“The Curve of an Emotion”

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## A Study of Change in the Portrayal of Children and Childhood in the Literature of James Joyce

Barry Ryan

UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG

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ISBN 978-91-8009-186-2 (print)
ISBN 978-91-8009-187-9 (pdf)

The dissertation is also available online:
http://hdl.handle.net/2077/67117

Cover:
Design by Sara Ryan.
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Photographer: Bettmann

Print:
Stema Specialtryck AB, Borås, 2021

# Abstract

Title: “The Curve of an Emotion”: A Study of Change in the Portrayal of Children and Childhood in the Literature of James Joyce
Author: Barry Ryan
Language: English with a Swedish summary
ISBN: 978-91-8009-186-2 (print)
ISBN: 978-91-8009-187-9 (pdf)
Keywords: Irish Catholic childhoods, alienation, distorted adult perceptions, sexual boundary, nostalgia, misopaedia, nexus, historicization, reciprocation

Litteraturteoretiker och socialhistoriker anser att skönlitteratur är betydelsefull för att studera och förstå barn och barndom. James Joyces texter anses viktiga för förståelsen av irländska barndomar, och Joyces skildringar av barndom har oftast setts som oföränderliga vad gäller den övergripande tematiken fram till att distinktionen mellan vuxna och barn bryts ner i *Finnegans Wake*. Det har emellertid inte gjorts några omfattande studier av barn och barndom i Joyces verk. Det finns en etablerad uppfattning bland forskare att det fiktiva barnet i Joyces texter är en historisk artefakt inom den Joyciska estetiken, samtidigt har endast begränsade studier gjorts inom ämnet i verk daterade efter *Ett porträtt av författaren som ung*. Den föreliggande avhandlingen har för avsikt att överbrygga den här kunskapsluckan genom att undersöka hur barndom skildras i alla Joyces betydande verk fram till *Finnegans Wake*.

Då avhandlingen är strukturerad kronologiskt i enlighet med Joyces verk inleds den med *Dublinbor* och avslutas med *Odysseus*. Metodiken bygger på en dialektisk analys av relationen mellan Joyces texter och den historiska kontexten. Utifrån det här tillvägagångssättet har de enskilda verken presenterat unika teoretiska problem i studiet av barn och barndom. Ett eklektiskt förhållningssätt har tillämpats och i analysen appliceras teoretiska modeller av barn och barndom som spänner mellan den klassiska antikens och nutida marxistiska perspektiv. Således demonstrerar de enskilda läsningarna i den här avhandlingen (som motsvarar de olika kapitlen) hur barn och barndom behandlas på ett unikt sätt i de enskilda fiktiva berättelserna av Joyce som föregår *Finnegans Wake*.

Genom läsningarna eftersträvas ett nytt förhållningssätt till forskningen om barndom i Joyces texter framförallt genom att visa hur en kontinuerlig förändring genomsyrar Joyces huvudsakliga teman gällande barndom. Förändringarna sker inte som radikala brott utan snarare som en kurva där känsligheten omprövas, och denna

kurva når sin höjdpunkt i *Odysseus*. I enlighet med detta hävdas att även med det breda spektrat av möjliga texttolkningar som diskuteras i avhandlingen underminerar barnet i *Odysseus* den vuxnes perspektiv, utan att radikalt bryta sig fria från det.

# Articles

Ryan, Barry. "James Joyce's 'The Sisters': Implied Pederasty and Interpreting the Inexpressible." *Boyhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2020, pp. 92-109.

Ryan, Barry. "Pregnancy and Abjection in James Joyce's 'The Dead'." *Nordic Irish Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2015, pp. 37-53.

Ryan, Barry. "'Arisen from the Grave of Boyhood'? Nostalgia and Misopaedia in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*." Accepted for publication in *Nordic Irish Studies*.

Ryan, Barry. "The Emerging Affective Child in James Joyce's *Exiles*." Accepted for publication in *Papers on Joyce*.

Ryan, Barry. "Interpreting the Lives of Working Children in James Joyce's *Ulysses*." Accepted for publication in *Engaging with Work in English Studies: An Issue-based Approach*.

# Acknowledgements

This work would have been impossible if not for the unwavering support, and influence, of others. In particular, I am grateful to my supervisor Ronald Paul for his continuous belief in my vision, even when I was forced to take unexpected paths. I am also grateful for Ron's good humour and patience, especially when it was obvious that I was in danger of losing my way. Likewise, I thank my brother Kevin Ryan, who encouraged my early curiosity by placing advanced theory along my path. Needless to say, Kevin's research on childhood and power made me aware of critical childhood perspectives from the outset, and without this awareness it is doubtful that I would have been sensitive to the topic when I encountered Joyce's fiction.

Also, if it were not for my two children Robin and Theo, it is doubtful that I would ever have reflected enough to complete this project, and I take great pleasure in their unfaltering sense of autonomy. Moreover, without the support and encouragement of the love of my life, Sara Ryan, it is extremely doubtful that I would have had the stamina, or willpower, to complete this work. More importantly though, because of Sara I am able to look forward to a life after this project. Ultimately, I am truly privileged to have the fingerprints of all of the above on every page of this thesis, and for this I am extremely grateful.

I would like to express gratitude to Åke Persson who has followed my development since my first day at university. I would also like to thank Malin Petzell and Jacob Jonsson for their support during the finalisation of this thesis. Likewise, I am grateful to Irene Gilsenan Nordin who supplied crucial feedback on an earlier draft, and to all of the peer reviewers who provided feedback for the articles in this thesis. I would also like to thank the committee members Chloe Avril, Marius Hentea, and the moderator Zlatan Filipovic, for their support during my final seminar. Moreover, my time at the University of Gothenburg has been enriched by colleagues such as Wade Bell, Margrét Gunnarsdóttir Champion, Pia Köhlmyr, Hans Löfgren, the late Marcus Nordlund, Britta Olinder, Houman Sadri, Joseph Trotta, and Miguel Garcia Yeste, among others.

Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank my late father and mother Thomas and Eileen, and my other siblings Frances, Sean, and Emma, who shared my own childhood. Also, my wife's family Kent Larsson, Roswita Larsson, Simon Larsson, Zakarias Grönqvist, Susanna Larsson, Simon Weiss, Patrick Minogue, and Annafrida Minogue, for putting up with my obsession.

# Table of Contents


1. INTRODUCTION ... 1
Literary Children and Childhoods ... 1
Defining the Terms Child, Children, and Childhood in Joyce's Fiction ... 4
Background: Irish Children in Context ... 6
General Outline: Methodology ... 9
Aim, Scope, and Relevance ... 11
Delimitation ... 12
Thesis Structure ... 14

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ... 17
Children and Childhood in Joyce's Fiction ... 17
General Commentary ... 17
*Dubliners* ... 23
*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* ... 25
*Exiles* ... 29
*Ulysses* ... 31
Concluding Remarks ... 35

3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW ... 37
Childhood in the Modern Period ... 37
The Child in Theory: The Early Modern Period ... 40
The Child in Theory: The Late Modern Period ... 45
Concluding Remarks ... 50

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ... 55
Children and Childhood in Theory ... 55
Childhood Studies ... 56
Critic of the Interpretative Child in Childhood Studies ... 60
Positioning the Child in Contemporary Scientific Disciplines ... 61
Dancing with the Affective Child in the Twenty First Century ... 65
Concluding Remarks ... 67

5. ARTICLE SUMMARIES AND SYNTHESIS ..................................... 69
The Portrayal of Children and Childhoods in Joyce's Fiction .............. 69
James Joyce's "The Sisters": Implied Pederasty and
Interpreting the Inexpressible ........................................................ 70
Pregnancy and Abjection in James Joyce's "The Dead" ........................ 74
"Arisen from the Grave of Boyhood"? Nostalgia and Misopaedia
in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* ...................... 77
The Emerging Affective Child in James Joyce's *Exiles* .......................... 80
Interpreting the Lives of Working Children in
James Joyce's *Ulysses* ........................................................................ 82

6. CONCLUSION ........................................................................ 89
Joyce's Literary Childhoods: Tracing the
"Curve of an Emotion" ........................................................................ 89
Limitations: Suggestions for Further Research ...................................... 93
Rethinking Children and Childhood in Joyce: Why it Matters .............. 94

WORKS CITED ........................................................................ 97

7. ARTICLES
James Joyce's "The Sisters": Implied Pederasty and Interpreting the Inexpressible

Pregnancy and Abjection in James Joyce's "The Dead"

"Arisen from the Grave of Boyhood"? Nostalgia and Misopaedia in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

The Emerging Affective Child in James Joyce's *Exiles*

Interpreting the Lives of Working Children in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

# List of Figures

Figure 1: Institutions and childhood participation .................... 59
Figure 2: Perspectives of the child in scientific disciplines ...... 62
Figure 3: Competing perspectives of the child in scientific disciplines .......... 63
Figure 4: Formation of perceptions of children and childhood .......... 64
Figure 5: Contrasting views of childhood characteristics ........ 84
Figure 6: Children's working activities .................................. 86

# 1. Introduction

*I have just received very important news [Joyce said]. A son has been born to Georgio and Helen in Paris. [Is] that all? [Arthur Power] replied. It is the most important thing there is, said Joyce firmly, his voice charged with meaning. [I] cannot see that it is so important. It is something which happens all the time, everywhere, and with everyone. [A] tense silence fell between us. [Our] relationship was never the same again.* (Power 110)

*Beating of children in almost all [Irish] Catholic schools is the general practice. Education and training in Catholic schools is founded on fear, the fear of corporal punishment, and the fear of hell. [The] child who is beaten by someone bigger and stronger than himself, will very often grow up bitter and full of hatred for society. He will want to get his own back. He may one day hit back. I warn society against the child who has been hurt.* (Tyrrell 53–54)

## Literary Children and Childhoods

The attitudes of indifference, reverence, anger, and empathy towards children and childhood in the above passages permeate almost every page of James Joyce's fiction in one form or another. Accordingly, it is not a large step to compare Joyce's veneration of children with Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*[1] or with Richard Rowan in *Exiles*.[2] Likewise, there are similarities between Peter Tyrrell's view of Irish Catholic education and Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.[3] Additionally, there are affinities between Arthur Power's attitude of indifference and the attitudes of the many adult characters

[1] All parenthetical page references to *Ulysses* are to the Dover unabridged republication of the original Shakespeare and Company edition, published in Paris by Sylvia Beach in 1922. To date there exists no definitive critical edition of *Ulysses*, and rather than choose between competing editions, I have chosen to remain sensitive to editorial choices by cross-referencing the Dover edition with the 1984 Gabler and 1961 Random House editions.
[2] All parenthetical page references to *Exiles* are to the 1973 Penguin edition.
[3] All parenthetical page references to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are to the 1968 Viking Critical edition, edited by Chester G. Anderson.

that populate the stories of *Dubliners*[4] and the streets of *Ulysses*. The above examples demonstrate that while a number of conflicting perspectives relating to children and childhood exist in Joyce's fiction, they are not necessarily contemporaneous. The difference in attitudes towards children, therefore, and the range of childhoods portrayed in Joyce's fiction, validates why scholarly study of the topic is warranted.

However, apart from a growing scholarly interest in the collapse of the distinction between adults and children in *Finnegans Wake,* the topic of childhood in Joyce's literature has not captured the imagination of scholars despite the vast proliferation of Joyce studies. Markedly, Joyce scholars generally consider children to be treated indifferently by Joyce, and his rendition of children's lives is often deemed unchanging within the major themes such as the Roman Catholic Church, the British Empire, colonial history, alienation, paralysis, exile, spiritual growth, nationalism, the family, maturity, father and son relations, and so on. Indeed, Declan Kiberd, who was the first critical voice to lift the child into the mainstream of Irish literary studies, states that Joyce is "one of the great recorders of Irish childhood and what it was like" (Kiberd "Hundred" 30:30–31). It seems fair to suggest, therefore, that the literary child in Joyce's fiction is generally considered to be an historical artefact within Joycean aesthetics.

For Margot Norris, who explores the topic of childhood in the early fragment of *Finnegans Wake* "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies," the myth of childhood is challenged by "[reinstating] the child into its social and political matrix" (Norris 95). Be that as it may, for those familiar with the opening statement in Joyce's early essay *A Portrait of the Artist,* (which bears the hallmarks of a manifesto and was declined by the editors of the Irish literary magazine *Dana* in 1904), it will be noted that the child was instated into Joyce's social and political matrix from the outset:

> The features of infancy are not commonly reproduced in the adolescent portrait for […] we cannot conceive the past in any other than its iron, memorial aspect. Yet the past assuredly implies a fluid succession of presents, the development of an entity of which our actual present is a phase only. Our world […] estranged from those of its members who seek by some art, by some process of the mind as yet untabulated, to liberate from the

[4] All parenthetical page references to *Dubliners* are to the 2006 Norton critical Edition, edited by Margot Norris.

> personalised lumps of matter, that which is their individuating rhythm, the first or formal relation of their parts. But for such as these a portrait is not an identificative paper but rather the curve of an emotion. (Joyce "Portrait" 257-258)

One of the editors of *Dana*, W. K. Magee, would later explain that his reason for opposing publication was "I can't print what I can't understand" (Fargnoli and Gillespie 134–135). For those involved with *Dana* – whose intention was to challenge revivalist nativism by providing an outlet for independent thought by espousing Enlightenment ideals – Joyce's understanding of liberty in this essay – being the recovery of dignity through the aesthetic expression of an ahistorical, yet individual human essence – would have seemed confusing. However, to scholars familiar with Joyce's reading between 1903 and 1904, the metaphysical influence of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas on Joyce's thinking will be recognisable. Thus, as in the philosophy of Aristotle and Aquinas, the child's mind is implicated in Joyce's aesthetic project from the outset. However, there exists at the present time negligible scholarly interest in the topic of childhood in Joyce's fiction prior to *Finnegans Wake*.

Accordingly, and conceding from the outset that there is no straightforward way to distinguish between adult and children's literature, criticism concerned with the portrayal of children in fiction aimed at adult readers up until the last 40 years or so was more or less confined to three surveys – Peter Coveney's *Poor Monkey: The Child in Literature* (1957), which describes child characters in post–1800 British literature – Robert Pattison's *The Child Figure in English Literature* (1978), which explores the thematic relevance of child characters to the fall of man and original sin – and Reinhard Kuhn's *Corruption in Paradise: The Child in Western Literature* (1982), which draws on a broad range of literatures to construct an intertextual rather than a chronological taxonomy of literary childhoods, that Kuhn argues to be paradoxical enigmas.

Assessing the field in 1994, Elizabeth Goodenough, Mark Heberle, and Naomi Sokoloff, while recognising Coveney, Patterson, and Kuhn's contributions to the literary history of childhood, argue that the studies in question are under–theorised, and either overly "descriptive" or "thematic" in nature (Goodenough et al. 2). Moreover, they argue that the literary child has been institutionally "neglected" by passing over the "radical problem [of] the uniquely difficult accessibility, and the attendant complexities entailed in speaking for children, or in their names" (Goodenough et al. 2–3). Thus,

literature for or about children is always about "manipulation, power, and desire" (Goodenough et al. 3), and child–centred writing is never free from adult concerns.

Since this assessment scholarly studies concerned with the portrayal of children and childhood in adult literature have increased exponentially. While it is still fair to say that the study of children's literature maintains institutional precedence over critical childhood approaches in adult literature, the topic of childhood in adult literature is now considered to be a field of study in its own right. However, no extended studies of children or childhood in Joyce's fiction exist, and the limited studies that do exist do not contribute to an understanding of change in Joyce's depiction of children and childhood. Moreover, even if childhood is to be treated as an historical artefact within Joycean aesthetics, it makes good scholarly sense to give adequate attention to any changes that may occur in that depiction.

In this thesis, therefore, I take a third path. On the one hand, the articles in this thesis provide a basis for arguing that Joyce's portrayal of children and childhood changes before a collapse of a clear distinction between adults and children occurs in *Finnegans Wake*. On the other hand, this does not necessarily indicate a radical break with earlier depictions. Rather, there are also continuities that indicate that depictions of children and childhood up until *Finnegans Wake* can be interpreted as following a "curve" of revised sensibility. Subsequently, it seems reasonable to suggest that Joyce's portrayal of children and childhood can be usefully interpreted as reaching a parabolic vertex in *Ulysses*.

## Defining the Terms Child, Children, and Childhood in Joyce's Fiction

Any study of the *child*, *children*, or *childhood* must contend with the fact that these terms are social categories with two points of reference that are ideologically charged, historically contingent, and theoretically elastic. First, does childhood begin at the time of conception, at a particular stage of development in the womb, at the moment of birth, or perhaps even later on? Second, does childhood end when children are at a certain age, or are capable of taking care of themselves in a wider society, or when they have entered the working place, or when they have demonstrated certain competencies, or even fulfilled certain rites of initiation?

Whether or not one differentiates between "foetuses," "infants," "toddlers," "young children," "pre–pubescent children," "adolescents," or "youth," all of these distinct categories are generally assembled under the umbrella terms of *child* and *children,* which indicates that *childhood* is an umbrella term that relates to the early, varied, period of the human life–course that is relationally constructed as the other of *adulthood.* This early period, as a categorisation, is generally defined by physiological, psychological, emotional, and intellectual change, and change is tacked onto socialisation and acculturation processes that are purposed by diverse interest groups.

