the normal is considered as good, proper, and right, the abnormal is supposed as bad, inappropriate, wrong, and therefore disgusting and disgraceful. They must be marginalized and hidden to let the normal shine in the center. This aggression toward the others roots in our infantile sense of inadequacy and incompleteness toward ourselves. By stigmatizing the other, we deny humanity and individuality.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### a) *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

The main theme of the novel is embedded allusively in the protagonist's name: Stephen Dedalus. As his family is roman catholic, he is named after St. Stephen (5-35 AD), the first martyr of Christianity. A truly devoted man, who did not lose his faith even while being stoned to death. Dedalus is allusive to Daedalus, the mythic engineer and artisan, who escaped with his son, Icarus, from King Minos's labyrinth by inventing wings. Flying too high, Icarus drowned in the sea, as the sun melted the waxy wings, but Daedalus safely landed on an island.

While the first part of the name connotes the absolute acceptance and faithful devotion without questioning, the second part refers to self-fashioning, liberation, and immigration. If the protagonist's life is divided into two distinct phases, that would be named "the Stephen" and "the Daedalus" part. The irreconcilable essence of the two parts of the name causes the main tension of the novel. Accordingly, the liberation from all the anti-humanistic and anti-liberalistic aspects of a prefabricated identity, based on the confinement and restriction and moving toward self-realization through perusing Heideggerian authentic life, relying on flourishing irreplaceable and nontransferable unique capabilities and capacities, is the main focus of this current paper.

The first signs of shame and guilt are detected at the beginning of the novel. Out of anxiety, Stephen is used to wetting his bed. To solve the problem, his mother spreads an oiled sheet to protect the mattress. Though it may seem to relieve at first, it is embarrassing at the same time. These equivocal mixed feelings are shown as "When you wet the bed, first it is warm then it gets cold. His mother put on the oiled sheet. They had a queer smell." (Joyce, 2003, p.2).

Some lines further, he mentions a little girl, Eileen, whose parents are close friends of Stephen's and there is a silent mutual consent that they should get married when they are grown up. Since the novel is narrated in the form of stream of consciousness, there must be a psychological association between two parts. In both cases of oiled sheet and Eileen, he feels embarrassment. Due to memory lapse or intentional censorship, he does not explain what exactly happens but anyway it is explained that he is hiding under the table and his mother emphasizes on the fact that he must apologize. What Dante says afterward, echoes on his mind just like a horrible curse.

Dante said:  
O, if not, the eagles will come and  
pull out his eyes  
Pull out his eyes,  
Apologize,  
Apologize,  
Pull out his eyes,  
Apologize,  
Pull out his eyes,  
Pull out his eyes,  
Apologize. (Joyce, 2003, p.3)

In religious texts, the punishment usually exceeds the sin. Since the family's state of morality is under the influence of religious beliefs, the punishment is harsh and severe and makes Stephen's consciousness into a battlefield of unpleasant emotions. The mixture of guilt, shame, repentance, and punishment is followed upon hearing this short poem-like.

The mechanism of controlling and civilizing through shame and disgust, as Nussbaum puts it, begins in the first years of childhood at home. Shame and guilt are used as a kind of training tool for parents and caretakers to socialize the child and impose the desired values in the process of his/her identity formation and subjectivity development.

Since Stephen's family members are bound with love and care, the other scenes are bound with sweet or at least ordinary reminiscences, but even through these two single scenes, the confining yet protecting nature of the family is revealed. Even though the family takes care of him and surrounds him with a homely, warm and friendly ambiance, nevertheless in the process of inserting the dominant traditional, social and moral values, shame and guilt as power tools are still traceable.

The school, as the second social institution he enters turns into the canon of shame, and guilt-bound socializing process. As a religious boarding school, it

is the representative of different religious, educational, and familial (residential) parties. Its training policies are mainly based on the uniformity, restraint, obedience, and passivity. Different strategies are used to break all the previous defense mechanisms, and make the individual flexible, and malleable enough to absorb the desired values and standards, and accept the prefabricated identity.

