

CHAPTER IV
STEPHEN DEDALUS' SEARCH FOR SELF-IDENTITY
AS SEEN FROM HIS CONFLICTS DURING HIS ADOLESCENCE

In chapter IV, the thesis writer discusses Stephen's search for his self-identity during his adolescence. She discusses Stephen's conflicts, both outer and internal conflicts, which show his search for self-identity.

IV.1. STEPHEN'S CONFLICT WITH HIS MOTHER

During his adolescence, Stephen experiences an outer conflict with his mother. The conflict occurs because of Stephen's rejection to his mother's wish. Stephen's mother wants him to do his easter duty, but he does not want to. Easter duty is one of the religious activities in the church on the Easter time which demands many things. Serving the easter duty means that Stephen has to attend the services in the church and become a priest. Though the conflict between Stephen and his mother is not directly shown in the direct argumentation, from Stephen's conversation with his friend, Cranly, it can be seen that Stephen does not want to serve the easter duty. The conversation can be seen in the following quotation:

'Cranly, I had an unpleasant quarrel this evening.'

'With your people?' Cranly asked.

'With my mother.'

'About religion?'

'Yes,' Stephen answered.

After a pause Cranly asked:

'What age is your mother?'

'Not old,' Stephen said. 'She wishes me to make my easter duty.'

'And will you?'

'I will not'.

'Why not?' Cranly said.

'I will not serve,' answered Stephen (Joyce, 1992:184).

From the conversation above, it is obvious that Stephen is unwilling to fulfill his mother's wish, that he does his easter duty and become a priest. Stephen does not like to be a priest. To Stephen, religion does not mean anything. As a result, Stephen decides to leave his mother and finds his own way of life by entering the university. It is clear that from Stephen's conflict with his mother, Stephen searches for his own self-identity. He wants to be free in deciding what he wants to be in life. Stephen, in this case, becomes a rebel by rejecting his mother's dearest wish. Yet, his rebellion is actually his attempt to have an independent life.

IV.2. STEPHEN'S CONFLICTS WITH HIMSELF

Besides facing conflict with his mother, during the period of adolescence from eleven to twenty years old, Stephen also experiences internal conflicts, that show and lead him to his search self-identity. Stephen's conflicts with himself happen because of some reasons.

Firstly, Stephen's conflict with himself happens because he feels annoyed with the noise of his peers in the playing field. Stephen does not want to play with his peers and does not like their noise. To Stephen, the game they are playing seems to be only the boyish game. Stephen feels that the voices of his peers at play are silly:

The noise of children at play annoyed him and their silly voices made him feel, even more keenly than he had felt at Clongowes, that he was different from others. He did not want to play. 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 (Joyce, 1992:48).

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Stephen feels annoyed with his other peers at play. Stephen is not interested at all in playing with his peers. He feels empty in his soul, and wants to seek something that can fill his empty soul. Soon, because of this reason, Stephen faces an internal conflict with himself.

Stephen's conflict with himself happens because he is in doubt whether he follows his peers in school or leaves them. If he is still with them, and identifies himself with his friends, his soul will be empty, just like what he feels right now. On the other hand, if he leaves them, he will be alone because he does not have friends to accompany. Stephen finally decides to leave his friends in his late adolescence. He is not afraid of being alone although he does not have even one friend. It can be seen in the following conversation between Stephen and his friend, Cranly:

Cranly, now grave again, slowed his pace and said:

'Alone, quite alone. You have no fear of that. And you know what that word [leave] means? Not only to be separate from all others but to have not even one friend.'

'I will take the risk,' said Stephen. (Joyce, 1992:191).

From the conversation above, it is clear that Stephen is aware of his self-identity. He is not afraid of being alone because of his separateness from his friends. His decision to leave his friends shows that he wants to be himself and decide something by himself.

Secondly, Stephen undergoes internal conflicts because of the bankruptcy of his father. Stephen feels that the bankruptcy of his father and the decline of his family fortune is due to his father's weakness. Besides, after his father's bankruptcy, Stephen's father seems to lose his self-respect. Stephen sees the changes in his father's manner. He acts as one from a low class society. These changes make Stephen resentful and have a low opinion towards his father. When his father praises his own past and tells the story of his youth, Stephen listens without sympathy to his father's story:

He [Stephen] listened without sympathy to his father's evocation of Cork and of scenes of his youth, a tale broken by sighs or draughts from his pocket flask...(Joyce, 1992:66).