Subsequently, when conducting research, the terms *child*, *children*, and *childhood* have been treated as umbrella terms, and the period of life belonging rightly to childhood in Joyce's fiction has been contextualised in this study to limit the risk of anachronistic bias. As a general guideline, Mary Hatfield's study of middle–class childhood in nineteenth century Ireland is useful, and the term "child" is applied to individuals between two and nineteen years of age (Hatfield 21). However, in Joyce's collection of short stories *Dubliners*, the chronological sequencing emphasises differences between childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age, and Joyce's use of these terms differs considerably from present–day usage. On the topic of life divisions in Joyce's fiction, Florence Walzl argues:

> Joyce had a strong awareness of the Roman divisions of the life span. His statements and practices indicate that he adopted the view that childhood (pueritia) extended to age seventeen; adolescence (adulescentia) from seventeen through the thirtieth year; young manhood (juventus) from thirty–one to forty–five, and old age (senectus) from forty–five on. Actually he seems more rigid in application of these life divisions than the Romans themselves, since they had a number of variations of this theme. (Walzl "chronology" 410)

Roy Gottfried concurs with Walzl that Joyce is consistent in viewing seventeen as the end of childhood in both his fiction and personal letters (Gottfried "Adolescence" 70). In this study, therefore, the term "childhood" applies to the period of life up to seventeen years of age, with no lower limit, and includes "foetuses," "infants," "toddlers," "young children," "pre–pubescent children," "adolescents," and "youth," as these terms are in common usage today.

## Background: Irish Children in Context

The changes in Joyce's depiction of children and childhood can be usefully compared with a shift in perspective towards children in the twentieth century in the Global North. At the end of the nineteenth century adults are often considered to have viewed children through a disinterested gaze, with children being unseen, unheard, and unfelt. In contrast, the child of the twentieth–first century is generally viewed as being a unique sentient entity that is seen, heard, and felt to act.[5] However, while the perspective of children in the last hundred years or so has shifted from considering children as part of an abstract collective towards seeing children as individuals with rights of their own,[6] this same shift has also had a resounding impact on Irish society.

In the last thirty years or so, evidence has continued to surface that gestures towards Ireland being a childhood dystopia, and political and religious leaders have often struggled in the face of public and international condemnation. A failure to treat this issue with the rigour that it deserves has contributed to the resignation of a Taoiseach,[7] a President of the High Court,[8] the collapse of an Irish government, and thereafter, high–profile tribunals. On 11 May 1999, in the face of widespread public condemnation, the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern offered an unprecedented apology; "On behalf of the State and all citizens of the State, the government wishes to make a sincere and long overdue apology to the victims of childhood abuse for our collective failure to intervene, to detect their pain, to come to their rescue" (Maguire 9). Despite this apology, and the resulting *Ryan Report* in 2009, the Irish state had to once again issue a full public apology to the survivors of Magdalen laundries after the publication of the *McAleese Report* in 2013, and with the investigation by the *Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and Certain Related Matters* still ongoing, further apologies can be expected in the future.

Consequently, while this period is also characterised by what many would consider to be the emergence of a more modern Ireland, this emergence is also trailed by what seems to be an unshakeable shadow that appears to be affecting every corner of Irish society. Thus, it does not seem to matter which position a more modern Irish society tries to take, as this shadow seems to

[5] For representative examples see James and Prout (1990), James et al. (1998), Jenks (2005), Corsaro et al. (2011), Corsaro, ("Sociology" 2011), Esser et al. (2016).
[6] See for example Oswell (2013).
[7] Albert Reynolds
[8] Harry Whelehan

persist beyond the expiration of the children per se. Accordingly, in the foreword of the ground–breaking book *The Child Sex Scandal and Modern Irish Literature: Writing the Unspeakable*, Fintan O'Toole writes:

> Ireland is not unique in creating, sustaining, justifying, and eventually exposing a large–scale system of coercive confinement in which women and children were rendered vulnerable to every form of physical and psychological violence and exploitation. It is probably true, nonetheless, that there are few if any countries where this system was so central to the very nature of the state [and] the control of *sexuality, reproduction, and childhood* could never be marginal to the definition of Irishness. (Backus and Valente "Child" xi; my emphasis)

If O'Toole is right, then stories about Irish children and childhood represent an unpaid debt that is uncomfortably surfacing within a more modern Ireland, which, O'Toole argues, threatens to decompartmentalise childhood from its "domain of horror and scandal and deeply felt shame" (Backus and Valente "Child" xii).

As the above discussion suggests, the study of children and childhood in Ireland is an important topic with implications for a range of scholarly disciplines. However, contextualising childhood in Ireland is challenging. On the one hand, the social–historian Tom Inglis indicates that the study of Irish childhoods is hampered by a scarcity of primary sources. On the other hand, in certain cases the distinction between adults and children has either been transgressed, or it has collapsed altogether, with transgressions sometimes occurring secretly, but also sometimes in full view much like an open secret. Needless to say, scholarly studies can be provocative and disturbing. Correspondingly, the historian Bet Bailey asks:

> [What] does it mean to apply such understandings to the emotionally charged topic of children and sex, most particularly when boundaries are not clear? […] for me at least – there is some point at which the boundary between childhood and age starts to feel absolute; some point at which the constructed nature of the meaning of childhood and of sex begins to seem less negotiable. My faith in social–historical construction is not shaken, but I still find a need to draw lines. (Bailey 206)

Bailey opens her essay with the reasonable proposition that "sex, in the modern western world, defines the boundary between childhood and adulthood" (Bailey 191). Be that as it may, Bailey also suggests that moral and ethical judgement is possible because childhood *is* constructed.

However, while much scholarly work has focused on the relationship of children to formal institutional praxis in post–independence Ireland; at the present time research on childhood in pre–independence Ireland is scant and mostly under–theorised. While it is widely acknowledged by scholars that Joyce meticulously unpicked identity constructions in his art, it would be remarkable if Joyce's representation of Dublin's social and cultural conventions is any less informed when it comes to childhood in his stories. Indeed, Hélène Cixous considers Joyce's art to be of immense social importance, whereby Joyce neither represents objectively, nor distorts the reality of the "three circles of family, homeland, and Church [whereby] the family [and] economic and social problems [are] concrete elements of social reality – an end in itself, but limited – and the means by which the artist's mind is sharpened" (Cixous ix–x). As Cixous suggests, because of their imaginative and expressive powers, creative writers often provide a voice that may be bypassed or ignored in other disciplines, which Fintan O'Toole argues is the:

> paradox: fiction is much more "factual" [in the case of supressed narratives] than the vast bulk of contemporary journalistic and political discourse. It picks up on the intimacies that are so carefully occluded in official discourse. But it also maps the complex relationships between what can be said and what can be written. In life, much of what children know is communicated between them only in quiet speech – the unspeakable is really the unwritable. In art, it is writing that occupies the place of this speech, that broaches, more or less explicitly, what is not being said, either by the young characters themselves or by the world around them. (Backus and Valente "Child" xiv)

Correspondingly, the historian Diarmaid Ferriter also concurs that literary representations of Irish childhoods are valuable not only as a source of expression, but if combined with historical resources, they may provide valuable insights into how it felt to live in the historical moment (Ferriter "Suffer" 103).

Unsurprisingly perhaps, this same period is also characterised by a flood of tragic childhood autobiographical novels in the last thirty years or so, and the historian Diarmaid Ferriter states that "it is strongly tempting to conclude from an engagement with [memoirs of Irish childhood] that the greatest blot on Irish society's copybook was its treatment of children" (Ferriter "Suffer" 70). By the same token, this period has also seen Irish cultural productions dominated by representations of children and childhood. Celebrated examples would include award–winning cultural productions such as Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*, Dermot Bolger's *The Journey Home*, Anne Enright's *The Gathering*, Roddy Doyle's *Paddy Clarke ha ha ha*, Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*, and Jim Sheridan's *My Left Foot.* Subsequently, it is clear that the topic of children and childhood has established thematic relevance within Irish cultural productions. However, it is also important to explore portrayals of the Irish child against the backdrop of political, religious, historical, and social narratives that enmesh it.

Accordingly, this dissertation is one response to an intersecting array of contemporary issues that concern social, sexual, and political controversies in Ireland with children and childhood at their centre. The relatively late emergence of the sentient child in Ireland has in all probability contributed to a seismic shift in attitudes in Irish society. With children now often considered to be unique beings symbiotically engaging in a world of reflexive adults, it is difficult to imagine a similar view of the child existing in Ireland when Joyce was writing a century ago. However, while Joyce's earlier depiction of childhood is clearly influenced by views of the child as it is often understood in the nineteenth century, and while it will be argued that Joyce's later view shares affinities with the child as it is often perceived in the twenty–first century, both views are arguably undermined in *Ulysses*, and a path is carved out for historicizing children's lives. It is perhaps, therefore, by following Joyce's reconsideration of children's lives as his fiction progressed that ways may be found to re–engage with dystopic histories without being deflected by the horror and shame of complicity.

## General Outline: Methodology

This study takes Joyce's texts on the one hand and the historical context on the other as the starting position for analysis. Thereafter, theoretical tools are chosen to best present the relationship between the particular text and the

context rather than filtering the texts through a theoretical lens from the onset. The theoretical study of children and childhood in Ireland is an emerging field, and I am wary of reading contemporary theoretical ideas straight into Joyce's texts. Rather, I see it as more appropriate to prioritise Joyce's texts to produce a dialectical discussion between the text and the historical account in order to reduce the risk of anachronistic bias. Each of Joyce's texts present unique theoretical problems for the study of children and childhood, and I adopt an eclectic approach out of necessity. I am clearly not an historian, but historical materialism suggests that Joyce is better understood if his texts are placed beside detailed historical accounts. Accordingly, as much historical information as is relevant and possible is provided in order to support, and clarify, a dialectical discussion between text and context, and I prioritise the concrete over abstraction.

The texts chosen for this study are all situated in the period between 1885 and approximately 1910, while Joyce was writing retrospectively. Consequently, it is of interest that Joyce's portrayal of children and childhood varies considerably when his texts are read in a chronological order. However, I do not suggest that this is the only way of approaching the topic. Whether this variation is a result of personal experience, changing societal attitudes, or stylistic development is a question for further discussion. What becomes clear from this study, however, is that the Joyce that wrote *Dubliners* is not the Joyce that wrote *Ulysses*, and it is likely that all of the above–named aspects are interrelated to some degree. This indicates that Joyce may have been writing into the same context, but he was by no means writing from the same context, and aspects of childhood that may on the surface appear to be derived from objective ethnographic observation are continuously revised through Joyce's own evolving prism.

Additionally, in this study I occasionally draw from biographical as well as social historical material to highlight that Joyce appears to have been struggling as much with his context as he was with his writing, and that the former cannot be easily dissected from the latter. While at this juncture it is unquestionable that Joyce was aware that language and discourses are historically contingent, the texts and the historical accounts in this study have been appropriately chosen and employed in a way that allows for a confrontation between historical facts and literary fiction, in the interests of illuminating the chosen topic and igniting further discussion.

When I began this study, I quickly realised that I was not the only scholar discovering childhood in an Irish context, and I have done my best to keep up with the publications within my linguistic grasp, even though it is possible that not everything has come to my attention. The same cannot be said of Joyce studies, which has seen a trickle rather than a flood of new interpretations. One of the aims of this study, therefore, is to evaluate the relevance of critical child and childhood perspectives for interpreting Joyce's texts, and my interests have been tapered accordingly.

## Aim, Scope, and Relevance

The overarching aim of this study is to explore change in the portrayal of children and childhood in Joyce's fiction. However, as the aim of this study is to demonstrate that the portrayal of children and childhood changes when Joyce's fiction is approached chronologically, the aim is more accurately defined as an exploration of the portrayal of children and childhoods in Joyce's fiction. However, I do not claim that these changes make a radical break with earlier depictions. Rather, I suggest that continuities exist that can be interpreted as following a curve of revised sensibility; or put another way, that changes in Joyce's portrayal follow the "curve of an emotion." Accordingly, texts have been selected to best fulfil this aim. For this reason, the breadth of this study is tapered, as each of Joyce's texts would warrant a book–length study to explore the full scope of the topic. As a result, it is recognised that issues relating to gender, ethnicity, and social class would add complexity to the arguments made in this study. However, it must also be emphasised that future studies that apply a narrower scope are supported by this study.

The relevance of this research is fourfold. First, it provides a contribution to Joyce scholarship through a child–centred approach that has not been previously explored. Second, it contributes to the growing field of English literature critical childhood studies. Third, it contributes to a broader understanding of children and childhood in Irish adult literature. Fourth, the social historian Tom Inglis has indicated that the historical study of Irish children and childhoods is hampered by the scarcity of primary sources, and that studies of the child in Irish literature make a valuable contribution to the field. This study, therefore, provides ways of thinking about children and childhood that may prove useful to Irish social historians.

## Delimitation

In order to achieve the aim of understanding change in the depiction of children and childhood in Joyce's fiction it is necessary to draw from a cross–section of texts. *Dubliners* is an essential starting point, as while the short stories portray interconnecting slices of Dublin at the turn of the twentieth century, the three stories "The Sisters," "An Encounter," and "Araby" are specifically written from the perspective of children. Moreover, it is widely accepted that in *Dubliners* a thick line is drawn between adulthood and childhood, yet children are still portrayed as contributing to the moral decline of Joyce's portrayal of Dublin. Thus, the ways in which the boundary between adults and children is constructed provides a useful starting point for this study. Moreover, the final story "The Dead" is important for understanding the child's societal positioning in *Dubliners*, as when approached contextually, the signposts gesture towards the emotional turning point of the story being brought about by the trace of an illegitimate child.

Likewise, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a necessary object of study, as while "Portrait" is often considered to be an ironic portrayal of the protagonist Stephen Dedalus in the form of a *Künstlerroman*, it is also a story that traces the growth of a boy from young childhood to youth. "Portrait", therefore, is a portrayal of a child covering more or less the entire period of childhood in Joyce's schema. However, because childhood has been consistently discussed within the generic framework of the Bildungsroman, the consciousness of the older protagonist has been taken as the benchmark for assessment. Needless to say, childhood has been consistently viewed as a deficiency. Therefore, the ideas and suppositions that inform Joyce's construction of the child warrant closer scrutiny as they have implications for the construction of the portrait as a whole.

Joyce's only existing play, *Exiles*, while often being considered a work of questionable quality, is also considered by some to offer insights that tie important themes from Joyce's early and later works together. In *Exiles*, the eight–year–old character Archie is often considered to be of minor dramatic importance. By the same token, the boy cannot be just idly brushed aside in analysis as, when compared with Joyce's earlier fiction, the child receives a revised position within the family matrix. Thus, an exploration of the child's revised position within the family matrix is necessary for explaining change in Joyce's portrayal of childhood.

In like manner, while children are mostly relegated to bystanders in *Ulysses*, they still maintain a persistent presence throughout. Moreover, while earlier and later adult views of the child in Joyce interestingly co–exist in *Ulysses*, both views are undermined by children, arguably opening up a path for the historicization of children's lives. Depictions of children and childhood in Joyce's earlier literature, therefore, are for the greater part incompatible with those in his later literature, and the coordinates of children's lives in *Ulysses* warrant closer scrutiny.

*Finnegans Wake*, while being the next logical step, would require a different theoretical approach than used here. In the "Wake," linear time collapses into the whirling modes of a dream cycle, and with the sexual boundary between adults and children breaking down, as John Nash argues, "anything goes: characters mutate into others of that archetype, and sex can be described in the terminology of […] nursery rhymes" (Nash 435). With this point in mind, Marilyn Brownstein argues that the theme of father–daughter incest collapses the normative positions of child/adult allowing for the expression of childhood sexuality (Brownstein 229). Similarly, Jen Shelton argues that Joyce grants the young girl character Issy forbidden authorial sexual knowledge disrupting the gendered power structure of the family (Shelton 204). Furthermore, Michael Powers contends that the ambiguous boundary between childhood and adulthood, adolescence, is exaggerated in the "Wake," and Issy strategically uses ambiguity, oscillating between "babbling and speech" to resist being interpreted (Powers 114–115). For Margaret McBride, Issy is perhaps the most "important and powerful presence in the tale" (McBride 173), indicating that Issy's almost invisible presence should be cautiously treated as deceptive. Similarly, Jennifer Fraser argues that the "Wake" creates a voice for "those who cannot express themselves [by striving] to open up the adult self, so that the childish or youthful self can be recalled and expressed" (Fraser 181). Furthermore, as discussed earlier, Margot Norris contends that "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies" retroactively challenges myths of childhood by "[reinstating] the child into its social and political matrix" (Norris 95). Subsequently, if these arguments are treated as a scholarly discourse, the distinction between adults and children found elsewhere in Joyce's fiction becomes redundant in *Finnegans Wake*. With this point in mind, this study takes *Finnegans Wake* as a starting, rather than a finishing point, as my aim is to understand how the depiction of children and

childhood changes before the distinction collapses in Joyce's final work of fiction.