Unique or distinct modes of identity are not tolerated and from the very beginning, the anti-liberal mechanism eradicates each root of individualism. For example, Dedalus seems not to be an ordinary family name in Ireland, and as it has a close association to identity, a mild embarrassing episode happens on his first introduction.

-What is your name?  
Stephen had answered: Stephen  
Dedalus.  
Then Nasty Roche had said:  
What kind of a name is that?  
(Joyce, 2003, p.4)

The constant force for homogeneity and equality push individuals into a kind of restricted anti-humanist, anti-liberalistic boundaries to get them under control. Those who escape uniformity in the form of Foucaultian resistance, shall pay the price. The dominant power defines the criteria of normalization and keeps their subjects behind the red lines using internal controlling tools such as shame and guilt as well as external repressive apparatuses such as penalties and punishment. The reaction against the strangeness of his surname, although it may seem mild, is severe enough to exclude the child from the happy, prosperous majority with common Irish names and make him ashamed. Most of the times, the normalization criteria are not clear or intentionally are kept vague and shady to confuse people, just like a fisherman, who stirs up the water to confuse the fish and catch them more easily.

-Tell us, Dedalus. Do you kiss your  
mother before you go to bed?  
Stephen answered:  
-I do.  
Wells turned to the other fellows  
and said:  
-O, I say, here's a fellow says he  
kisses his mother every night  
before he goes to bed.  
The other fellows stopped their  
game and turned round, laughing  
Stephen blushed under their eyes  
and said:

-I do not.  
 Wells said:  
 -O, I say, here's a fellow says he  
 doesn't kiss his mother before he  
 goes to bed.  
 They all laughed again. Stephen  
 tried to laugh with them. He felt his  
 whole body hot and confused in a  
 moment. (Joyce, 2003, p.10)

Kissing or not kissing one's mother is not important. What Wells does, is confusing Stephen and convince him that he is inadequate and inefficient enough to think for himself or doing anything right. After a while, the individual's defense mechanism is broken, and he is ready enough to undergo the brainwashing process: to deny himself to let the others think for him. In the novel, there is a scene where he repeats and repeats:

Stephen Dedalus is my name.  
 Ireland is my nation.  
 Clongowes is my dwelling place  
 And heaven my expectation.  
 (Joyce, 2003, p.12)

Through these four short lines, identity, nationality, socio-economic status, and religion as well as the ultimate aim of life are determined. The Althusserian Ideological State Apparatuses works through different ways to keep them under the net. The individuals' sense of guilt and shame and constant need for being approved and accepted by the others, keep them passive. But as the threat for rebel and riot never dies out and there is always a possibility for the individuals to claim their liberal humanistic life back and peruse their unique thought system and be authentic, the Repressive State Apparatuses intervene to guarantee the continuum of the system.

In the novel, the lunatic Father Dolan represents RSA at the boarding school. Every day, he breaks in the class suddenly and interrupts what is going on, there. Just like a serial killer, who searches for victims, he punishes the wretched children harshly without any logical excuse. The recurrent pattern of insult, punishment and humiliation makes it a ritual. "-At your work, all of you! Shouted the perfect of studies. We want no lazy idle loafers here, lazy idle little schemers. At your work, I tell you. Father Dolan will be in to see you every day. Father Dolan will be in tomorrow." (Joyce, 2003, p.53)

Once, Stephen is victimized to his brutality. He has broken his glasses and is exempted from doing homework, due to his severely poor sight.

Father Dolan punishes him harshly. The dread, shame, and pain are overwhelmingly tremendous.