... his restlessness had risen to fever. He wondered how his father, whom he knew for a shrewd suspicious man, could be duped by the servile manners of the porter;... (Joyce, 1992:68).

Hearing his father's stories of his youth makes Stephen feel that 'a faint sickness sighed in his heart' (Joyce, 1992:69). Soon, Stephen faces conflict with himself.

The internal conflict that Stephen undergoes happens because Stephen hesitates whether or not he will choose his father's character as the figure that he identifies himself with.

In a vague way he understood that his father was in trouble and that this was the reason why he himself had not been sent back to Clongowes. For some time he had felt that the slight change in his house; and those changes in what he had deemed unchangeable were so many slight shocks to his boyish conception of the world. The ambition which he felt astir at times in the darkness of his soul sought no outlet. A dusk like that of the outer world obscured his mind... (Joyce, 1992:48).

If he chooses his father figure, he is afraid that he cannot adjust any longer with his father's character, of which he has a low opinion, but if he does not choose his father, this means he will become a rebel as he insists to be different from him. Though Stephen leaves his conflict unsolved, it is obvious that the conflict shows his search for self-identity.

Also, because of his father's bankruptcy, Stephen is doubtful whether he will go into his father's occupation or not. If he goes into his father's occupation and chooses to take his father's figure, he will not be happy, particularly after seeing his father's manner. On the other hand, if he does not go into his father's occupation, this means he rebels against his father. Stephen leaves his conflict unsolved. Stephen does not seem proud of his father's occupation, which changes all the time, as seen in the following conversation between Stephen and his friend, Cranly.

'Was your father...', Cranly interrupted himself for an instant, and then said: 'I don't want to pry into your family affairs. But was your father what is called well-to-do? I mean, when you were growing up?

'Yes,' Stephen said.

'What was he?' Cranly asked after a pause.

Stephen began to enumerate glibly his father's attributes.

'A medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a story-teller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a tax-gatherer, a bankrupt and at present a praiser of his own past. (Joyce, 1992:186).

Thirdly, Stephen's internal conflict happens because he is offered by the priest to join the order or the priesthood. While Stephen is joining in the novitiate, he is asked by his priest if he has a desire to be a priest. The conversation between Stephen and the priest can be seen in the following quotation:

His ears were listening to these distant echoes amid the silence of the parlour when he became aware that the priest was addressing him in a different voice.

'I sent for you today, Stephen, because I wished to speak to you on a very important subject.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Have you ever felt that you had a vocation?' Stephen parted his lips to answer yes and then withheld the word suddenly. The priest waited for the answer and added:

'I mean, have you ever felt within yourself, in your soul, a desire to join the order? Think.'

'I have sometimes thought of it,' said Stephen. (Joyce, 1992:120-21).

Having been asked by the priest concerning his vocational choice, Stephen faces conflicts with himself. He is doubtful whether or not he will join the order and become a priest as his vocation. If he joins the

priesthood, this means that he will face 'a grave and ordered and passionless life, a life without material cares' (Joyce, 1992:123). On the other hand, if he does not join the priesthood, this means he will break his mother's heart because she wants him to become a priest. This time, Stephen resolves his conflict by choosing not to join the priesthood.

To Stephen, the wisdom of the priest does not touch him at all. He is not interested at all to be a priest because religion does not mean anything to him. Stephen seems to be aware of himself that he does not belong to the priesthood. This can be seen through the following quotation:

His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders. The wisdom of the priest's appeal did not touch him to the quick. He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world (Joyce, 1992:124).

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Stephen is not interested at all in joining the priesthood as he feels that the wisdom of the priest's appeal does not touch him. The church fails to conform of what a church should be. Also, Stephen actually wants to be free in choosing his vocation. He is not willing to follow the

priest as he prefers to choose his own vocation, different from the one chosen by the priest. Therefore, Stephen makes his own choice and decision by refusing to be a priest and finding his own way of life.

Besides, Stephen refuses to join the priesthood because of his mother. If Stephen becomes a priest, this means he will follow his mother's vocational choice, which he does not like, and take his religious mother figure, which is not suitable for him. On the other hand, if he does not become a priest, it means he has rebelled against his mother's wishes and her religion as well. In solving his internal conflict, Stephen chooses not to become a priest. Though his decision to leave the priesthood does not please his mother, Stephen does not regret what he is doing. He is becoming aware of his self-identity and of where he is going.