Thereupon, Joyce's early collection of poems *Chamber Music* does not, at least from the theoretical positioning employed, feel relevant to this study. *Stephen Hero*, while providing background material for interpretation of "Portrait," is an unfinished text and is, therefore, unreliable in the context of this study. Likewise, Joyce's unfinished work *Giacomo Joyce* would also prove unreliable. Also, Joyce's children's stories *The Cats of Copenhagen* and *The Cat and the Devil*, while being interesting in their own right, belong to the genre of children's literature which is not the focus of this study. Joyce's letters, critical writings, miscellaneous works, and notebooks, may, or may not, provide important insights for the topic of childhood. These source materials would need an extended, in–depth, engagement beyond the scope of this study. However, such a study is dependent on prior investigations such as this one. The choice of texts, therefore, is tapered to emphasise change in Joyce's depiction of children and childhood, and from the selection it is apparent that I am not claiming my analysis as definitive. Rather, the intention of this study is to stimulate scholarly engagement by providing a sustained discussion on the topic of children and childhood in Joyce's fiction.

## Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised in two parts. The first part comprises an introductory section with six chapters. The second part comprises five articles that explore the topic of children and childhood in Joyce's fiction. In the introductory section, Chapter 2 is an examination of previous research with a focus on children and childhood in Joyce's fiction. While the topic of childhood is not explored in any extensive studies, there exists a limited number of book chapters and articles that, when presented together, illustrate the existence of a scholarly discussion. Thereafter, Chapter 3 is an historical overview of the theoretical child. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background for clarifying why the theoretical positioning in the close readings of Joyce's texts can be interpreted as following a "curve" of revised sensibility. Chapter 4 is an exploration of the theoretical treatment of the topic of childhood in sociology over the past 40 years or so. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a template to clarify the theoretical positioning in the close readings of Joyce's later texts. Chapter 5 is a summary of the five articles included in this thesis,

and a treatment of their combined contribution to the scholarly field. Chapter 6 concludes by revisiting the aims of this thesis, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the study, and pondering possible approaches for further research.

In the second section, "James Joyce's 'The Sisters': Implied Pederasty and Interpreting the Inexpressible" treats the portrayal of children, and the ways in which the sexual boundary between adults and children is policed in *Dubliners*. "Pregnancy and Abjection in James Joyce's 'The Dead'" focuses on the ways in which the sexual boundary also functions to amputate illegitimate children from community and kin, and the ways in which amputation leaves an inerasable emotional trace in the story. "'Arisen from the Grave of Boyhood'? Nostalgia and Misopaedia in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*" examines the ways in which the child's biography is grafted onto a template of two opposed, but indivisible views of the child, that are fused through an abhorrence towards the corporeal. The effect is that memory is split into deficient and redemptive potentials, and actual childhood experience is supressed. "The Emerging Affective Child in James Joyce's *Exiles*" evaluates a re–positioning of the child within a revised family model. In effect, the child is empowered, through affective choice, to compensate for a failure in adult relations. "Interpreting the Lives of Working Children in James Joyce's *Ulysses*" explores the dissonance between adult perceptions of children, and the lived experiences of children in *Ulysses*. Effectively, it is argued that in *Ulysses* there exists a continuum of childhoods organised through social class that collapses the notion of children as an abstract collectivity, and childhood as a shared collective experience. Thus, it is argued that, in *Ulysses*, a path is ploughed for the historicization of children's lives.

# 2. Previous Research

## Children and Childhood in Joyce's Fiction

While the staggering pace with which books, articles, and reviews dedicated to Joyce are produced is a testament to the depth of Joyce's fiction and the imagination of the scholarly community, I have for the greater part limited the selection of previous research to scholarly studies that focus on children or childhood in Joyce's fiction. However, despite an abundance of topical and thematic anthologies dedicated to Joyce's literature, neither children nor childhood have received consideration within any collection. Likewise, no book–length studies dedicated to understanding children or childhood in Joyce's fiction exist.

For this reason, I have treated the terms *child*, *children*, and *childhood* as umbrella terms when conducting research. However, even within a broader approach, there are, relatively speaking, few examples of scholarly work that focus specifically on children or childhood in Joyce's fiction. Nonetheless, while the secondary sources used in the articles included in this thesis will for the larger part not be repeated here, and while there is always the chance of having missed sources that are obscured for some reason, there exists a limited number of book chapters and articles that focus on children or childhood in Joyce's fiction that, when presented together, illustrate the existence of a scholarly discussion. Be that as it may, it also seems fair to point out that the topic of children and childhood is contained within, and submerged under, major themes in Joyce scholarship.

## General Commentary

The first scholar to seriously consider childhood in Joyce's fiction is Peter Coveney in *Poor Monkey: The Child in Literature*, published in 1957. Coveney's study traces the persistent presence, and describes the changing depiction of children and childhood in British adult literature from Romanticism to

Modernism. Moreover, in the introduction to the second edition of the book, F. R. Leavis lauds the originality and importance of Coveney's study, arguing that it invites real discussion despite the approach being "very unusual" (Coveney "Image" 15, 25). Coveney argues that literary childhoods differ temporally in adult British literature, and that a writer's relationship to, and depiction of childhood, says something about the author's attitude to life in general.

Coveney's exploration of the portrayal of children and childhood in Joyce is limited to "Portrait," which Coveney considers to be influenced by the stylistic innovation of the Freudian child in modernist fiction:

> [The] child does not occupy either a very frequent or really important place in [Joyce's] work. Nevertheless, his treatment of childhood is typical of his general treatment of character and experience, and the boyhood of Stephen in the *Portrait* is an [interesting] example of the new approach to the child. (Coveney "Monkey" 253)

Time has demonstrated the lucidity of Coveney's comment with psychoanalytical interpretations becoming a mainstay in Joyce studies. At the present time it is widely recognised that Joyce was familiar with both Freud and Jung's work, and that Joyce adapted and transformed their thinking to suit his purposes.[9] It is, however, less developed how Joyce's understanding of Irish Catholicism influenced his adaptation of psychoanalytical theories. The childhoods that Joyce sought to depict, and the psychic effects of Irish Catholicism found in his fiction, both adhere and depart from the psychoanalytical models that Joyce had access to. On this point Coveney makes an important contribution without exploring the full implications of his insight, as in "Portrait" he discovers a depiction of childhood that differs significantly from those previously found in British literature, and from those found in contemporaries such as Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence:

> There is in Joyce no tone of nostalgic regret for the passage of childhood's 'simple joys.' The vivid re–creation of Stephen's childhood merely serves as a prologue to the central conflict of the 'young man' with his Catholic and unsympathetic environment. The movement of the book is towards the involvement of Stephen with manhood. The psychological

[9] For representative discussions see Brivic ("Between" 1980) and Kimball ("Growing" 1999).

> realism of the boy's childhood serves to strengthen the total 'portrait' of the developing consciousness of the 'young man'. (Coveney "Monkey" 258)

As Coveney sees it, while Joyce was aware of an emerging sensibility towards childhood in the field of psychoanalysis, Joyce also distanced himself from those theories in his portrayal of Irish children. Thus, while it may be reasonable to make a case for Joyce not focusing specifically on childhood, it is however less reasonable to consider that childhood is not a pervasive topic that informs major themes in Joyce's fiction, as a lack of nostalgia would indicate that the portrayal of childhood in "Portrait" informs the portrait as a whole. Subsequently, by placing Joyce within a British literary tradition, Coveney fails to develop the importance of the Irish context for interpretation of depictions of childhood in Joyce's fiction.

While not dealing specifically with the topic of childhood, in the dissertation *Joyce's Doctrine of Denial: Families and Forgetting in Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and Ulysses*, published in 1993, James Brown argues that Joyce's depiction of childhood is strongly gendered, and while male children are often depicted as internally complex, the internal worlds of young female characters are mostly suppressed:

> As a daughter, as a young lover, as a 'seaside girl,' Eveline is the first of many such silent young women in the Joyce oeuvre; and like Polly Mooney, Catherine Kearney, the swan–girl of Portrait, Milly Bloom, and even Gerty MacDowell after her, she is not seen from within, as a subject, but through the distancing, interpreting gaze of the male spectator – here the narrator, but in other cases a character. This narrative distance reaches its extreme with Milly Bloom in *Ulysses*, in which, as has been noted, she does not technically appear at all. While Milly Bloom is, as we shall see, spared the household responsibilities and the threats of violence with which Eveline must suffer, she shares with Eveline a suppressive narrative presentation which leaves to implication the details of their relationships with their fathers and families. (Brown 80–81)

On one level Brown is right that the portrayal of childhood in Joyce's literature is strongly shaped by gender. However, on another level, Irish childhoods were highly stratified across divisions of gender, social class, religion, and ethnicity at the time of Joyce's writing. Thus, it is also possible to

read Joyce's handling of gender in his depiction of childhood as an indication of how gendered childhood actually was. Furthermore, even though Brown does not develop the point, while Eveline and Milly Bloom may share the marginalizing "gaze of the male spectator" (Brown 80), the male gaze, as it relates to the female child, varies considerably between these two points in Joyce's writing.

It seems important, therefore, to explore not just the existence of a gendered gaze, but to also explain the implications of a shifting gendered gaze in Joyce's depiction of gender in childhood. Brown actually foreshadows such an investigation by arguing that the reader witnesses "the decline and fall of the solipsistic perception of childhood; yet what replaces it is not objectivity, but a more complicated, qualified solipsism" (Brown 74). Thus, with the absence of subjectivity in the characterisation of female children, the shifting depiction of the male gaze as it relates to young female characters is, I would argue, worthy of a book–length study in its own right. While Brown's study is not specifically about childhood, the saliency of the questions asked provide a basis for further inquiry.

In "Freud, Leonardo, and Joyce: The Dimensions of a Childhood Memory," published in 1999, Jean Kimball argues affinities between Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical study of Leonardo da Vinci, and the characterisation of Stephen Dedalus in "Portrait" and Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*. Kimball convincingly argues that Joyce would have been prepared by "traditional Jesuit assumptions to accept Freud's claims for the overwhelming formative significance of the very early years of childhood" (Kimball "Freud" 178), and conditioned by his Catholic Irish upbringing to accept the emphasis on sexual repression in Freud's analysis of Leonardo.

However, Kimball is also careful to point out that many aspects of Stephen's early childhood in "Portrait" also depart from the childhood of Leonardo. Subsequently, care should be taken, as Freud did not invent the idea of the repression of innate childhood sexuality being formative of neurosis in the adult. Rather, Freud created a new way for re–interpreting repression, which the Roman Catholic Church has considered necessary to limit the corruptive effect of innate childhood sexuality on the adult psyche for the better part of two millennia. Thus, while it is plausible that Joyce dabbled with Freud's theories, it is perhaps more productive to explore how Joyce adapted, and departed from them.

In the dissertation *The Child as Emblem of a Nation in Twentieth Century Irish Literature*, published in 2003, Barbara Ann Young dedicates a chapter to the literary child in *Dubliners*, "Portrait" and *Exiles*. Young argues for an allegorical reading of the child in Joyce as an emblem of the nation and colonial disempowerment, in a similar way, but in opposition to, contemporary Irish literary revivalists. The model for the child in Young's study is framed through the concepts of innocence, vulnerability, and powerlessness (Young 153, 163), while adults are viewed as psychologically and physically abusive, cruel, emotionally distanced, and ignorant of children's needs (Young 153, 167, 244).

Young's view that childhood is determined by a corrosive dichotomy where every child is "destined" and "doomed" to reproduce their parents "truncated" lives of colonial repression (Young 166), draws on a view of the vulnerable child that, while finding expression in some circles in Victorian Britain, did not come into general circulation in Britain until the third decade of the twentieth century. An anachronistic model of childhood may, in certain cases, prove fruitful, and Young does interestingly draw attention to a shift in Joyce's depiction of child/adult relations that is worthy of further scrutiny; moving from the hopelessness of childhood experience in *Dubliners*, to "singularity" in "Portrait," towards generational responsibility in *Exiles* (Young 244). However, this point remains undeveloped as the theoretical framing, which purges children of intentionality through an alternative form of infantilism, does little to erase dispossession, as one adult voice is merely exchanged for another.

In "'An Iridescence Difficult to Account For': Sexual Initiation in Joyce's Fiction of Development," published in 2009, Margot Backus and Joseph Valente provide a fascinating account of childhood sexuality in *Dubliners* and "Portrait" through the post-Freudian concept of the "enigmatic signifier" as theorised by Jean Laplanche (Backus and Valente "Iridescence" 527). For Backus and Valente, at least as I understand it, enigmatic signifiers are ambiguous sexually repressed adult messages that initiate children into the sexual worlds of adults. This initiation, which expands a child's experiences, produces a doubling of psychic effects that cause appeal and unspeakable shame (Backus and Valente "Iridescence" 527–528). Thus, for Backus and Valente, the material residue of enigmatic signifiers such as the "acoustics of the word, the timbre of the voice, the sheen of the image" (Backus and Valente "Iridescence" 527) function to provide children with unspoken experience "in the zone of uncertainty between the sexual and the non-

sexual" (Backus and Valente "Iridescence" 530). This juxtaposed ambiguity, at least in psychoanalytical terms, produces pleasure and trauma (Backus and Valente "Iridescence" 533) that is expressed in the fluctuating mode of Joyce's style of narration:

> Joyce puts the reader in intimate, yet 'unobtrusively fluctuat[ing]' and so unreliable contact with the protagonist's mental and emotional response to the unfolding seduction drama [thus striving] to relay the enjoy-meant of the highly charged […] scenes of sexual initiation [producing] a sort of (dis)harmonious convergence of traumatic enjoyment. (Backus and Valente "Iridescence" 542–543)

While Backus and Valente convincingly argue that sexual potentiality always threatens to erupt in Joyce, it would be interesting to explore more extensively how the disruptive potential of children's sexual potentiality is also kept in check through coercion and surveillance in *Dubliners* and "Portrait," and whether, or how, the unleashing of that potentiality affects children in Joyce's later fiction.

In a comparative study of Thomas Hardy's final novel *Jude the Obscure* and Joyce's early fiction, published in 2013, Galia Benziman argues that sensibilities derived from Romanticism inform the child's perspective in the first three stories in *Dubliners,* and the child's perspective in the beginning of "Portrait". Each of these stories, Benziman argues, repeats the Wordsworthian pattern of crisis when the beauty associated with subjective projection is exposed as mere illusion. Thus, introspective idealism is exchanged for extrospective disillusionment that is portrayed through "detachment, shattered gazes, and fragmentation" (Benziman 168). Thus, the child's deflected gaze is:

> [An] evolution rather than a negation of the tentatively optimistic gaze of the Wordsworthian child, [as Joyce's] ironic use of the child as central consciousness exposes the instability of the Wordsworthian Child's subjective harmony with the external world. (Benziman 168–169)

While a case can be made for characters in Joyce's early literature being influenced by ideas and texts from Romanticism, it is less convincing that Joyce's disillusionment about "the innocent, idealistic subjectivity" of the child in his early literature is only partial (Benziman 157). Joyce's portrayal of

children and childhood in his early literature is dependent on notions of the child as it is found in Irish Catholicism at the turn of the twentieth century, and the innocent child in *Dubliners* and "Portrait" is arguably introduced as a self–erasing trope of an older consciousness. Therefore, children are portrayed as being corrupted by external forces, while simultaneously contributing to the corruption of their older selves through their curiosity. Subsequently, through the combination of extrospective instability, and an introspective split in Joyce's depiction of children and childhood, it is difficult to marry a view of nature as it is found in Romanticism with that found in Joyce's early literature. The former is a derivative of Enlightenment discourses, while the latter is arguably derived from an earlier period of Western thought.

## *Dubliners*

In "Death in 'An Encounter'," published in 1965, Sidney Feshbach argues that "An Encounter" fulfils the requirements of an elegy by portraying "the spiritual death of a young boy" (Feshbach 82). Furthermore, the boy's spiritual death can be extended to other childhoods in *Dubliners*; even to the man that assumedly pleasures himself in front of the two boys:

> [If] we listen closely to what the man says we find he speaks with increasing excitement about lost childhood (mutability), books and study (sobriety), and the play of sex and the punishment due the players (anti–*carpe diem*) […] awakening [the boy's] sense of penitence. (Feshbach 84; emphasis in original)

Thus, for Feshbach, childhood in *Dubliners* is portrayed as an intergenerational cyclic structure, passed down from one generation to the next, replicating a sense of shame and loss; characteristics which Susan Mooney argues in "Interrupted Masculinity in *Dubliners*: Anxiety, Shame, and Shontological Ethics," published in 2017, define masculinity in *Dubliners* generally (Mooney 220). Moreover, in "Joyce's 'Araby' and the 'Extended Simile'," published in 1967, Ben Collins argues that characterisation in *Dubliners* is accumulative, with the boy in the third story about childhood "Araby," carrying the burden of experience from the boys that have preceded him (Collins 84).

Furthermore, in *Teller and Tale in Joyce's Fiction*, published in 1983, John Paul Riquelme convincingly argues that the voices of the younger protagonists and older narrators often merge, creating a "counterpoint to the [boys'] thoughts

in the midst of their representation" (Riquelme "Desire" 107). For Riquelme, there is a fluctuating conflation of two narrative time frames that create ambiguity in our expectation about what a child might, or should know. There is, also, no clear separation of past and present, and "the attitude of the boy [in "Araby"] meshes with the attitude toward himself he later expresses [as] an adult writing about those experiences" (Riquelme "Desire" 107–108). Subsequently, in *Dubliners* there is no clear–cut separation between child and adult narration as both inform and undermine each other, and Riquelme's observation of the adult's voice retroactively intervening in memories of childhood is worthy of extensive investigation.

