

# ANALYSIS OF STEPHEN DEDALUS'S IMAGINATION AND PERCEPTION ON WOMEN

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## ABSTRACT

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Everything begins with a predetermined thought, so well planned in detail according to which activities will flow. Imagination is one's ability to create a mental image, having a vision about the life, how it should be and what kind of life people are going to lead. In this paper I've tried to unearth the imagination of a boy since he was in his early years until he becomes mature about the environment, society and establishment of living a life as an artist, without limits, and to create his own actions from his soul. Also, it's a great deal of his perception on women according to the main protagonist of the novel Stephen. Most of information is taken and analyzed from thoughts and writings directly mentioned in the book, of course, other sources on the same field were used for more reinforcement and to make it as completely comprehend. At the end of the work we will see that it's the imagination which makes people go ahead and live a life adapting to the reality. The beautiful genre, women, have a great impact in our lives, as well, since we come to this world.

**Keywords:** imagination, life, women, sex, family, character, personality etc.

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## Imagination in A Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man

It is discovered that the imaginative world and the world around us are different worlds, and that of imaginative world is more important to us than the latter one. When we look at the society, it seems like the real world, but we also notice that there's a great deal of illusion in it.

As the Victorian poet and critic Mathew Arnold said that people live in two environments: an actual social one and ideal one, and that of ideal one may come only from something suggested in our mind.

The world we live in is revealed by some highly organized ways of using word studies such as philosophy, history, science, religion and law where we find information and knowledge. They are built in power of imagination, and those studies are its

production. Imagination is not only a train of mind but it's also a social and moral development, too.

In the novel "A portrait" we see Stephen Dedalus struggling in discovering his true vocation through his adolescence life. In fact, imagination introduced in the novel is an invisible force that compels Stephen for starting a new life. But as it is seen later in the story, the role of imagination is present in Stephen in four distinct transformations. Imagination is the implement that allows Stephen to create his own conscience through his self-understanding and finally be an artist.

Confronting the rector at Clangowes is his first transformation. He fights against injustice and doesn't want to be punished due to his assignments. This determination for justice is only possible through his imagination.

Encountering new obstacles while he was growing and understanding much better the society Stephen must reach his calling in some ways. He must overcome ups and downs of life, such things happen when he loses the innocence with the Dublin prostitute, but learns that he is doing a sinful life.

He continues to think about his sins, he imagines the various sins he did and discusses about fires and light. In relation with the symbolism of fire he convinces himself that the life he is leading is not for him. He wasn't born to lead such a life so sinful and immoral. When Stephen decided to get rid of sexual needs, here once more time is shown that progress must be the first in life stage, however, imagination takes a great role in leaving behind the past with sinful moments, where people choose to search for the best paths.

As a saying says: To wrong is human, and to forgive is divine. the same happened with Stephen when after making sins he decides to live his life in another manner, the religious life. The remembrance of fire and punishment in the afterworld, speeches of Father Urmall, were the main factors to think more carefully and be open-eyed how to spend days in this life.

The fear of hell, how to be in front of God with such deeds, he imagines that a change must be taken as quickly as possible. Stephen's awakening is not because of religious faith, but of his imagination.

The last metamorphosis in novel is its title. We see that after too many obstacles that preoccupied Stephen either from society or his inside world at last he became a mature artist. "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead. "(Joyce 276)

In a young age walking through various stages of life, helped Stephen to become more and more informed about the world. According to his imagination he makes proper choices for his life. To do a sin is not someone's character. He finally finds for himself a place as an artist. Only with his creative talent Stephen progresses through life and leads a career as an artist.

### **Stephen Dedalus' Perception on women**

Stephen's first romantic imagination is on the beautiful girl Emma. He feels so excited when she is near him and he writes poems to her. Even though she is not seen directly in the novel, she remains a figure in Stephen's idealized imaginative life. We can say, she lives more in his imagination than in his real life. In his sixteen years old age, when he visits the brothels, he feels so guilty, he imagines himself appealing to Emma for his sins in remorse to her.

Another girl who is fascinated in Stephen's imagination is Mercedes. She is a fictional character from Alexandre Duma's novel "The Count of Monte Cristo" Mercedes is a kind of girl, whom Stephen wants to meet in reality. She represents the embodiment of pure love and womanhood, although when her fiancé was imprisoned she marries another man.