Stephen closed his eyes and held out in the air his trembling hand with the palm upwards. He felt the perfect of studies touch it for a moment at the fingers to straighten it and then the swish of the sleeve of the soutane as the pandybat was lifted to strike. A hot burning stinging tingling blow like the loud crack of a broken stick made his trembling hand crumple together like a leaf in the fire: and at the sound and the pain scalding tears were driven into his eyes. His whole body was shaking with fight, his arm was shaking and his crumpled burning livid hand shook like a loose leaf in the air. A cry sprang to his lips, a prayer to be let off. But though the tears scalded his eyes and his limbs quivered with pain and fright he held back the hot tears and the cry that scalded his throat.

-Other hand! Shouted the perfect of studies. (Joyce, 2003, p.55)

As he grows up, his problems aggravate, respectively. His sexual awakening at the age of sixteen, causes him to be attracted to beautiful young women. The natural pressure of basic instincts pushes him toward what he considers as sin. After his first visit to the brothel and having his first sexual experience with a prostitute, his life changes dramatically and becomes messy and chaotic. He regretfully thinks that just like Lucifer, he has negated his love and denied his obedience to God. Having lived an innocent devoted life as a religious young boy, suddenly he sees himself descending the stairs of hell toward rebel, guilt, and darkness. Having overwhelmed by sin and shame, he hears a powerful dreadful sermon, which he feels he is its only and only addressee. During the sermon, trembling from fear, he sees how he has lost his innocence and virginity by committing a disgusting sin of the flesh and how he has lost the opportunity of having a glorious life of devotional service. The preacher illustrates hell so acutely and in such details that horrifies Stephen to death.

A holy saint (one of our own fathers I believe it was) was once vouchsafed a vision of hell. It seemed to him that he stood in the

midst of a great hall, dark and silent save for the ticking of a great clock. The ticking went on unceasingly; and it seemed to this saint that the sound of the ticking was the ceaseless repetition of the words - ever, never; ever, never. Ever to be in hell, never to be in heaven; ever to be shut off from the presence of God, never to enjoy the beatific vision; ever to be eaten with flames, gnawed by vermin, goaded with burning spikes, never to be free from those pains; ever to have the conscience upbraid one, the memory enrage, the mind filled with darkness and despair, never to escape; ever to curse and revile the foul demons who gloat fiendishly over the misery of their dupes, never to behold the shining raiment of the blessed spirits; ever to cry out of the abyss of fire to God for an instant, a single instant, of respite from such awful agony, never to receive, even for an instant, God's pardon; ever to suffer, never to enjoy; ever to be damned, never to be saved; ever, never; ever, never. O, what a dreadful punishment! An eternity of endless agony, of endless bodily and spiritual torment, without one ray of hope, without one moment of cessation, of agony limitless in intensity, of torment infinitely varied, of torture that sustains eternally that which it eternally devours, of anguish that everlastingly preys upon the spirit while it racks the flesh, an eternity, every instant of which is itself an eternity of woe. Such is the terrible punishment decreed for those who die in mortal sin by an almighty and a just God. (Joyce, 2003, p.141)

This is not his first encounter with hell. As a little boy, the heavy presence of hell imagery and its association with sin, guilt, and punishment are sensed everywhere. The omnipresence of God frames his trembling being, and his daily routine is conditioned by shame and guilt. He says his prayers every day to protect himself from going to hell. His wretched being is on the very edge of wrongdoing, misdeed,

and sin. There is a strong possibility to be victimized to God's indignation and rage every minute, even after having passed a long life of faith, obedience and devotion. And now, the doomed moment has come and he, as a miserable fallen sinner, has drowned in the sea of shame and humiliation. Scarlet with shame, he becomes self-conscious that he has transgressed and trespassed the red line. He sees himself as an inadequate person, who has a constant painful need and dependency toward sexuality and cannot ever overcome it.

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. There was no more to tell. He bowed his head, overcome. (Joyce, 2003, p.153)

He goes under an agonizing and bone-breaking process of repentance. He cries and says his prayers over and over. Sense of shame and disgust isolate him. A deep sense of alienation makes him think that he is lonely and lost. He tortures himself with deep senses of regret and sorrow. He even goes to the church for a confession. He decides to deny carnal love and sublimates all his untamable passion to the love of God. He wants to save his immortal soul at the cost of rejecting the ephemeral beauties and pleasures in the contingent materialized world. After this hard period, he comes to the point that he thinks to have overcome his lust and can control himself.