Expanding on the points discussed above, in "*Dubliners*: Double Binds (the Constraints of Childhood and Youth)," published in 1988, Bernard Benstock argues that many aspects of the first three stories of childhood in *Dubliner*s invisibly bind the boys to a singular narrative, allowing the reader to choose between discreet, self–contained readings of the boy's narratives, or as interrelated stories that describe a sequential line of development. Following the latter of these options, Benstock convincingly draws up an account of the shared aspects of childhood experience common to all three stories:

> [Absence] of direct parental love, mistrust of human involvements, suspicion regarding the efficacy of a religious vocation, the deadending of adventurous quests, the discrediting of chivalric ideals, disappointment in love, and introspective distrust of one's own motives – enough cause cumulatively for the implosion of 'anguish and anger' and the self–accusation of 'vanity'. (Benstock "Dubliners" 160)

For Benstock, childhood experience is carried over into the stories of maturity and public life. Thus, "angst, anxiety, angina, anguish [reappear] with their intersecting connotations of strangulation, suffocation, narrowing, constricting, binding" creating a "communal" condition of confinement that the reader can see in each character's life, and in the character's reflected image in the eyes of other characters (Benstock "Dubliners" 171). Subsequently, despite Joyce's treatment of childhood as a separate social category in *Dubliners*, Benstock convincingly argues that children are portrayed as collectively contributing to the stranglehold of emotional paralysis in Joyce's rendition of middle–class Dublin.

However, in "All Work, No Play: The Refusal of Freedom in 'Araby'," published in 1999, Jim LeBlanc views the interruption of the romantic illusion in "Araby" as the boy's "reapprehension of existential freedom" (LeBlanc 232), which Stephen Doloff, in "Closing Time: 'ten minutes to ten' and the End of Childhood in Joyce's 'Araby'," published in 2011, alternatively interprets as an abrupt and paralysing end of childhood (Doloff 154). Similarly, for Jack Morgan, in *History, Politics, and Life in Dubliners: Joyce's City*, published in 2015, the main concern in the childhood stories in *Dubliners* is the memory of disenchantment. Thus, the boy's incapacity to carry out a romantic quest in "Araby" results in the adult narrator, whose separation from the boy that he remembers being "enormous" (Morgan 55), "[falling back] to the darkness of private reference and self–contempt" (Morgan 65). For Morgan, the depiction of the child in *Dubliners* is distorted by adult scepticism. However, for Richard Gerber, in "Anima in 'Araby': Courtship of the Knight–Errant as a Jung Man: An Archetypal Interpretation," published in 2019, the courtly disenchantment experienced by the boy at the end of the story is "an important step in his 'individuation'," with the anguish and anger a "recognition and acceptance" of loss awakening the boy up to "a new level of self–awareness" (Gerber 226). There are, therefore, as one would expect in Joyce scholarship, differences of opinion in how childhood experience can be interpreted in *Dubliners*. The studies that explore childhood from a child–centred perspective are, however, arguably more convincing and useful.

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

During Joyce's lifetime, the portrayal of childhood in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* attracted the attention of critics. For example, in 1917, H. G. Wells commented that:

> Mr. Joyce's book [is] the story of an education; it is by far the most living and convincing picture that exists of an Irish Catholic upbringing. It is a mosaic of jagged fragments that does altogether render with extreme completeness the growth of a rather secretive, imaginative boy in Dublin [that tells] unsparingly of the adolescence of this youngster under conditions that have passed almost altogether out of English life. [The boy's] fear is like nothing in any boy's experience who has been trained under modern conditions. [These] young people across the channel are something different from the liberal English in training and

> tradition […] No single book has ever shown how different they are. (Wells 88–89)

The following month in the *Times Literary Supplement*, A. Clutton Brock argued that "Portrait" is not a book about an artist as a young man, but rather about a "child, a boy, a youth […] who cannot reconcile with himself. [What] an angel he would like to be, and what a filthy creature, [he] seems to himself. [Stephen] has not enough egotism to have any values, and when the book ends suddenly he is setting out to find some" (Brock 89–90). In a similar fashion, in 1936, Paul Elmer More argued that "the boy [in "Portrait"] is brought up in a family devoutly Catholic and intensely Irish [and] though he has rebelled against both of these restrictions, has never lost the stamp they set upon his soul" (More 71). While this is a lucid comment, More retreats immediately from analysis of the conditions of Stephen's childhood and apologises that this is Joyce's, rather than his own view, of the effects of Irish society and Catholicism on children.

However, shortly after Joyce's death, Harry Levin's seminal claim that *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* fits the generic conventions of the Bildungsroman, and more specifically the *Künstlerroman*, has functioned either as a support,[10] or as a point of contention,[11] for the majority of critical evaluations of the novel (Levin 36–37). The point of departure, thereafter, has consistently been the consciousness of the older protagonist, irrespective of whether commentators agree with the Bildung theme or not, creating a vast body of commentary that indirectly frames childhood as a human deficit.

The commentary on the Bildung theme is too extensive to be treated in a literature overview with the scope here, but two scholars have assessed the critical commentary at different junctures. The earliest example is James Sosnoski, who assesses the critical commentary up until the end of the 1970s. Sosnoski argues that the critical argument appears to have been less sensitive to the text than to the critical paradigm producing the reading (Sosnoski 47), and suggests more sensitivity towards the text is warranted. Thereafter,

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[10] For authoritative examples that argue in favour of the Bildung theme see (organised by year): Van Laan (3–13); Walzl ("Liturgy" 436–450); Stewart (15–20); Ellman ("Structure" 38–40); Lemon (41–52); Fortuna (120–180); Sucksmith (9); Buckley (230–231); Mitchell (61–73); Gose (267–269); Thornton (65); Weir ("Joyce" 89); Castle ("Confessing" 157–182); Eco (60–61); Gottfried ("Comic" 1, 158); Brivic ("Freedom" 45–60); Castle ("Coming" 359–384).

[11] For authoritative examples that argue against the Bildung theme see (organised by year): Kenner (124–160); Gordon (140); Goldman; Ryf; Naremore (113); Benstock ("Joyce" 49–52); Blades; Mahaffy (290–315).

Weldon Thornton, in a thoroughly researched book length study *The Antimodernism of Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, published in 1994, engages with almost every scholar on the subject, resulting in 45 pages of notes in tiny print, and a seventeen–page bibliography, in a 158–page book. Moreover, Thornton organises the commentary into rough critical camps, with those who see Stephen Dedalus as fulfilling the Bildung ideal, and those who do not.

Thornton associates himself with those who view Stephen's development as fulfilling the Bildung ideal, and his commentary is mostly representative of that camp. Accordingly, Thornton traces Stephen's development through stages of social, sensuous, religious, and aesthetic experience, with each overlapping oscillation between inner and outer poles raising Stephen above the limitations of previous stages (Thornton 90). Thus, for Thornton, development is read through the metaphor of an upwardly moving spiral, indirectly defining the child through what it lacks.

In the opposing camp are commentators such as Hugh Kenner who, in "The 'Portrait' in Perspective,"[12] argues that the "priggish [and] humourless Stephen of the fifth chapter in Portrait" is the same "gloomy", "quiet", "bitter", and "cold" Stephen that we meet in first episode of *Ulysses*. Therefore, as Stephen merely retains childish characteristics, "there is no question whatever of regeneration" (Kenner 124). Considering the extensive commentary, there are also commentators who sit on the fence. In "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," published in 1990, Deidre Bair argues that nothing exists in "Portrait" unless "it works to enhance Joyce's development of Stephen [and] the development of character" (Bair 92); which Bair concedes adds up to a portrait of "a *very young artist*, with some thoughts and actions which show lack of insight and experience and also, because of arrogance and pride, which show a lack of full moral or spiritual scope" (Bair 97; emphasis in original). Likewise, there are also those who show little sensitivity towards children in the story, such as Lee Lemon, who claims in "*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: Motif as Motivation and Structure," published in 1968, that "we all know that the subject of ["Portrait"] is the development of a young man from a creature to a creator" (Lemon 41). While I concede that "Portrait" loans itself to productive interpretations of the

[12] While the earliest version of "The 'Portrait' in Perspective" was published in 1948 in *The Kenyon Review*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1948, pp. 361-381.; the essay was revised and republished in *Dublin's Joyce*. Chatto & Windus, 1955.

Bildung theme, it is also worth pointing out that the selection of examples discussed above also indirectly comment about childhood in the story in their own unique ways. The topic of childhood is, therefore, integrated within, and submerged under, the Bildung theme as it has been explored.

Thereafter, in "From the Mists of Childhood: Language as Judgement of the Emerging Artist in Joyce's 'Portrait'," published in 1975, David Leigh argues that in the opening scene of "Portrait" the "infant poet" starts to shape his world firstly on the phonetic level, and finally at the level of meaning, when the child poet, through a growing awareness of the basic emotions of "guilt and fear," refashions Dante's threat into a rhythm of terror (Leigh 371–372). Leigh considers that the "language surrounding these infant 'poems'" (Leigh 372) is more relevant for understanding the developing consciousness of the artist than any of Stephen's theorising in the last chapter of the story.

While Leigh makes an interesting point, there is no evidence that Stephen has access to the emotion of guilt in the first section of "Portrait," which casts doubts on the reliability of the reading. However, the fact that Leigh expects the child to have such feelings is revealing in itself. Concerning this point, John Paul Riquelme argues in *Teller and Tale in Joyce's Fiction*, published in 1983, that the textual ambiguities in the first scene can only be overcome if the reader uses preconceptions about the voice to retroactively overcome the ambiguous relationship between "narration and narrative, telling and experiencing" (Riquelme "Teller" 98–100).

Moreover, Peter Barta, in "Childhood in the Autobiographical Novel: An Examination of Tolstoy's *Childhood*, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Bely's *Kotik Letaev*," published in 1987, discusses the interiority of childhood experience in "Portrait" as being a typical attribute of twentieth century psychological novels. While avoiding the term Bildungsroman, Barta still applies characteristics typical to a coming–of–age story with the protagonist Stephen Dedalus gradually reaching "interior consciousness" (Barta 49), while simultaneously losing connection with his direct surroundings.

With the burgeoning array of readings of "Portrait" that take the consciousness of the older protagonist as the benchmark for assessment, it is difficult to discern how this coming–of–age approach contributes to a greater understanding of childhood in "Portrait." However, almost as an aside, Batra draws attention to the characterisation of the young child Stephen Dedalus on the first page of "Portrait" who "experiences purely sensory impressions from

his environment" (Barta 51), and continues that "when Stephen becomes aware of the causes and effects of phenomena, his function in the narration of the novel becomes obvious" (Barta 51). Expanding on this point in "Desire, Freedom, and Confessional Culture in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," published in 2008, John Paul Riquelme argues that while all five senses are invoked in the opening paragraphs of "Portrait":

> [The] compressed presentation concerns not the senses primarily but an *embodied sensibility* that is being shaped, even before schooling begins, by pressures that are implicit in the juxtaposed details […] Like Stephen at this early stage of his development, we are not in a position to make sufficient sense of what we encounter. We and Stephen will understand more fully the politicized domestic situation structured by constraints on behaviour, including restrictions on the objects of desire, that involve the Roman Catholic Church and the Irish conflict with England. (Riquelme "Confessional" 38; emphasis in original)

For Riquelme, therefore, the reader is limited by the way the young child is depicted as experiencing the world in the first scene, with the tentacles of the Roman Catholic Church and the British Empire already seeping into the emerging consciousness of the child through embodied experience within the economy of the family. What can be deduced, therefore, is that Joyce has thoroughly thought through the aspects of characterisation that are included, and left out, in the portrayal of the young child. Moreover, it seems reasonable to suggest that, even though the bulk of commentary has taken the consciousness of the older protagonist as the benchmark for assessment, previous research also gestures towards the young child's portrayal informing the portrait as a whole.

## *Exiles*

In 1918, Samuel Tannenbaum considered the child in Joyce's play *Exiles* to be "one of the few life–like children to be found in literature" (Tannenbaum 25). However, despite the lucidness of Tannenbaum's remark, and the obvious differences in the depiction of the child in *Exiles* and in Joyce's earlier fiction, the child in *Exiles* has come to represent a conundrum in critical commentaries. Sebastian Knowles, in the recent critical edition of the play, published in 2016, sums up the critical reception and considers that the central

theme is "doubt: the 'deep and richly perplexing incertitude' that drives all the characters in the play except [the child] Archie and the Fishwoman" (Knowles x). The child, therefore, is generally considered by commentators to be outside of the central theme of doubt.

Influential in Knowles summation of the critical field are critics like Sheldon Brivic, who argues in "Structure and Meaning in Joyce's *Exiles*," published in 1968, that Archie seems to be something that can be "gained or lost in the game of give and take" (Brivic "Structure" 39). Also, critics like Richard Ellman, who argues in *Along the Riverrun*, published in 1988, that in *Exiles* "there is a fidelity test [...] that is brought on by doubt, much like in Strindberg's play *The Father* [...] in which the captain thinks that his son may not be his son, and despite his wife's protestations (like Bertha) remains unconvinced" (Ellman "Riverrun" 43–44). Similarly, in "The Beastly Incertitudes: Doubt, Difficulty, and Discomfiture in James Joyce's *Exiles*," also published in 1988, Joseph Voelker considers that Archie is, in all probably, not Richard Rowan's son (Voelker 503).

Be that as it may, even in the three instances when the child Archie is considered thematically significant, he is considered by Virginia Moseley in "Joyce's *Exiles* and the Prodigal Son," published in 1959, to be a self–contained character that is an "archetype of a new social order" (Moseley 227) – by David Krause in "Joyce's *Exiles*: A Comedy in 'Three Cat and Mouse Acts'," published in 1992, as a comic interlude (Kraus 272–273) – and alternatively, by Mária Kurdi in "'Did He Seem to You a Child Only--or an Angel?': The Figure of Archie in James Joyce's *Exiles*," published in 1995, as a symbol of futurity mostly outside of the adult plot (Kurdi 72). Thus, in critical commentaries, the child in *Exiles* resembles what John Gillis has argued to be the "master symbol" of the virtual child that, since the nineteenth century, has come to stand in not only "for a lost past, but an elusive future" (Gillis 31, 45).

However, while the child has been critically framed as a minor character who contributes little, if anything to the adult plot, there still remains a somewhat tacit acceptance that Archie's random comings and goings bring an "etherealness to an otherwise seemingly dystopian adult world" (Ryan "Affective" 12). In 1933, Louis Golding sensed the dilemma that the child in *Exiles* creates for critical analysis, and while acknowledging the difficulty of relating Archie to the wider adult plot, argued that there is still "no resolving the small boy into nothingness. The problem of the small boy is not dealt

with, nor even stated. But it is implied. The texture of the play is so lean that it is quite certain Archie has not crept in by accident" (Golding 73–74).

Thus, while Archie's presence in the play has been widely noted, his contribution to the play has been largely displaced by either drawing on models of the child found in Joyce's earlier literature, or by drawing a thick line between adults and children in the play. Hence, despite the child's marginal critical positioning, Archie has maintained a consistent presence in critical commentaries while simultaneously remaining elusive.

## *Ulysses*

In "'Major' Tweedy and His Daughter," published in 1982, Ruth von Phul interestingly argues that Molly Bloom's "total absence of earlier childhood memories is so unusual as to suggest she repressed all memory of a very unhappy period," not once referring to her father's absences, her schooldays, or her childhood friends (von Phul 345). In a similar fashion, Stephen Dedalus cannot stretch out a comforting hand to his younger self in the episode "Nestor." As curious as these two examples are, commentary on childhood in *Ulysses* is scant and, for the greater part, limited to the children of the Blooms.

The limited commentary on the dead infant in *Ulysses*, Rudy Bloom, is mostly driven by different critical concerns than discussed in this study. However, for some critics, the memory of the dead infant Rudy structures Leopold Bloom's emotional life. For example, in "The Family of Bloom," published in 1972, Morton Levitt considers Bloom's mourning of Rudy to be dovetailed, as while on the one hand Rudy is missed for himself, on the other hand he is missed because he represents the end of ethnic continuation (Levitt 147). For others, Rudy's function in the story is mostly symbolic.[13] However, in *Joyce's Ghosts: Ireland, Modernism, and Memory*, published in 2015, Luke Gibbons convincingly argues that when Rudy looks unseeing into Bloom's eyes in "Circe," it "[vanquishes] the primordial desire for the returned look that pervades *Ulysses*" (Gibbons 160). Accordingly, it seems reasonable to interpret the vanquishing of a returned look as the abolishment of reciprocity, with Rudy remaining, at least for Bloom, in a state of infantile vulnerability despite having grown into a spectral boy.

[13] For examples see Steinberg (1999) and Williams (1999).