His first experience with the prostitute made him lose his self for which he had fantasized a lot about it, but instead of transfiguration this experience produced an over power on him. When he started to pray to Virgin Mary for saving him from consequences of sins, there's a stage of his life in two contrasts, those of images of women as goddess and as a whore.. It is very important to say that during his time at Belvedere College, the time he was to choose as the leader of the sodality of the blessed Virgin Mary, he was visiting prostitutes. Stephen was confused in salvation in his feelings about women. He was also in conflict with the feeling of making real relationships with women. It was possible only through his imagination. It seems that the call of independent artist was much more interesting to him than the desire of the relationship. It's significant that the girl by the river is contemplated by Stephen in a detached way but not with any romantic or sexual interest only in his imagination for artistic revelation.

### **The role of women in Stephen Dedalus' creative process**

Stephen experiences different situations, but the most significant were those of interacting with other people, especially woman, who prove to be the main drive force behind his artistic life. In the progress of the novel, art, women and Stephen are in a relationship which is so clear. For Stephen art involves "recreating life out of life"

(434). To fulfill the destiny as an artist, we should embrace life and experiences in it, because it is the experiences which lead us to build creations. Stephen's experiences with the opposite sex are showed early in his life. It is Dante, who teaches him about geographical places where for the first time Stephen take lessons about the world outside him. Then, his mother as a devoted believer to the Catholic doctrine , associated Dante in telling about the punishment when they say that he "will apologize", all this helped Stephen to create his first poem which was based on "apologize" and "eyes". Their words were planted in his mind and were the first inspiration for him to create.

As for his romantic interest with women, it is developed early in the novel in the form of his playmate Eileen whom he thinks to marry later when they will grow up. This assertion is the first suggestion that his romantic and sexual relationship will be important. Women play a central role in Stephen's life, because they make an established link between romance, punishment and inspiration which will affect his art.

During his childhood, women continued to be the source in Stephen's development as an artist even though he is unaware and without any significance. as the stays with Eileen, he observes that her hand is different from his because, of course, she is a girl and comes to the conclusion that "by thinking of things you could understand them"(287)

Stephen is able to understand the power of women will transform him. For him, women are the channel to the strength, boldness and experience which can be obtained if they are really practiced. To create something, first there should be any incident in the real life. So, Stephen needs those experiences but even after having contact with the prostitute, where he thought there will be activeness for him, it happened the contrary. Stephen understands that he can be transformed by women through sex. This is a new experience for him, but in the other hand is engaged in sins. He knows that such a deed makes him live his life to its fullest. Grown up with Catholic thoughts, once more in the midst of his Catholic doctrine he finds himself drawn to purity love of Virgin Mary. Despite the fact that commits sin after sin he feels so close to the "refuge of sinners" (357) But as we know Stephen was searching for something deep inside his spirit, an independent life, artistic one and that the image of woman erupted him and arose his inspiration. When he was ready to confess of his sins, he again replaced the moral purity with that of Virgin Mary's beauty.

Stephen has different stages during his life. For a short time he spends his time completely in religion without thinking anything else, but soon realizes that he doesn't belong among pious of church. During the novel, Stephen receives artistic

inspiration, the role of women is described as emissaries through which life allowing him "to fall, to err, to triumph, to recreate out of life" (434) and it is the women who deliver the raw experience which he was transformed into artist.

The sexual, religious and mythological natures in Stephen's inspirations achieve their culmination in his early composition of villanelle. It was a poem composed by Stephen's romantic experiences with the young women which provide to be the first attempt at creating poems.

For Stephen, when he comes to understand the woman's role, their action becomes his inspiration or the female figure is the external figure of inspiration. In his essay "Evolution of perception of women" Huong Pham evaluates that in each adolescent phase, Stephen's life is interrelated on women and they are the tangible object of his abstract conviction. Pham continued arguing that sex, salvation and purity are the three most frequent ascriptions to women. He did some comparisons to make this a bit clear that attributions to prostitutes, Virgin Mary and to the young girl are the sources of spiritual elevation and freedom. All these three women are the maps of the destination Stephen desired so much and derived their direction from his mind.

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