Meanwhile, the school principal invites him and asks him whether he wants to join the order and become a priest. As he wanders and tries to make up his mind, the climax of the novel happens. On the beach, he sees a half-naked beautiful girl and this image transcends him to another level.

Her image had passed into his soul forever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on! (Joyce, 2003, p.181)

A sublime experience, a kind of self-revelation happens and he sees his path in life, very clearly. At a moment of epiphany, he understands what he is supposed to do and what his life is meant for. He sees vividly that all he wants is being a normal human being without any sense of shame, and disgust, to accept his failures, defects and imperfection without any sense of inadequacy, and guilt. He finds out that his greatest potential is worshipping beauty and baptizing himself in the river of aesthetics. This is his rebirth in a new world. This is liberation. He sees the very restricting essence of all the nets that protect him and define his identity, how their ambivalent nature makes him into a mediocre, ordinary man with certain values and desires. He decides to leave Ireland, to fly over those nets just like Daedalus and go to Paris. He wants to be free from the burden of his pre-destined pre-determined being and define himself liberally in a more liberal context. All his previously religion fate, and devotion are now channelized into his new love: Art.

#### b) “The Dead”

Quite a masterpiece, “The Dead”, is the longest short story (almost a novella) in the collection of *Dubliners*, and its main theme is questioning the language, religion, tradition, and national identity. The main plot happens in Gabriel Conroy’s (the protagonist) aunts’ house, where is an annual ball party on the occasion of Christmas, exactly the Feast of the Epiphany. Gabriel, a remarkable professor, and editor, enjoys having open-minded views and an international outlook. The rest including, his wife, Greta, are not sophisticated that much. The event is quite an Irish night with national cultural features, such as Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, and Irish treat. The guests as well as the hosts, are joyfully dancing, eating, drinking, and having fun.

At the first half of the story, he observes the others as an outsider. With a natural self-righteousness, he does not join them in their activities and watch them apparently without any comments. However, his reluctance toward the contribution in the party activities and programs, reveals a kind of disapproval to what is going on. As the story proceeds, more and more he seems to be anomalous to what is called the Irish.

There is a picture of the two murdered princes on the wall, which refers to Shakespeare’s play of “Richard III,” where Edward IV’s two young sons are imprisoned and murdered by the villain uncle in the tower. This picture indicates symbolically, how Gabriel feels alienated, imprisoned, and isolated in his country and estranged by his family and kinship. He is pushed toward dancing with Miss Ivors, a

nationalist with the same educational background but different attitude and perspective.

“O, innocent Amy! I have found out that you write for The Daily Express. Now, aren't you ashamed of yourself?”

“Why should I be ashamed of myself?” asked Gabriel, blinking his eyes and trying to smile.

“Well, I'm ashamed of you,” said Miss Ivors frankly. “To say you'd write for a paper like that. I didn't think you were a West Briton.” (Joyce, 2013, p.94)

He does not understand that his genuine love for literature and intellectual activities shall be criticized so harshly and he should be labeled as “West Briton”. For him, as a liberal scholar, literature stands above the political and national biases and prejudices. After a while, still dancing, another tension occurs:

Then she said suddenly: “O, Mr. Conroy, will you come for an excursion to the Aran Isles this summer? We're going to stay there a whole month. It will be splendid out in the Atlantic. You ought to come. Mr. Clancy is coming, and Mr. Kilkelly and Kathleen Kearney. It would be splendid for Greta too if she'd come. She's from Connacht, isn't she?”

“Her people are,” said Gabriel shortly.

...

“But where?” asked Miss Ivors.

“Well, we usually go to France or Belgium or perhaps Germany,” said Gabriel awkwardly.

“And why do you go to France and Belgium,” said Miss Ivors, “instead of visiting your own land?”