However, the Blooms' fifteen–year–old daughter Milly has attracted more extensive attention from critics. In "Why is Milly in Mullingar?" published in 1977, Jane Ford considers that even though the theme of incest is supported by Bloom's fantasies throughout *Ulysses*, that there is actually enough textual evidence to conclude the actual occurrence of incest between Leopold Bloom and Milly (Ford 447). In response to this claim, in "Bloom and Milly: A Portrait of the Father and the 'Jew's Daughter'," published in 1981, Diana Ben–Merre argues Ford's over–reliance on "symbolic patterning [that obscures] the fact that Bloom's feelings of guilt are for his imagined [and not real] acts of incest" (Ben–Merre 43). Moreover, in "Milly, Molly, and the Mullingar Photo Shop," published in 1999, Carol Shloss argues that Milly's agency is also subsumed by the generational order of mother and daughter, leaving only enough range for a manipulation of the mother's script (Shloss 44).

However, in "Nymphs/Nymphets/Lolitas in James Joyce's *Ulysses*," published in 2001, Mª Isabel Porcel García argues that Milly's portrayal is a "reinterpretation" of the classical nymph, through which youth is characterised as a liminal period with "body and mind [standing] halfway between childhood and maturity, between innocence and corruption" (García 156–157). Moreover, for Joseph Valente in "Joyce and Sexuality," published in 2004, Bloom's decision to shield Milly from her mother's affair with Boylan, by sending her to work as a photography assistant in Mullingar, has the inverse effect of "[galvanizing] her sexual initiation by analogy" (Valente "Sexuality" 217). Consequently, Milly sends an implicit warning to Bloom in a sealed letter that his intervention has stimulated, rather than neutralised, "[her] sexual appetite" (Valente "Sexuality" 218). Furthermore, in "Joyce and Consumer Culture," also published in 2004, Jennifer Wicke argues that Milly's sexuality is, however, commodified through her job as a photography assistant, where she is expected to lure young men into having their pictures taken with her in a bathing suit (Wicke 236). Contradicting this point, in "Joyce's 'Saucebox': Milly Bloom's Portrait in *Ulysses*," published in 2006, Shannon Forbes argues that by being in Mullingar, one of Milly's functions in the story is to provide an off–scene foil for Bloom and Molly, while also showing how an exploration of the "multifarious aspects of her identity" are made possible by being away from home (Forbes 40).

Be that as it may, on a different note, in "Milly as Blind Spot in *Ulysses*," published in 2014, Katherine Ryan interestingly points out that while Milly is

treated by critics in either broad terms as an object of Bloom's incestuous desire, or in narrow terms as a younger version of her mother, Milly's function in the text can be more productively understood through the theme of inheritance. Subsequently, while Bloom's nostalgia is:

> [always] accompanied by some registration of a displacement of Milly that is never quite registered […] These crucial moments point to an inclusion of Milly's role within inheritance that is almost always avowed but never fully recognized [in] the Telemachean plot. (Ryan 18–19)

Thus, for Ryan, Milly's centrality in Bloom's anxieties about patrilinear replication are undermined by his own subconscious, and Milly stands for an unrealised, but resolvable potential. Furthermore, in *Irish Divorce/Joyce's Ulysses*, published in 2017, Peter Kuch argues that the Blooms' marriage, or possible divorce, is left open–ended, and in this respect, with *Ulysses* introducing indeterminacy into sexual patriarchy in Ireland, Bloom has made provisions for Milly in that "the insurance policy provides her with a sum of money that makes her independent" in the case of divorce or Bloom's death (Kuch 195). Moreover, Georgina Binnie in "'Photo girl he calls her': Re-Reading Milly in *Ulysses*," published in 2019, considers that not enough consideration has been given to the more progressive aspects of the photography trade, arguing that:

> In nurturing Milly's photographic potential, Bloom encourages his daughter to succeed in an industry that was increasingly marketed and accessible to women […] and by positioning her in a small, local studio, Joyce allows her to 'learn' the skills needed to succeed […] producing a character both aesthetically aware and economically successful. (Binnie 50)

Consequently, while all of these studies make important contributions to the incongruity between Bloom beliefs about children and childhood, and Milly's off–scene willingness to accept the limitations, or take advantage of the possibilities, provided by Bloom's beliefs; there is actually no real way of knowing if Milly is Bloom's biological daughter.

It is well known that at the age of twenty–seven Joyce believed dogmatically in a gestation period calculated in terms of months rather than weeks. When Nora gave birth to their son Giorgio on July 27 1905, in what Joyce calculated to be sixteen days overdue having consummated their relationship on October 11 1904, or a 39–week gestation period, Joyce's

doubts caused so much anxiety that he recorded his emotions in his play *Exiles* (Joyce "Selected" 158–159). Bloom is adamant that Milly was conceived the first time Bloom and Molly had sexual intercourse on Howth Hill on September 10 1888 (*Ulysses* 687), being one month before Bloom and Molly were married on October 8 1888, meaning a gestation period of almost forty weeks with Milly being born on June 15 1889 (Raleigh 12). However, Bloom's insistence on that date is in itself revealing. First, it indicates that full sexual intercourse before marriage only happened on Howth Hill. Second, if Bloom's belief is to be upheld, he must accept that Molly had a prolonged term of pregnancy. Subsequently, Milly's biological parentage is as ambiguous as many other aspects of *Ulysses*. Bloom's musing that, despite being "born of two dark" (*Ulysses* 646), that Milly's blond hair is derived from distant ancestry, is about as reliable as when he considers that Milly's light complexion may have resulted from drinking too much milk (*Ulysses* 64). It seems reasonable to argue, therefore, that Bloom also has a tendency to circumvent thoughts of illegitimacy.

However, while Bloom's tendency to circumvent the issue of illegitimacy gestures towards Bloom having concerns; where Bloom differs from Joyce's other male characters is that he does not transfer his anxieties onto Milly, which is remarkable in a city where a "bitch's bastard" is considered a "throwaway." When Milly's physical appearance is combined with Molly's reputation, it seems more reasonable to suggest that, despite the emotional implications, Bloom has prioritised protecting Milly from the caustic attitudes that saturate *Ulysses*, and the research discussed above indicates that Bloom has gone to great lengths to plan ahead for Milly. Indeed, the point made by Joseph Valente that "Bloom's day long, deeply unconscious practice of coming to grips with the loss of his '*darling … lookinglass'* daughter, Milly, a loss that is arguably more devastating and certainly more fraught than even the more permanent loss of his virtually stillborn son, Rudy," is even more penetrating if viewed with the above thought in mind (Valente "Allwombing" 6; emphasis in original). Subsequently, Milly's ambiguity within the patrilineal theme allows wider conclusions to be drawn about contrasting attitudes towards children and childhood in *Ulysses*. Moreover, Gibbons' argument that vulnerability abolishes reciprocity is a sobering insight with important implications for the interpretation of children's lives against the backdrop of contrasting adult attitudes in *Ulysses*.

## Concluding Remarks

One of the most noticeable aspects of this survey is the dividing line that exists in previous research between Joyce's earlier and later fiction. In all of the commentary that treats the topic of children and childhood in Joyce's fiction generally, *Exiles* functions as a line of demarcation. Further exploration into the commentary on *Dubliners* and "Portrait" demonstrates that there exists recognition that aspects relating to children and childhood are interchangeable up to a certain point, and that these aspects are important for interpretation. However, in *Exiles*, the child Archie has largely remained an enigma, mostly unexplained within the adult plot while simultaneously maintaining a presence that critics have been unable to completely ignore. Also, in *Ulysses*, the child all but disappears from commentary, and there is little recognition of either children or childhood being consequential for interpretation; that is, other than as functioning as foils for exposing deeply buried adult concerns.

However, in "Joyce's Ghosts" Luke Gibbons convincingly argues that although the stylistic development of the internal monologue technique in Joyce's fiction has been widely appreciated, there are good reasons to argue that the development of free indirect discourse is a more important aspect of Joyce's writing. This point is intriguing, as when the previous research in this chapter is compiled, it is worth pondering on whether, or how, the innovation of free indirect discourse influences the portrayal of repressed childhood experiences in adult narration in Joyce's early fiction. While I do not discuss free indirect discourse in the articles about *Dubliners* or "Portrait" included in this thesis, it is still quite possible that such an approach may prove productive in future studies.

Furthermore, in "The Emerging Affective Child in James Joyce's *Exiles*," while it is recognised that the child Archie represents a critical dilemma in the play, it is argued that rather than sliding neatly into the adult plot, the adult plot is deepened and expanded by the child's presence. This has not been recognised, as the previous research presented in this chapter also demonstrates, because there has been arguably little consideration given to the changes made to the depiction of childhood in the play, with Archie's characterisation interestingly aligning more with the characterisation of Leopold Bloom than Stephen Dedalus. The depictions of childhood in Joyce's

earlier fiction, therefore, are not directly interchangeable with the depiction of childhood in *Exiles*.

Moreover, in "Interpreting the Lives of Working Children in James Joyce's *Ulysses*," it is also argued that adult perspectives of children in *Dubliners*, "Portrait," and *Exiles* are juxtaposed in *Ulysses*, and neither view does justice to the complexity of children's lives. As the previous research presented in this chapter demonstrates, it is recognised that Bloom's view of children and childhood deviates significantly from other Dubliners, and the off-scene depiction of Milly Bloom is convincingly discussed as being filtered through adult sexual desire. However, keeping in mind that the interstices of *Ulysses* are also densely populated by children, (even though being mostly passed over in previous research), it is also quite possible that the unshackling of the vast majority of children in *Ulysses* from complex narrative techniques may contribute to a more compelling understanding of Milly than provided by adult perspectives in the novel. Consequently, even though it is argued in this study that Joyce's earlier depictions of children and childhood are juxtaposed in *Ulysses*, it is also argued that the children of *Ulysses* are in more control of their absence than has been previously recognised. While the children of *Ulysses* are an integrated but mostly unobserved part of Joyce's portrayal of Dublin, they interestingly only poke their noses out of the interstices of the story when it is absolutely necessary.

Subsequently, by tracing and compiling articles, book chapters, and critical asides that relate to children and childhood in Joyce's fiction, it becomes evident that, even though limited in scope, the topic of childhood is integral to Joycean scholarship. Moreover, the forthcoming book by Margot Backus and Joseph Valente, *The Child Sex Scandal and Modern Irish Literature: Writing the Unspeakable,* due in December 2020, will dedicate a chapter to Joyce by deepening their exploration of the enigmatic signifier as discussed in their article "Iridescence" in this chapter. With Backus and Valente ranking among the more experienced and creative of Joyceans, there are good reasons to assume a growing interest in the topic of childhood in Joyce's fiction. What this chapter emphasises, however, is that, with the range of childhoods that exist in Joyce's fiction, and with the seriousness with which Joyce treats the portrayal of children's lives throughout his writing, that the topic has, to date, not been given adequate attention by Joyce scholars.

# 3. Historical Overview

## Childhood in the Modern Period

In their entry on the philosophy of childhood in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Gareth Matthews and Amy Mullin argue that it is only recently that childhood has gained recognition as a legitimate topic of philosophical inquiry. Likewise, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, published in 2010, no specific guidance is given for theorising either children or childhood other than within the family as theorised by Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, and Donna Haraway. Childhood, therefore, represents either an editorial blind spot in this anthology, or, at least until recently, a blind spot in critical theory.

In the Western philosophical tradition, therefore, it seems fair to argue that the child has been generally viewed as a lack that has to be overcome, and childhood as a preparation for becoming a more complete type of human being, whatever this may mean. Accordingly, there has been broad acceptance of human nature existing in lower and higher forms, and a failure to conquer the lower form has often been interpreted as a failure to quilt the child's lack with human qualities proper, whatever these might be imagined to be. Be that as it may, with the child and childhood now being investigated with rigour by some philosophers, historians, and critical theorists, there is broader acceptance that the child's absence from scholarly inquiry is a valid reason for critique. Much like in critical gender approaches, which seek to reverse the male gaze, critical childhood approaches seek to reverse the adult gaze.

For scholars interested in children and childhood, there is broad consensus that childhood emerged as a general collective social category in the latter half of the early modern period. Of course, it is not that children or childhood did not exist before this period; rather, the criteria for defining childhood as a particular period of the life–course applicable to all human beings, irrespective of ethnicity, social class, and gender, gained traction during the early modern period. Needless to say, the selection of criteria was, and is, often contested.

However, while the ways in which the limits of the human condition have been envisioned throughout the modern period differs from earlier periods, earlier periods have still left a mark on later conceptions of the child that are important for understanding Joyce's early depiction of children and childhood. Particularly, the influence of Christianity in Europe in late antiquity and the medieval period has left a lasting impression on adult perspectives of children in Western thought that is recognisable in *Dubliners* and "Portrait." Accordingly, a basic understanding of the theoretical child in Christian philosophy in late antiquity and the medieval period is helpful for understanding the differences, and also the continuities, in portrayals of the child and childhood in Joyce. In particular, the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas have relevance for interpreting childhood in Joyce's early fiction.[14]

For Aquinas, human potentiality is defined by the limitations of the human soul, which is viewed as a material and spiritual composite that is species specific. Thus, the human is situated in a chain of being as the highest material, but lowest spiritual entity.[15] It is the human's gravitational leaning, therefore, to drift towards the perfection of human potentiality by taking heed of the soul's substance, and human potentiality is best achieved by keeping the eyes firmly fixed on the spiritual father. The human entity, therefore, is envisioned as existing in lower and higher forms, with the soul induced into the foetus's lowly material form in the second trimester of pregnancy. Thereafter, at least for Aquinas, even though the infant's original corrupt state is not of the child's own making, the material conditions of childhood must be overcome in order to gravitate towards a unified spiritual existence.

Thus, during the medieval period in Europe it is useful to envision the human entity as a nexus on a sliding scale with material and spiritual stopping points. As a nexus on a sliding scale, human potentiality is realised by the wilful repulsion of material desires and comforts, which propels the composite human entity towards unity on the spiritual end of the scale. However, in Aquinas, as in Joyce's early fiction, human propulsion towards the spiritual end of the scale is anchored by the human material condition, which, I argue, finds expression initially in *Dubliners*, but more so in "Portrait," through the design of the child's characterisation. For example, in "Portrait," it is argued that while the material and spiritual endpoints are forces that repel

[14] It is widely recognised that as a young man, Joyce read the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas closely, often engaging with the texts in the original.

[15] For an extended discussion see Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Questions on the Soul*. Marquette UP, 1984.

each other, their unalterable fused state creates a self-negating oscillation, splitting Stephen Dedalus's experience by doubling his sense of alienation.

In the Enlightenment period, however, the material and spiritual stopping points on the scale changed, but the scale was not abolished, when man cut himself loose from the spiritual father in order to master his own destiny. Although in a reconceived form, the scale survived with biological and social stopping points eventually marking the limits of human potentiality. However, rather than being repulsed by the material as in late antiquity and the medieval period, in the modern period the biological and social stopping points function as competing sites of redemption. Accordingly, the Christian repulsion towards human sexual potentiality in late antiquity and the medieval period is reversed in the modern period by the formation of a thick sexual boundary between adults and children through the concept of sexual innocence. Thus, with philosophers attempting to detach themselves from the limitations of past eras, and with the eyes firmly fixed on the future rather than on the spiritual father; the child in the modern period has often been envisioned as being either a purely social, or purely biological, non–sexualised being. Of course, for Enlightenment thinkers unable to fully extract themselves from the Christian belief that the child is born corrupted by original sin, the child simultaneously represents a corruptive and uncorrupted potential. However, with philosophers in the modern period failing to fully collapse the sliding scale of past eras, during this period it is useful to envision the theoretical child as a biosocial nexus on a sliding scale with biological and social stopping points.

Mapping out this difference is consequential for grasping the range, and limits, of Joyce's portrayal of childhood before the distinction between adults and children breaks down in *Finnegans Wake*. In the articles in this thesis concerned with Joyce's earlier fiction, it is argued that Joyce's portrayal of children and childhood is influenced by philosophers from classical antiquity, late antiquity, and the medieval period. Closer consideration is given to constructions of the child in these periods in the articles included in this study. Joyce employs these constructions in unique ways and previous research indicates that these constructions are best understood in a dialectical discussion between text and theory. Furthermore, in the articles included in this thesis concerned with Joyce's later fiction, it is argued that Joyce abandons earlier views of children and childhood. However, Joyce arguably does not explicitly employ abstract views of the child as theorised in the

modern period up until the time of Joyce's writing. Rather, it is argued that the portrayal of children and childhood in Joyce's later literature resembles views that align more accurately with those found in contemporary childhood studies, which will be treated in Chapter 4 of this thesis. Of importance to this thesis though, is that it is possibly more accurate to see contemporary childhood studies as a continuation of, rather than as a radical break with, earlier views.

This historical overview, therefore, is concerned with mapping out the trajectory of the theoretical child in the early and late modern periods with the intention of creating a bridge that demonstrates continuity, rather than rupture, between Joyce's earlier and later depictions of children and childhood. As discussed in the introductory section of this thesis, I consider it more useful to view portrayals of children and childhood in Joyce's literature prior to *Finnegans Wake* as following "a curve of emotion" that reaches a vertex in *Ulysses*. The purpose of this chapter is to lay out the historical basis for that claim.