Yes, his mother was hostile to the idea, as he had read from her listless silence. Yet her mistrust pricked him more keenly than his father's pride and he thought coldly how he had watched the faith which was fading down in his soul ageing and strengthening in her eyes. A dim antagonism gathered force within him and darkened his mind as a cloud against her disloyalty and when it passed, cloud-like, leaving his mind serene and dutiful towards her again, he was made aware dimly and without

regret of a first noiseless sundering of their lives (Joyce, 1992:126).

Lastly, Stephen experiences conflict with himself because of the voice of nature he hears calling his name. The voice can be seen in the following quotation:

Again! Again! Again! A voice from beyond the world was calling.
 'Hello, Stephanos!'
 'Here comes The Dedalus!'
 'Ao!...Eh, give it over, Dwyer, I'm telling you,'
 or I'll give you a stuff in the kisser for yourself...Ao!'
 'Good man, Towser! Duck him!'
 'Come along, Dedalus! Bous Stephanoumenos! Bous Stephaneforos!'
 'Duck him! Guzzle him now, Towser!'
 'Help! Help!...Ao!' (Joyce, 1992:129).



Having heard the voice calling his name, Stephen is in doubt whether or not he will become an artist since he thinks the voice wants him to be one. This can be seen through the following quotation:

What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some medieval book of prophecies and symbols, a hawk-like man flying sunward above

the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being? (Joyce, 1992:130).

If Stephen becomes an artist, this means he has to leave his family, his friends and his country and becomes a rebel, because Stephen's name is a sign of the artist means of escape from the island of his birth, Ireland. On the other hand, if he does not become an artist, he will not feel happy with his present life. Though this time Stephen is not able to solve his internal conflict yet, it is obvious that his conflict shows his search for self-identity. He becomes aware of his self-identity as he undergoes conflict with himself.

Nevertheless, inspired by the vision of a young girl on shore, Stephen decides to be an artist. Through the vision, Stephen imagines something that is beautiful; something that can fill his empty soul. This can be seen in the following quotation:

A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender

bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and soft-hued as ivory,... But her long fair hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face (Joyce, 1992:131-32).

The seabird-like young girl is for Stephen a means of release from his spiritual apathy. What Stephen refuses in his adolescence, both his mother's wish and his friends, are regarded as bad things which all seem to isolate him. When he finds something beautiful in the vision of the young girl, he regards it as beauty. In this point, Stephen finds the reverse things of those regarded as bad things that can fill his empty soul. The vision of the young girl, thus, is a symbol of the liberating, recreating power of art to which he encounters (Lodge, 1966:246-47). To Stephen, beauty represents an art. Stephen feels that he has found what he has been searching for: an artist.

Actually, Stephen's awareness of beauty has begun since his childhood, in which he is very obsessed with words. Even, in his adolescence, he is capable of making rhythm and phrase from words. This proves that Stephen's obsession with words brings him to his awareness of his self-identity: to be an artist. Therefore, in his late adolescence, Stephen decides that his vocation belongs to

that of the artisthood.

As Stephen has found his self-identity, he decides to leave Ireland, his country. He wants to go abroad, away from his family, his friends and his church, and to become a writer. Though Stephen leaves them all, he feels happy as he has found his own self-identity:

He was alone. He was unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life. He was alone and young and wilful and wild-hearted, alone amid a waste of wild air and brackish waters and the sea-hearted, alone amid a tangle and veiled grey sunlight and gayclad...(Joyce, 1992:131).

Stephen also feels that his soul is not empty anymore. Having found his self-identity, Stephen knows what he is going to do in the future. This can be seen in the following quotation:

His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her grave clothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable (Joyce, 1992:130).

Stephen, during his adolescence, faces conflicts, both outer and internal conflicts, that show his search for self-identity. With his mother, Stephen undergoes conflict that makes him choose to leave his mother. With himself, Stephen faces internal conflicts because of some reasons: the noise of his peers, the bankruptcy of his father, the offer of the priest and the voices calling his name. Later on in his late adolescence, inspired by the vision of a young girl on the shore, Stephen decides to leave his country, his family, his friends and religion.