“Well,” said Gabriel, “it's partly to keep in touch with the languages and partly for a change.”

"And haven't you your own language to keep in touch with—Irish?" asked Miss Ivors.

"Well," said Gabriel, "if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language."

...

"And haven't you your own land to visit," continued Miss Ivors, "that you know nothing of, your own people, and your own country?"

"O, to tell you the truth," retorted Gabriel suddenly, "I'm sick of my own country, sick of it!" (Joyce, 2013, p.94)

These sentences are enough to be familiar with Gabriel's mind. His wife is from a small region, where he wants to put behind. Miss Ivors wants him to be connected with his roots. He liberates himself with a harsh move. Explicitly, he admits that he has no sense of belongingness toward either his mother tongue or homeland. He wants to move on and connect himself to a broader context such as west Europe. Both his vocation and vacations are overseas-orientated.

Miss Ivors interrogates him to know the reason. He cannot or does not answer. There is no logical explanation that can convince an ardent nationalist such as her. This is psychologically justifiable how someone may feel estranged, confined and alienated at home and believe that the nets of language, religion, nationality, and culture do not let him live a liberal life, where he can flourish and reach self-actualization.

For some others like Gabriel's aunt, this level of liberation and independence brings unbalancing and sense of dangling. Such people never trespass and if they do by chance, they go back, and stand behind the red line once again.

"I know all about the honor of God, Mary Jane, but I think it's not at all honorable for the pope to turn the women out of the choirs that have slaved there all their lives and put little whipper-snappers of boys over their heads. I suppose it is for the good of the Church if the pope

does it. But it's not just, Mary Jane, and it's not right."

She had worked herself into a passion and would have continued in defense of her sister for it was a sore subject with her but Mary Jane, seeing that all the dancers had come back, intervened pacifically: "Now, Aunt Kate, you're giving scandal to Mr. Browne who is of the other persuasion."

Aunt Kate turned to Mr. Browne, who was grinning at this allusion to his religion, and said hastily: "O, I don't question the pope's being right. I'm only a stupid old woman and I wouldn't presume to do such a thing. But there's such a thing as common everyday politeness and gratitude. And if I were in Julia's place I'd tell that Father Healey straight up to his face. . . ."

"And besides, Aunt Kate," said Mary Jane, "we really are all hungry and when we are hungry we are all very quarrelsome." (Joyce, 2013, p.97)

In their eye, going out of the net is supposed as a kind of violation, aggression that should be justified. All the subjects must live in a bubble and breath the air inside. All have to accept their geographical, lingual, cultural and socio-economical fate and behave in a manner as if they were the best choices, ever available.

At the table, they talk about the opera company which is at the Theatre Royal. An opera singer is mentioned, who has a good voice but he is not received well among the guests. "'And why couldn't he have a voice too?'" asked Freddy Malins sharply. "Is it because he's only a black?'" (Joyce, 2013, p.98) The deep sense of nationalism does not let the individuals welcome and tolerate other races, nations or cultures easily. These sentiments are against Gabriel's, which seems to be more open and liberal.

As every year, Gabriel must give a short speech and thank the hosts for their hospitality, while praising Irish traditions and customs. He feels uncomfortable. He starts the speech with "It is not the first time that we have been the recipients—or perhaps, I had better say, the victims—of the hospitality of certain good



ladies.” (Joyce, 2013, p.100). The word “recipients” is substituted by “victims”. As that ceremony is a pure Irish night, with Irish features and characteristics, the usage of such a weird word reveals the heaviness of victimhood and entrapment in the net of national culture and traditions, he senses in his heart.

A significant point about the speech is his hesitancy of including some poems of Robert Browning or Shakespeare, who are both English and non-Irish. However, in such an Irish night, it would be more appropriate that he used some lines of his national fellowmen. Among all he could praise as his national values, he focuses mainly on the “hospitality” and discards the rest.