## The Child in Theory: The Early Modern Period

In the period generally referred to as the Enlightenment (with the outer limits being 1680 until 1800 or so depending on the criteria chosen for defining the period), there are basically two intellectual strains of thought that inform contrasting conceptualisations of the child that are far from redundant. The way in which these two conceptualisations relate to each other can be usefully visualised by adopting the metaphor of a sliding scale, with the biological child on one end of the scale, and the social child on the other. The former, or biological conceptualisation of the child, may be called Rousseauian, or a Romantic conception of the child. In this model the child is perceived as being born with innate human capacities of spontaneity, empathy, and curiosity, with the potential to correct societal deficiencies. The latter, or social conceptualisation of the child, may be called a Lockean, or Enlightenment conception of the child. In this model the child is perceived as being an unformed person, thus a blank slate, or *tabula rasa*, that can be moulded by adults in order to correct societal deficiencies. Subsequently, the theoretical child within Enlightenment philosophy can be usefully envisioned as a nexus with the potential to correct societal deficiencies attached to a sliding scale with biological and sociological stopping points.

Even before the defined period, however, René Descartes opened a modern philosophical inquiry by stating that childhood is the reason why man needs a discourse on method to begin with:

> [Because] we are all children before being men and because for a long time it was necessary for us to be governed by our appetites and our teachers (which were frequently in conflict with each other, and of which perhaps neither gave us the best advice), it is nearly impossible for our judgements to be as pure and as solid as they would have been if we had the full use of our reason from the moment of our birth and if we had been guided by it alone. (Descartes 8)

Paola Marrati, whose reflection on childhood in Western philosophy in the modern period is echoed by many commentators, argues that:

> [Descartes] is not alone in his complaint: Spinoza, Kant, and virtually every major philosopher until recently will or did join in. Reason is a natural faculty, universally shared, that would work just fine, like a perfect spiritual automation, were it not for the curse of childhood and everything that comes with it. (Marrati 30)

The child, therefore, is often viewed as being the antithesis of enlightened man, and childhood is the dungeon from which man must drag himself to reach the light of day. It seems reasonable, therefore, to argue that the child is a central component in the construction of enlightened man; a construction that is discernible in early Enlightenment thinking in both Britain and the European continent.

Accordingly, for Roy Porter, the Enlightenment in Britain developed out of a religious and political flash point in the 1680s, and with ideas of liberty, property, autonomy, and reason fuelling the sentiments of the privileged classes; these ideas became the theoretical tools through which the privileged classes would pry themselves from the "tyranny and witchcraft" of former eras (Porter 28). In line with these ideas, John Locke published his influential work *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which argues against the notion of innate principles of human understanding. The infant's mind, therefore, became a central tenet in his philosophy, and Locke argues "if we will attentively consider new born children, we shall have little reason to think that they bring many ideas into the world with them" (Locke 36). Thus, while it is possible to discuss differences in continental European and British

Enlightenment periods, the child's mind is a deeply embedded trope across–the–board.

Accordingly, in the Rousseauian, or Romantic conception of the child, the child is considered to be born with innate human capacities of spontaneity, empathy, and curiosity, which become distorted by literacy, reason, self–discipline, and shame. In 1762, the same year as Rousseau wrote his influential *On the Social Contract* in which he declared "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains" (Rousseau "Contract" 1), he also wrote *Emile or Treatise on Education* where the Enlightenment ideology of liberty is brought to bear on children, beginning with the denunciation of swaddling. In the preface, Rousseau writes "people know nothing about childhood" and continues, "people always look for the man in the child […] without thinking about what he was before coming a man" (Rousseau "Emile" 34). Thus, in order to create an affective understanding of the child, adults were to re–imagine themselves in relation to their own childhoods. Larry Wolff considers this to be a one of the Enlightenments most important contributions to a modern conception of childhood and argues:

> In order to fathom Emile, Rousseau indulged in flights of remembrance in which he assumed the character of a child himself [creating] the establishment of a meaningful relation between the child and the adult he would become, between the adult and the child he used to be. (Wolff 89)

Furthermore, Bailey also argues that the fundamental characteristic that separated this "sense of wonder, an intensity of experience and a spiritual wisdom lacking in the adult" was based on "sexual innocence [which] became the fundamental definition of childhood" in a modern conceptualisation of childhood (Bailey 195). Thus, Bailey sees the principal defining boundary between adults and children in this strain of thought as being sexual maturity.

Alternatively, in the Lockean, or Enlightenment conception of the child, the infant's mind is perceived as being a blank slate at birth, or a *tabula rasa*. The child, therefore, should be moulded into an adult through training in literacy, reason, self–discipline, and shame. Moreover, John Locke also related the "eye to the I," and by refuting innate knowledge, empiricism was to construct an epistemology from without, through a "reduction of the affective senses" (Porter 66–68). The reduction of the senses was to set up a hierarchy between the affective and intellectual senses, between the infantile and the

enlightened intellect, between ignorance and knowledge. Porter considers this to be an essential strain in British Enlightenment thinking through which "the mind maturing through experience, from ignorance to knowledge, [is a suggested paradigm shift] for the progress of mankind at large" (Porter 70). However, it is important to point out that by no means did Locke consider the child innocent, despite the metaphor of the blank slate. While Locke did eventually move away from the concept of original sin, according to Bailey, he did acknowledge "the 'incompatible disposition' of children's acts and children's nature" (Bailey 195).

Similarly, David Hume, while also arguing that innate knowledge should be expulsed completely, argued for a reversal of the Lockean hierarchy, whereby man can only judge through affective, rather than intellectual experience, and declared that "reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions" (Hume 106). Porter considers this as a tentative validation of subjectivity whereby "the key to the mechanisms of the mind and emotions lay in a sensationalist analysis of the production of consciousness and character *via* environmental stimuli" (Porter 163; emphasis in original). Consequently, a conflation of a general view of selfhood with a particularised individual self, "meant prioritizing interiority [and the] pressing question became that of self–identity: what does it mean to be an 'I'" (Porter 165).

To sum up, in the former, Rousseauian view, the child is posited as being born in an original state of innocence, but equipped with innate embryonic human qualities, constituting the child as having value in and for itself, while it is the civilising, adult world, that is in a state of corruption. While within the latter, Lockean view of the child, the child is a subversive entity (possibly tainted by original sin) that must be civilised, and childhood has no intrinsic value in and for itself. While the former sought to associate adult experience with that of the child, the latter sought to disassociate adult experience from that of the child. However, both sought to construct a particular form of childhood through a theory of the child in order to influence future society. Thus, childhood is constructed as a support for adult society in both models. On this point, Wolff argues that:

> [The] Enlightenment had rediscovered, refashioned, and reconceptualised childhood […] From childhood each person evolved towards maturity and enlightenment, without ever forgetting or discarding the original child whose innocence marked the foundation of character […] the voices of children

> now heralded what appeared to be a new stage in the history of the Enlightenment, the advent of the modern world. (Wolff 95)

In this, Wolff is in no doubt right, but it seems important to point out that Rousseauian and Lockean conceptions of the child were in no way simply overwriting or replacing each other. Rather, these two strains of thought often informed and competed with each other. As argued by Aidan Day, "combinations of emphases on the value of 'reason' and the value of 'feeling' within an enlightened political radicalism were possible" (Day 70). However, in neither branch of thinking does the autonomous and consciously acting adult disappear, nor is the hierarchy associated with enlightened man undermined. Rather, during this period, in accordance with wider societal anxieties and concerns, and through competing conceptions of the *child*, *childhood* became overdetermined in the maintenance of modern man.

Subsequently, the dichotomy of infant and adult consciousness became an extremely pliable concept that was used to explain a wide variety of human differences relating to social, racial, and gender hierarchies, to name just a few of the most recognisable examples. During the said period, therefore, the concept of *infantilisation* became a measure through which enlightened man could measure himself against others. Subsequently, childhood was used to reinforce the identity, of what Roy Porter defines as the enlightened individual that validates philanthropy and paternalism through the construction of a "superior sensibility" (Porter 19). Consequently, philosophers, activists, and literary artists were able to crisscross with relative ease over the concept of the *child*, and utilise the conceptual pliability of *childhood* to transform, or confirm, an extensive range of ideas that relate to the modern period per se.

Correspondingly, while a diverse collection of intellectuals sought to unmask, and find expression for the essence of enlightened existence, it seems plausible that material existence itself had an even more profound effect on their intellectual productions. It seems reasonable to argue, therefore, that the child, through its material existence, produced effects in society throughout the Enlightenment period without uttering a single word. The child, therefore, capable of being described as an animal, an object, a protoadult, and even a divine being or a representative of the devil, but never a fully–fledged human being, exemplifies the inability of Enlightenment thinkers to stabilise the child in theory. The conceptual elasticity of the term *child* as a representative of an abstract collective during the Enlightenment period provides testimony of the

mutability of real children in a wider society, and the real child's immutability when faced with theoretical totalisation.

## The Child in Theory: The Late Modern Period

Charles Darwin, whose theory of human evolution and natural selection marked a paradigmatic shift in scientific thinking about human origins and human development in the latter half of the nineteenth century, also commented separately on children and infants. In 1877, 37 years after recording observations of his children in notes, Darwin published an article on infant behaviour that anticipates many of the discoveries later claimed by developmental psychology. In "A Biographical Sketch of an Infant," Darwin clearly defines the infant in terms of a bio–psycho–social being, and differentiates between drives and instincts, language acquisition and language development, mimicry and creativity, emotional and cognitive intelligence, biological and psychic development, and perplexes on the child's imaginary projection of the self, or what Jacques Lacan would later argue to be the mirror stage over half a century later.

Despite the overarching biological determinism, for Darwin there is some degree of ambiguity between nature and nurture. While nature determines the infant's traits to a large degree, Darwin infers that nurture, while in itself being no more than an intervention, can also influence the emotional development of the child up to a certain point. Moreover, Darwin claims that earlier experiences can have future effects on the psychic and emotional development of the child. Even more surprising perhaps, is that Darwin indicates that inherited traits will more than likely manifest themselves at different times in different infants: "I feel sure, from what I have seen in my own infants, that the period of development of the several faculties will be found to differ considerably in different infants" (Darwin 285). Darwin's children were seen, therefore, as objects of scientific study in much the same way as children have been often viewed by proponents of development psychology; throwing light on the human in its finished state (Piaget 32). The point not to be overlooked, however, is that while the same sliding scale between nature and nurture used in the early modern period remains intact, the nexus occupied by the child is equipped with a biosocial psyche.

Accordingly, with the increasing scientific interest in psychology in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it did not take long for the microscope to

be turned on the child. Along this trajectory, Sigmund Freud's recognition of early childhood being formative of adulthood was very influential, arguably having a global impact on understandings of childhood in the twentieth century. In Freud's influential work, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, published in 1905, Freud's theory of infant sexuality posits the id (or the repository of insatiable desire and creativity that must be repressed in order for people to be able to live satisfactory in collectives) at the level of the child – the super–ego (or the ideal image of self) at the level of the collective – and the ego (or the realistic image of self that mediates between the insatiable desire of the id, and the restrictive image of the super–ego) at the level of the adult.

Subsequently, Freud's triptych of child, adult, and collective split the Enlightenment subject into conscious and unconscious experience, arguably creating a newly formulated sensibility towards children and childhood. However, while Freud's theory has opened a path for a causal explanation of deviant behaviour in the adult, for the childhood theorist Chris Jenks, "the id awakens all of the images and resonances of the evil child but at a later historical moment; here again is a childhood predicated on constraint, management and the fear of an evil that resides within, and this time in the form of the unconscious" (Jenks "Childhood" 149). Childhood, therefore, becomes an object of adult retrospection pointing in the direction of a future, contributing little to understandings of children, as the child is purged of intentionality by being defined through drives and instincts.

However, the field that dominated thinking about the child for much of the twentieth century is development psychology, with the most influential theorists being the contemporaries Jean Piaget and Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky. For Piaget, the child's development results from a chronological sequence of intellectual stages that are, for most children, universally applicable. These stages begin with sensory motor intelligence immediately after birth until approximately 2 years of age, with development being a function of language and symbol recognition. Thereafter, the child between two and seven years of age develops pre–conceptual thought through a detachment from direct perception. Henceforth, the child, between seven and approximately eleven years of age, develops intuitive thought which is developed through concrete acts. Eventually, the child, between eleven and approximately sixteen years of age, can refer to hypothetical objects or actions, and reflect upon their own thinking (Kohler 168–201).

However, these stages are placed on a hierarchal continuum, from low status infantile thought to high status adult useful intelligence, which is presented as rational and natural. On this point David Archard argues:

> [That] all children acquire cognitive competencies according to a universal sequence [has] been criticised on two grounds […] First, his ideal of adult cognitive competence is a peculiar Western philosophical one. [In particular] Piaget was concerned to understand how the adult human comes to acquire the Kantian categories of space, time and causality. If adult cognitive competence is conceived in this way then there is no reason to think it conforms to the everyday abilities of even Western adults. Second, children arguably possess some crucial competencies long before Piaget says they do. (Archard 65–66)

Thus, for Archard, Piaget's discourse is embedded in, and replicates, Enlightenment ideals. Moreover, Jenks argues that Piaget's child is not an historically locatable child. Rather, theory abandons the real child, and scientific rational thought replicates itself outside of situational social–life (Jenks "Childhood" 23).

Contrary to Piaget, the main theoretical tenet of Vygotsky[16] is that by using language, or signs, as tools, humans change the "natural conditions of existence" for themselves, positing children are participants in their own development (Vygotsky 132). Consequently, development is not viewed as a result of pre–determined stages as in the work of Piaget. Rather, the child is active in its own development through a dialectical relationship with more experienced peers. Thus, development, while being partly determined by biological maturity, is also affected by the historical conditions that the child interfaces with. Development is, therefore, elastic, as it can be shaped, and resisted, by the child who contributes to their own developmental processes.

In contrast to Piaget, therefore, who considers social and cultural contexts to be secondary effects; for Vygotsky, a child's development cannot be understood in isolation of their social and cultural contexts, as these are the primary, rather than secondary factors that contribute to an individual's development. Thus, child development should be considered as motion and change rather than fixed and predetermined, and Vygotsky's studies focus on

[16] Vygotsky agrees with, and expands upon, Friedrich Engels's view that humans change their environment through the development and use of tools, rather than being merely determined by nature (Vygotsky 132).

the causes of change, and "the laws according to which [phenomena] change," and their history (Vygotsky 8–9). Thus, Vygotsky is interested in how the underlying processes that facilitate habitual and changeable behaviour are actualised through action and speech (Vygotsky 24).

For Vygotsky, therefore, the child is neither fully a tabula rasa, nor an embryonic human, but an actor participating in the historical moment through speech and action. Subsequently, the historical moment pressures and shapes the child, while the child participates in adult society through mimicry, experimentation, and resistance, and therefore contributes to social and historical forces. Furthermore, this is not a linear process necessarily leading to the development of the child, but development is itself a complex array of intersecting, and not fully formed competencies, and the child and society dialectically constitute each other. Thus, for Vygotsky, childhood is a construction that children are participants in constructing. Subsequently, in developmental psychology, the sliding scale between nature and nurture used in the early modern period remains intact, with the child sliding up and down the scale, depending on the theoretical positioning.

As the above discussion indicates, much of the interest in children and childhood in the first part of the twentieth century developed outside of the university. This includes the work of Piaget who carried out much of his work from within government institutions, and Freud, who developed his theories by analysing adults from an office, with such studies being situated, as the field of psychoanalysis grew, in psychoanalytical institutions. Gradually though, as the twentieth century proceeded, interest in children and childhood eventually gained a foothold in the university, primarily within the departments of psychology and sociology. However, the study of children and childhood was, especially in the case of psychology departments, laboratory focused which, in turn, informed an essentialist understanding of the child as being primarily destined through innate natural qualities; in essence, "biology was destiny" (Melton et al. 12).

The scientific rationale, therefore, initially focused on a perception of children as a collective abstraction shaped by their genes, their degree of maturation, and their environment, in that order. Hence, children were not perceived as contributing to shaping the adult world on which they were dependent (Melton et al. 12). Thus, during this period, the four prongs of anthropology, psychology, psychoanalysis, and sociology emphasised, albeit in their own unique ways, that childhood was an incomplete period of the life–

cycle that needed to be studied in terms of development and socialisation (Heywood 3). In this respect, childhood was widely considered to be a biological phase, defined by age, within the life–cycle. In its wider meaning, the life–cycle was considered to be a circular trajectory based on the physiological development, and the eventual demise, of the individual human animal as an abstract entity, and in its narrower meaning, as the period of life that stretches from birth to biological reproduction (Harris 18, 22). Within this life–cycle, however, the human was perceived as travelling along a series of biological stages, with each stage determining human experience.

However, in 1960, when the historian Philippe Ariès asked in *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, if *childhood* is a concept that can be applied to all children, irrespective of historical context, (and despite the criticism that his study has since received), the shockwave that was felt in the social and historical sciences is a testament to the quality of the question that was raised. For Ariès, children in the Middle Ages were considered to be miniature adults, and as no special social mechanisms were in place, once the child demonstrated the physical strength and competency to participate in adult activities, they were enrolled in working and educational duties. For Ariès, childhood was only defined in opposition to adulthood from the beginning of the sixteenth century,[17] and from the Enlightenment onwards, childhood came to dominate thinking as the other of adulthood.

For the social sciences, whose dominant concern had been the analysis of agency and structure, the question asked by Ariès constituted a dilemma. While common understandings of agency in the social sciences were underpinned by notions of the autonomous and consciously acting individual, (which finds its genesis in the thinking of Enlightenment theorists and philosophers), if childhood is a social construction, then what part do children play in their own lives; are children totally dominated by social structures, or do they effect the social world as agents?

As this suggests, dissatisfaction of the earlier epistemological framework of childhood developed in the 1970s, intensified in the 1980s, and achieved critical mass in the 1990s, as social constructionist perspectives penetrated many disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. This effected a

[17] There is still no agreement on a set of parameters for defining childhood at the beginning of the early modern period, as the question of when childhood ended is more dependent on individual circumstances rather than on a collective identity. For an extended discussion see Miller and Yavneh (13).

questioning of the notion of the term's *child* and *childhood* as essential, universal categories. Commentators argued instead that *childhoods* were historically contingent and culturally specific constructs; placing focus on context rather than on biological determinism (Melton et al. 12). This marked a move from laboratory–centred theories that overlooked situational factors towards empirical studies that sought to study the child in–situ.

Consequently, social constructionism also led to an interrogation of the concept of the life–cycle, and childhood has been largely relocated within a life–course. Within a life–course, childhood is perceived as personalised experience that is informed and shaped by the historical moments through which a person maps their personal biography. Subsequently, the idea of determining stages has been mostly displaced by the idea of transition, with sensitivity towards interpreting what transition means for the individual in question. The result of this shift is that many beliefs about children and childhood have been challenged, as has been the case in gender studies. However, unlike in gender studies, the power of interpretation still lies mostly with adult observers.

In short, while there has been a shift from studies of childhood development towards studies of childhoods as historical artefacts, both perceptual frameworks co–exist in various interdisciplinary constellations at the present time, and the sliding scale, with biology on one end, and socialisation on the other, remains largely intact. However, as discussed by Allison James, Chris Jenks, and Alan Prout, "a discursive space has been established within which children are now seen as individuals, whose autonomy should be safeguarded and fostered and whose being can no longer be simply nested into the family or the institution" (James et al. 6–7). What can be argued, therefore, is that while there may be a revised scholarly sensitivity towards the child, the child's position as a nexus on a sliding scale with biological and sociological end stops has arguably not been dislodged.

## Concluding Remarks

As this historical survey suggests, the problem of adult perception represents a difficult obstacle for the study of childhood, and goes some way to explaining why conceptualisations of children and childhood intersect across such a vast array of scholarly disciplines such as the social sciences (anthropology, sociology, history and economics) – the humanities (literature, the fine arts,

and religion) – and the behavioural sciences (particularly psychology). However, Leena Alanen asks the pertinent question "whether society can, in principle, be known from the point where children stand" (Alanen 31–32). So, whether childhood is framed as a life–course and considered to be an organic whole that resists division, or as a life–cycle and considered to be an assemblage of stages that leads towards maturation, adult perceptions of children and childhood have been, and for the greater part remain, privileged.

Indeed, the search for the child as agent in the last 35 years or so has all too often been based on an assumption that children have agency, and that it just has to be discovered. Accordingly, agency has often been understood as an innate human quality, and a social constructivist approach has often rested on an assumption anchored in biological determinism. However, it has also become evident that such assumptions do not always stand up to empirical evidence. Hence, while at an abstract level sociology aims at developing theories about society and social life, and on a more concrete level tests such theories against empirical evidence; the empirical evidence in this case has not always concurred with the theory. At the present time, therefore, there is a theoretical shift from viewing the child through an innate capacity of agency towards seeing agency as emerging socially.[18] However, a search to define the child's position in society through the concept of agency appears to have reproduced the child sliding up and down the scales between nature and nurture. Accordingly, the belief that childhood comes dogmatically from without, which is what would probably be left if the innate agency hypothesis is removed, would possibly conjure up an image of advocates of the Lockean *tabula rasa* raising their glasses in victory, and advocates of Romanticism howling in protest. Indeed, one would be inclined to hear Jonathan Swift chuckling behind his quill as he wrote: "I am now trying an experiment very frequent among modern authors which is *to write upon nothing*" (Swift 102; emphasis in original).

However, as this historical survey indicates, although theories of children and childhood vary considerably throughout the modern period, at no point does the concept of the child as a biosocial human entity completely collapse. Rather, it is possibly more useful to view the child in contemporary childhood studies as a *continuation* of the theoretical child that emerged during the early

[18] For example, see Florian Esser et al., editors. *Reconceptualising Agency and Childhood: New Perspectives in Childhood Studies*. Routledge, 2016.

modern period. Moreover, while it is also possible to talk about continuities between the medieval and modern periods with sexuality marking the boundary between adults and children in both, but also of a paradigmatic shift in conceptions of the corrupt contra innocent sexualised child as it is reconceived in the modern period, there are also good reasons to argue from the articles presented in this study that Joyce eventually considered both of these views to be derived from a distortion of adult perception.

For example, in "James Joyce's 'The Sisters': Implied Pederasty and Interpreting the Inexpressible," it is argued that children are portrayed as contributing to their own demise through a *natural* curiosity towards adult sexuality. Each of the stories about childhood in *Dubliners* depict boys allowing older characters to transgress the sexual boundary that exists between adults and children, implicating the boys in acts of corruption. As the previous research presented earlier in this thesis indicates, this results in an oscillating narrative style with older narrators recoiling from, and sometimes even overwriting the experiences of their younger selves. It is possible to argue, therefore, that memories of childhood in *Dubliners* can be viewed as functioning as a site of both loss and repulsion for older narrators. Moreover, while it is argued that the portrayal of childhood found in *Dubliners* is for the greater part replicated in "Portrait;" it is also argued that the distortion of adult perception in *Dubliners* is thoroughly explored in "Portrait."

Subsequently, in "'Arisen from the Grave of Boyhood'? Nostalgia and Misopaedia in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," it is argued that the portrayal of childhood is constructed through a conflation of two common views of the Roman Catholic child that find their genesis in Aristotle's depiction of childhood. As in the childhood stories in *Dubliners*, "the synthesis of these two trajectories creates a self-negating oscillation, with Stephen Dedalus recoiling from the experiences of his younger self, while simultaneously being dependent on a notion of innate autonomy" (Ryan "Nostalgia" 4). However, the point of repulsion is threshed out in "Portrait" by building Stephen's Bildung upon a template of recognisable, pre-modern, theoretical constructions of the child in Western thought. Of consequence for this thesis, therefore, is that even though the underlying construction remains dormant in Stephen's Bildung, there are good reasons to suggest that the choices made in the portrayal of Stephen's childhood gesture towards Joyce being aware of the distortion in his portrayal of childhood at this stage in his writing.

Thereupon, it of interest that in Joyce's next work of fiction, *Exiles*, the child's familial position is upturned. Thus, rather than the child providing a point of material exchange, as can be found in Joyce's earlier fiction; the child in *Exiles* is portrayed as compensating for a failure in adult relations by becoming a portal for adult redemption through affective choice. As this portrayal aligns well with recognisable perspectives in the Global North in the twenty-first century, which will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4, it also indicates the emergence of a portrayal of childhood that, while seeking to break with pre-modern periods, also builds upon constructions of the child as it was theorised by philosophers during the early modern period. However, as radical as Joyce's portrayal may at first seem, the child's portrayal in *Exiles* does not manage to break free from the distortion of adult perception.

Accordingly, Joyce's earlier and later portrayals of the child discussed above co-exist as opposed adult points of view in *Ulysses*, indicting Joyce's awareness of the ongoing distortion in the adult portrayal of childhood in his fiction. However, in *Ulysses* children are portrayed as engaging with, and undermining adult perceptions – much like the child as it is theorised in contemporary childhood studies, which will also be explained in more detail in Chapter 4. The child in *Ulysses*, therefore, is not reducible to either the repulsive or redemptive potentials found in Joyce's earlier fiction; rather, it is more useful to view children's lives as being historicized in *Ulysses*. Up until this point in Joyce's writing, therefore, it is possible to discuss a wide variety of childhoods in Joyce's fiction, with examples sharing affinities with both medieval and modern conceptions of the child. However, stock must also be taken of the continuities in these portrayals, as despite the wide arch of interpretational possibilities discussed in this thesis, the child in *Ulysses* undermines, but does not radically break free from, the distortion of adult perceptions.

# 4. Theoretical Framework

## Children and Childhood in Theory

While the child is a constant and recognisable presence in all human societies, it is empirically verifiable that childhood is constituted differently in individual societies. As the discussion in Chapter 3 also demonstrates, the terms *child*, *children*, and *childhood* are also historically endowed with a broad degree of conceptual elasticity. Accordingly, beliefs about children in any particular society, at any given time, contribute to the constitution of childhood. Childhood is, therefore, a historically contingent category that has existed in Western societies on a theoretical sliding scale, with nature on one end, and nurture on the other, throughout the modern period. Despite a broad degree of elasticity, however, these terms maintain contemporary relevance because the child is a social category that has not collapsed. Keeping in line with the aim of this study, therefore, which is to provide an account of children and childhood in Joyce before the distinction between adults and children arguably collapses in his last work of fiction, this chapter provides an overview of how childhood is constituted by those theorists who have sought to reshape, rather than collapse, the category in recent years.

With the literary child being an indisputable construct of adult imagination, and the concern of contemporary childhood studies being a reversal of the adult gaze; my interest in contemporary childhood studies is limited to understanding the range of theoretical positions that the child has been allotted within the adult/child dyad. Moreover, as the short historical survey of childhood theory presented in Chapter 3 indicates, social, historical, cultural, economic, and political forces are always in play when a theory of the child is proposed. Subsequently, while power is an integral part of the adult/child dyad, in childhood theory power is not solely viewed as repressive. Power can also structure the terrain upon which struggles are staged, whether the purpose of such struggle is to preserve, or overturn, an existing social order. Contemporary childhood studies, therefore, is a field of scholarly

inquiry that has grown out of an historically anchored revision of sensibility towards the child.

In the previous research presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis, there are indications that scholarly interest in the topic of childhood in Joyce's fiction tapers off after "Portrait." Yet the articles in this thesis provide evidence of a revised sensibility towards the depiction of children and childhood in subsequent fiction. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to demonstrate that – while changes in Joyce's depiction of children and childhood can be usefully compared with theoretical models in contemporary childhood studies – that it is also useful to see these changes as following a trajectory of revision, rather than as radical breaks with past depictions.

## Childhood Studies

As discussed in Chapter 1, the terms "foetus," "infant," "toddler," "young child," "pre–pubescent," "adolescent," and "youth," are distinct categories that are generally assembled under the umbrella term of the *child*. *Childhood*, therefore, is an umbrella term that relates to the early varied period of the human life–course that is constructed as the other of *adulthood*. This early period of the life–course, as a categorisation, is generally defined by biological, psychological, emotional, and intellectual change, while change is influenced by processes of socialisation and acculturation, enabling *children* to join in, reject, or be dominated by adult society.

Consequently, *childhood*, as a theoretical concept in the modern period, has been informed by secondary concepts such as "competency," "generation," "inheritance," and "continuation," which, it is argued, have all traditionally functioned to displace the actual experience of childhood into one of what the child will become, or "futurity" (Corsaro "Sociology" 8; James and James 63–65). "Futurity," however, is a concept challenged by contemporary theorists who see a "definitive move away from the more or less inescapable implication of the concept of socialization: that children are to be seen as a defective form of adult, social in their future potential but not in their present being" (James et al. 6). The focus on what the child will become, it is argued, has served to mask the social and political forces that have converged to displace the significance of experiences for children themselves, and possibly distort the memory of childhood in the adults that they become. In other

words, it is argued that there is hysteresis between how a child experiences life, and how an adult remembers that experience.

Accordingly, Richard Mills argues that if childhood is to be viewed as a separate and exclusive period with at least some degree of relational knowledge and experience, "what world, lost to adults, do [children] inhabit?" (Mills 23). Chris Jenks expands on this argument and states that:

> [The] child is familiar to us and yet strange, he inhabits our world and yet seems to answer to another, he is essentially of ourselves and yet appears to display a different order of being: his serious purpose and our intentions towards him are meant to resolve that paradox by transforming him into an adult. (Jenks "Sociology" 9)

The child's strangeness provides grounds for understanding why the theoretical child has been so malleable in the modern period. However, the child's strangeness is also a cautionary reminder to tread carefully around truth claims.

Subsequently, William Corsaro argues that in traditional theories of childhood, children are viewed as being passive "consumers" of culture produced by adults (Corsaro "Sociology" 9). However, the view of children within what was originally considered to be a new, emerging paradigm of the sociology of childhood (James and Prout "Paradigm" 7) – hereafter to be referred to as childhood studies – pivots basically on two tenets. First, that children are active, creative, social actors, who, up to a certain point, produce their own cultures and influence adult society. Second, that childhood is a socially constructed category of which children are members (Corsaro "Sociology" 4; James and Prout "Paradigm" 8). Thus, the child, while being viewed as an actor in a psychosocial context, is also allocated a position in society depending on their social class, race, gender, ethnicity, age, (ab)normality and so on. In childhood studies, therefore, the term *childhood* no longer posits the child within an abstract collective. Rather, children are considered to be unique individuals, and childhoods are diverse, interlocking, subcultures. Childhood studies, therefore, is not only an endeavour to understand and analyse children's unique experiences, but it is also an endeavour to understand if children, as a relational category, can, and do, influence adult society.

In childhood studies, therefore, the terms *child*, *children*, and *childhood* are not viewed as static concepts that can be applied generally across a population at

any given point of time or place, but are seen as consisting of a variety of possible social positions that are relationally organised. Therefore, the relations between generations, the social and cultural relations among children, the experiences of children as peer group members, children's relation to institutions, and children's relation to childhood as an institution, are all important avenues of inquiry (Frønes "Dimensions" 145–164).

Furthermore, childhood scholars are also concerned with understanding how institutions are influenced by children as members of institutions (James and Prout "Paradigm" 26). The terms "institution" and "institutionalisation" are used in these studies in a narrower sense. They relate to concrete entities organised to normalise particular needs or activities for children, while also providing structures for opportunity, and include informal institutions such as the family, and formal institutions such as educational facilities (Zeiher 127). Thus, as participants, and within peer group constellations, the social world is not viewed as being assimilated passively, but is considered to be negotiated, and contested, by children, within, and across, various institutional settings, with varying degrees of impact. Hence, adult perceptions of children are viewed as being emblematic prescriptions that inform adult's views about children within adult social productions, that inform adult's views about their own childhoods, that inform children about their own experiences, and also inform adult understandings about children's own views of their contributions to the social world.

The hysteresis between the structural form of institutional childhood, and the lived experiences of children within those institutions, therefore, is a central concern of childhood studies. As a result, childhood theorists seek to understand the child as a participant in "interpretive reproduction," or as a contributor to the production and reproduction of childhood and society (Corsaro "Sociology" 20–30). Within this theoretical model, emphasis is placed on language as a tool for creating and stabilising social and psychic realties, and routines are tacit, and habitual, "anchors" that help social actors to "deal with ambiguities, the unexpected, and the problematic," within the fold of a wider community (Corsaro "Sociology" 21). To facilitate an understanding of this model, Corsaro utilises a metaphor of a web, which is depicted in Figure 1 below, to help visualise how productive, and interpretive reproductive, characteristics of childhood relate to a range of social institutions. Also, the diagram supports a visualisation of how the diversity of localities in which interaction can take place relate to each other over time.

The web, therefore, while being structured by formal and informal adult institutions, is also a supple structure prone to vibrations and damage from instability. The web is, thus, a structure that the child is woven into, often before birth, through converging and competing adult concerns.

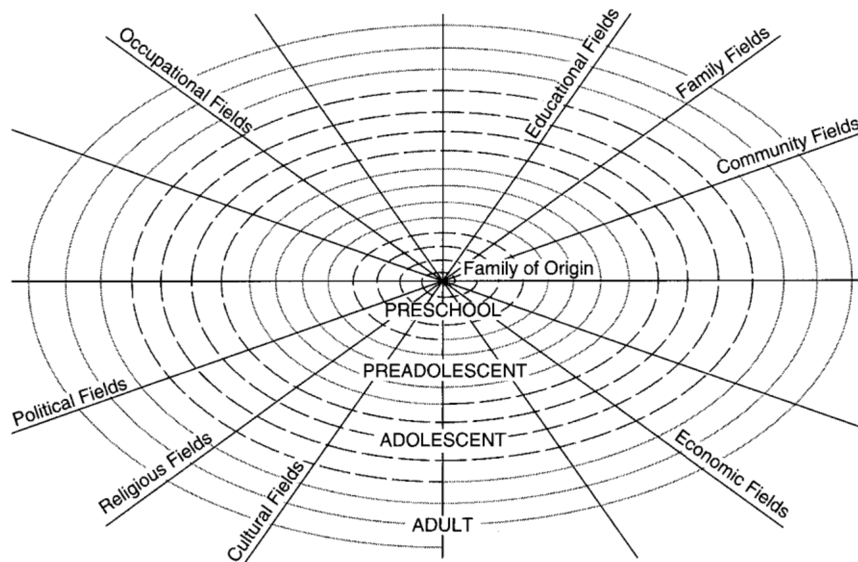


Figure 1: Institutions and childhood participation (Corsaro "Sociology" 27)

In short, the diagram above illustrates that contemporary social theories of childhood contend that socialisation is, with varying degrees of plasticity, reciprocity, dynamics, and contextualisation, the opposite of traditional views that consider childhood to be a static, one–sided, and cocooned apprenticeship. This shifts the focus away from childhood as a staircase metaphor of progressive developmental stages, towards one of organic growth within processes of "increasing density and reorganization of knowledge that changes with the children's developing cognitive and language abilities" (Corsaro "Interpretive" 161–162). Concerning this metaphorical shift, Jack Priestly provides a useful example of the perceptual difference between these two models and argues that:

> [There] is a whole world of difference between the cultivation of a living, growing organism like a tomato plant or a child, and the building of an inanimate object like a motor car. The latter has no

> meaning and no value until it is finished; the former is a whole throughout all stages of its growth. (Priestly 115)

This transforms the perception of childhood from one of an apprenticeship, or an asset to adult society, into one where the child has value in its own right. Allison James and Alan Prout argue that what is vital in childhood studies "is to focus on children not only as protoadults, future–beings, but also on children as beings–in–the–present" (James and Prout "Re–Presenting" 241). Consequently, this marks a shift from childhood as a collectivity, towards childhood being viewed as an individual biography with collective experiences. Subsequently, many scholars in contemporary childhood studies view children as being more aware of their contributions to society than has been previously recognised, and this is a model that it is argued can be usefully applied to children's lives, rather than to adult perceptions of children, in *Ulysses*. Even though no studies exist that map out the concordance or discrepancies between children's lives and adult perceptions of children's lives in *Ulysses*, it is argued that contemporary childhood theories can be usefully employed to thresh out previously unexplored differences between adult and children's perceptions in the novel.