When the party is over and Greta and Gabriel come back to the hotel, he feels strong love and sexual passion for his wife but soon his hopes fade out when he finds out about the memory of Michael Furey’s love for Greta and his untimely death. Since, at the end of the party, painful reminiscences have overwhelmed Greta, on listening to a song, which Michael used to sing for her. When Greta sleeps in tears, Gabriel undergoes a kind of both individual and collectivistic self-revelation. A kind of epiphany happens and he finds out that not only his fellowmen but even he, himself, whom he thought was different and distinguished, are all dead. He understands that the real dead, like Michael Fury, who lived and died for love, is much more alive than him. He finds out that his narcissist ego is nothing but an illusion. He sees the very reality of himself, as “as a ludicrous figure, acting as a penny boy for his aunts, a nervous, well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealizing his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror. Instinctively he turned his back more to the light lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead.” (Joyce, 2013, p.109)

This shame is different from Stephen’s. He is shameful because he knows now that he has not lived his life fully. He has wasted the better half of his life, so far. He understands that he has never been truly in love, as Michael Furey was. He feels deceived, lost and broken-hearted. What has remained is a frustrated mediocre man, a living dead.

The motif of death is repeated in different parts of the story. Besides the title, for example, at the dinner, one of the guests talk about some hermits, who live like the dead by total self-denial. “He was astonished to hear that the monks never spoke, got up at two in the morning and slept in their coffins.” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 99). Or at the last scene, Gabriel thinks

about the imminent death of his Aunt Julia and even imagines himself, sitting by her deathbed. But even imagining himself being alive after her death does not make him feel alive. Frustrated and cold, he burst into tears. He sees that he is not alone and the whole country, all the living and the dead, are the dead. Snow is falling all over the country, covers everything and everyone, even Michael Furey’s tombstone, which is the symbol of pure love.

Snow was general all over Ireland.

It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead. (Joyce, 2013, p.110)

#### 4. CONCLUSION

While shame deals with negative assessment of the individual, guilt associates with his/her misdeed and wrongdoing. Therefore, the very essence of shame is the sense of inadequacy and that of guilt is trespass and transgression. Although they are quite different, both are used as controlling tools to break the subjects and keep them ready for brainwashing and acceptance of certain values. Human disgust, based on conventional arbitrary discourse-bound standards, keeps them behind the red line, and make the individuals react similarly. The dominant discourses define what to like and what to hate, what to wish for, and peruse and what to avoid and reject. The result is a homogenized unified collectivistic identity, which is the product of socio-cultural institutions.

What Stephen Dedalus figures out gradually is that despite their protective role, these institutions and faculties are restricting and confining. To have a liberal authentic life, one should escape from those nets and fly over their labyrinthine structure. Free from the shame, guilt and disgust, s/he should reject the prefabricated mediocre identity, which the society gives her/him, listen to his internal voice, embrace his self-alienation and isolation, and pursue the meaning and happiness in her/his unique capabilities

and capacities. As Stephen Dedalus endures the weight of liberation and freedom and tries to self-fashion himself through art and aesthetics.

Gabriel is a middle-aged frustrated Stephen Dedalus, who has never left his homeland! Under the strict socio-cultural norms, structures and constructs, he has tried to customize his world. Not being creative like Stephen, he has a job with English-orientation and travels abroad on vacations. At first, he sees himself as distinguished and elite but just at the end of the story, he understands that he is not the only pebble on the beach. With shame and disgust, he sees the true essence of his empty, absurd, aimless life. He is a living dead, among the dead. When his wife admits her sentiments toward her young dead lover, Gabriel loses his dominant masculine position toward her. He understands that he has no absolute power on his wife and does not play an important role in her life. This sense of weakness and embarrassment extends to his whole life. He sees himself as a nervous sentimental clown, surrounded by the vulgar. He senses the weight of old-fashioned shabby norms and rules, which have formed his identity, banning him from living his life fully, depriving him of experiencing love, and leading him to a tasteless void life. But it is too late to change and there is nothing else to do but weep.

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