## Critic of the Interpretative Child in Childhood Studies

A recent, recurring criticism coming from within the field of childhood studies[19] is that, from the outset, there has been an assumption that agency is a "pre–social, natural agency that is systematically destroyed and corrupted by social force" (Esser 50). Subsequently, agency is viewed as a positive and innate quality, and the implications have not been theoretically threshed out despite an increase in empirical studies that demonstrate childhood agency only emerging under specific conditions. As Meike Baader argues, any such de–historicized view of agency collapses back on a Romantic conceptualisation of the child (Baader 137). While Kevin Ryan's focus is the theorists that seek to collapse the category of childhood in recent years, Ryan sees the move as a continuation of a modern conceptualisation of the child, rather than as a radical break with history:

[19] See as examples; Bollig and Kelle (2016) and Mey (2016).

> Biosocial power [in the new paradigm of childhood studies] takes the form of innate capacities which are embodied by children (agency and voice), and which are said to shape, even as they are shaped by, the social context. The new wave [of childhood studies] goes further, or 'deeper', in deconstructing what are considered to be the very cognitive frames from which modern western childhood was forged, thereby disturbing the conditions of possibility for power asymmetries of the kind that structure adult–child relations. But this posited biosocial dualism is a discursive construct and not a historical artefact: the object of present concerns rather than a product of past realities. Consequently, the new wave obscures the degree of continuity between past and present, and fails to see that it inhabits the biosocial nexus in staging its critique. (Ryan 450)

The belief in agency as an innate capacity, therefore, is an indicator that childhood studies is a construct driven by a revised sensibility towards the child that is arguably a continuation of, rather than a break with, constructions of the child in the modern period. It seems fair to argue, therefore, that the child has never been either purely biological, or purely social; rather, these are adult concerns. Thus, the child's positioning on the sliding scale between nature and nurture may have been altered by scholars, but the scale remains largely intact. Accordingly, it is useful to quickly map out the coordinates of that positioning to gain traction on a recognisable revised sensibility towards the child in the twenty–first century.

## Positioning the Child in Contemporary Scientific Disciplines

In order to grasp how competing theoretical models of the child inform contemporary sensibilities towards the child, it is useful to consider theoretical discourses as being embedded in a discursive formation, rather than as discreet discourses. Consequently, there are primarily three scholarly disciplines that have been influential, and are implicated in, theories of the child and childhood in the late modern period. However, even though I am aware that what follows is a gross oversimplification, and as the previous discussion indicates, there is no straightforward way of dividing scholarly ideas about childhood into discreet boxes, it is a necessary manoeuvre to explain how the theoretical child is implicated in a revised sensibility towards children

in the Global North. In contemporary scientific studies of children and childhood there are:

1. Definitions by theorists that children are actors and participants in their own childhood experiences. These are definitions that seek to account for the child's participation and motives as determined by membership in a wider social field of kin and community, with a focus on social aspects preceding biological and psychological factors.
2. Definitions by theorists of intrinsic biological functions that are inherited by children through deep structures. These are definitions that seek to account for actor's participation in childhood cultures, and the motives for behavioural characteristics of children within childhood cultures, with a focus on biological aspects preceding social and psychological factors.
3. Definitions by theorists of intrinsic mental functions that are pressured by external social forces. These are definitions that seek to understand the characteristics of childhood as experienced by actors themselves, and to study the motives for actors' own participation in childhood, with a focus on psychological aspects preceding social or biological factors.

A pictorial representation of these three definitions is presented in Figure 2 below.

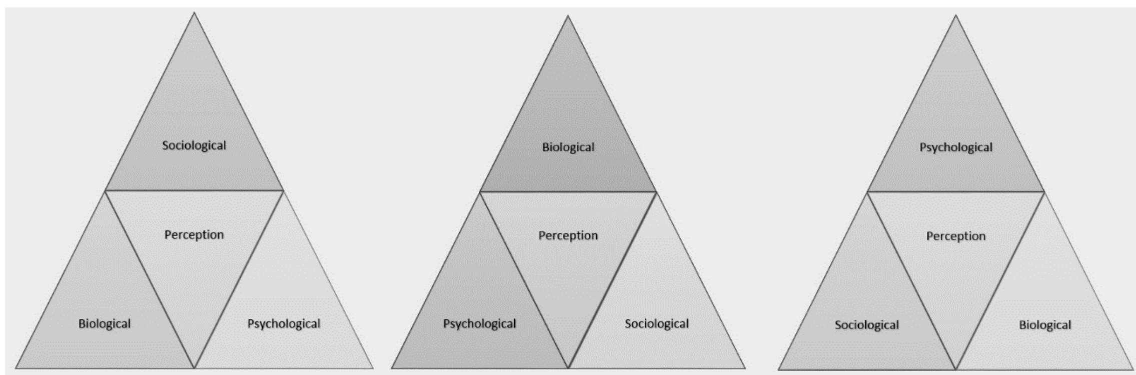


Figure 2: Perspectives of the child in scientific disciplines

While these three diagrams represent the span of childhood studies across an array of scholarly disciplines, they are more accurately depicted in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Competing perspectives of the child in scientific disciplines

As none of these definitions, even at their most extreme, can completely discard the existence of the other two without collapsing the term "child" as a social category, the triangle that they relationally form must be modified to allow it to rotate synchronically through alternative institutional formations, and also diachronically through alternating historical institutional formations. Therefore, rotation is a definition of institutional ambiguities as institutions relate to each other. Moreover, rotation is also a definition of the child and its perception of its own biopsychosocial being as it relates to institutional ambiguities. Figure 4 below presents a revision of this diagram to include these dynamics.

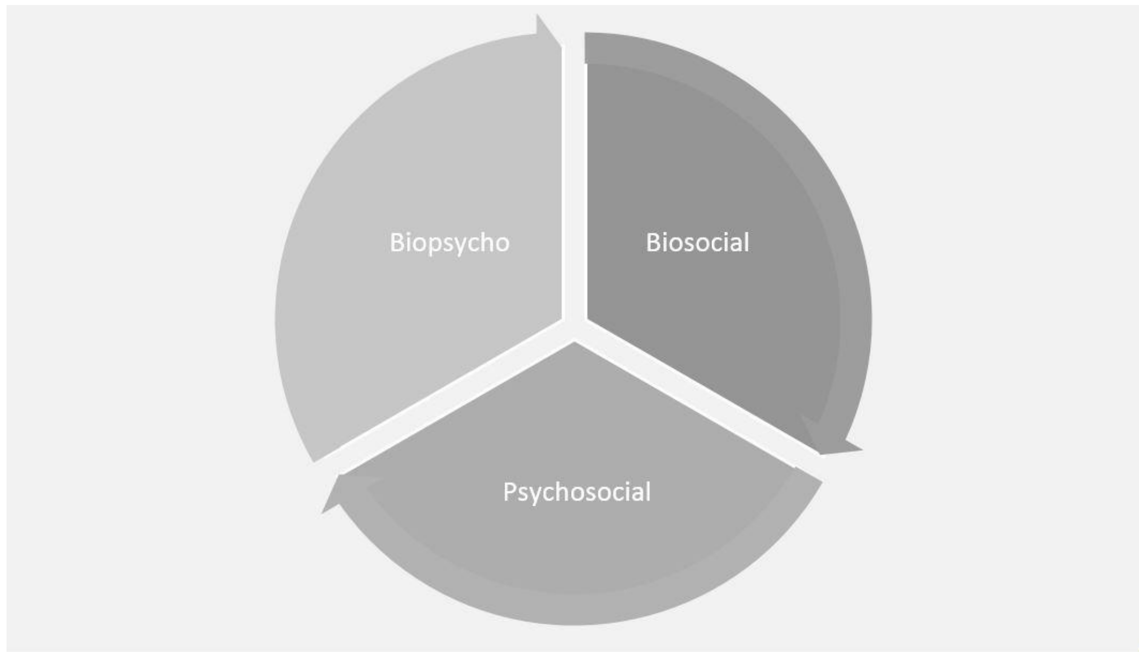


Figure 4: Formation of perceptions of children and childhood

The result is a formation of perceptions of children and childhood that can be relationally understood as institutional forces that tension each other through the portal, or hub, of the child. Any attempt to over–tension a particular spoke distorts the hub by default, as while the child is anchored by social institutions, as argued by Corsaro, social institutions are also anchored by the child. Furthermore, while parallel institutions may, or may not, have their roots anchored in a similar function or ideal in a society at any given time, the distribution of force may vary considerably across institutions, and across different categories of children, with children often categorised differently dependent on age, gender, ethnicity, social class, (ab)normality, and so on.

Thus, any over–tensioning of one particular spoke results in strain on the opposing two spokes through the portal of the child, and the breakage of any one spoke, due to too much tensioning, means the collapse of childhood as a social category. Hence, irrespective of how individual spokes are externally framed through discourses, their internal dynamics are characterised by interdependency. Of importance, however, is that spokes can be uniformly tensioned extremely tightly making movement very difficult indeed, (and this relates to both an external tensioning through coercive institutional practices; and internal tensioning through what Michel Foucault terms surveillance procedures by making children aware of their own behaviour [James et al. "Theorizing" 8]). Likewise, spokes can be tensioned extremely loosely,

allowing for a broad range of experiences largely free from interference, or support.

However, all perspectives are interdependent, and this is irrespective of whether this is an implicit, or explicit, characteristic of the particular constellation. Importantly though, contemporary childhood studies draw attention to the child's own perception in decoding, defining, and utilising the ambiguous tensions that relate to particular institutions, and between institutions. This allows the diagram to be read from the inside–out, in terms of children's perspectives, or outside–in, in terms of adult perspectives. However, realistically, at the present time, an adult reading from the inside–out is always going to be informed, at least in part, by perceptions from the outside–in. With this in mind, scholarly disciplines have fostered a culture of reflexivity towards children and childhood in order to overcome the effect of adult bias, and it is difficult to imagine a clean dissection between critical reflexivity in the academy, and sensibilities about children in a wider society.

## Dancing with the Affective Child in the Twenty–First Century

In the above discussion it is argued that if *childhood* is be adequately positioned as the other of *adulthood*, it must be at least partly constituted through biological maturation and, therefore, biological difference. Therefore, *childhood* is a concept that situates the *child* in the world through a biological label. From this position, to take a purely social constructionist stand is at best problematic, and at worst, false. As the anthropologist David Lancy argues, in "object play by very young children, for example [...] we find true biological universals at work" (Lancy 7).

Likewise, to reduce *childhood* to a purely biological form, and this is a point argued by most sociologists, biologists, and psychologists at the present time, would be just as problematic, as generic models of the biological child cannot account for the actual differences between children, or childhoods. Summing up contemporary perspectives, Ivar Frønes argues that:

> In accordance with new perspectives on biology the recent decades have also seen a constitution of a 'new' infant and child; the child as an active subject. [In] the famous book by Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* […] there is a section on socialisation and they say something like, the society and the

> parents try to socialise the child but the little animal fights back. Now we know that this is completely silly, the little animal socialises itself. It doesn't fight back; neither is it a tabula rasa. Even a new–born baby is actively shaping its own socialisation. If you want to understand not only childhood but also the children passing through childhood, you have to have this perspective – children are active developing subjects interacting with social, cultural and economic frameworks [….] under conditions over which they have little control. (Frønes "Key" 91–94)

As discussed, the infant's mind has fascinated and eluded theorists for centuries, but at the present time there is a reasonable degree of consensus across scholarly disciplines that the infant does not purely mimic others; rather, the child and adult emotionally invest in each other. Summing up the interactions between infants and carers, Peter Hobson argues that:

> [There] is a universal body language, more basic than the language of words, that connects us with other people mentally. It is a [coordinated] mechanism for interpersonal engagement that operates before thought, or at least before the kind of symbolic thought that allows us to think about things in an imaginative way. (Hobson 48)

Mutuality between infant and carer, in the present historical moment, is often viewed as being expressed through body language such as eye contact, touch, facial expression, sound, and so on. Communicative competencies, therefore, provided by nature, support the growth of inter–emotional investment between infant and carer, which infers that the infant has a mental life from the beginning. Thus, the child is no longer viewed as waking out of a mental slumber into a world of language; rather, language is grafted onto an emotional fabric that is assembled from earliest experiences; which will vary considerably depending on the biological characteristics of the particular child, and the circumstances that the child is born into. For Hobson:

> [There] is no doubt that [...] infants are highly attuned to other people [...] They have an active social life right from the start. More than this, it is a social life that deepens so swiftly that it serves the eight–month–old as a fountain of pleasure, a reservoir of reassurance, and a well–spring of mischief. It also swirls that same infant into a whirlpool of pulls, pushes and other emotional

> currents that [...] wrest the infant from a kind of self–centredness and liberate the very processes of thought. (Hobson 43)

While I am aware of the theoretical implications of a claim such as this, my interests are limited to providing a recognisable example of a shift in adult sensibilities towards children where the infant and carer are considered to perform a kind of emotional "dance" (Hobson 43), as this is a model of the child recognisable in Joyce's later literature. In *Exiles*, for example, it is argued that while the child is empowered through emotional choice, that this depiction also shares affinities with the depiction of Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*. As can be recognised from the arguments made by scholars in the previous research presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Leopold Bloom's view of children, and especially of his daughter Milly, aligns exceedingly well with this model of the child.

## Concluding Remarks

In this chapter it is argued that subtle, but noticeable differences exist between the theoretical child of the late twentieth and early twenty–first centuries in the Global North. In the late twentieth century childhood theorists attempted to break with the past by treating children as co–authors in their own becoming, rather than through future competencies. In the twenty–first century it is argued that there is a shift towards treating children as unique sentient beings that symbiotically engage in a world of reflexive adults from infancy. However, there are tendencies in both of these models to rely on innate competencies, albeit with the latter adding complexity to the biological end of the sliding scale.

In general, therefore, even though the turn in contemporary childhood studies has been described as a new paradigm in studies of the child, the positions that the child is awarded in contemporary scientific disciplines (and specifically the positions that children are awarded in Figures 2 through 4 of this chapter), would indicate continuities rather than a radical break with earlier theories. Accordingly, it seems reasonable to contend that the difference between the theoretical child of the late twentieth and early twenty–first centuries is anchored in a revised sensibility that developed during the modern period. However, I would also argue that one should be wary of shifts in attitudes towards the child, as while some shifts may bare the common–sense hallmarks of progression, it is also demonstrated in the articles in this

thesis that similar differences emerge in a reversed order in Joyce's later fiction.

Accordingly, Irish children in the nineteenth century are considered by both the Irish literary scholar Declan Kiberd, and the Irish social historian Tom Inglis, to have had no general value in, and for, themselves in Irish society (Kiberd "Inventing" 102–104; Inglis 178–200). Thus, children are considered to have been generally unseen, unheard, and unfelt, and emotional detachment is considered to be a primary component in the formation of the adult/child dyad. From the evidence presented in the articles in this thesis, Joyce's rendition of Irish Catholic lives aligns well with this description. However, as discussed in the introduction of this thesis, the Irish child in the twenty–first century is often considered to be a unique sentient being symbiotically engaging in a world of reflexive adults; seen, heard, and felt to act. Emotional attachment, therefore, is considered to be a primary component in the formation of the adult/child dyad. It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that the characters in Joyce's later fiction who do not sit comfortably within Irish Catholic coordinates also align well with this description. In Joyce's later fiction, therefore, it is possible to argue that attachment and detachment function as counterpoints in Joyce's portrayal of the adult/child dyad in his rendition of Dublin.

Importantly, however, both non-affective and affective views of children are the result of adult, and not children's concerns in *Ulysses*, and neither view fully dominates children's lives. Moreover, it is argued that both of these views are undermined by children themselves in *Ulysses*. Therefore, it is more useful to see children's lives in *Ulysses* as being historicized. Subsequently, the concept of "interpretive reproduction," as theorised and pictorially represented by Corsaro in Figure 1 of this chapter, is useful for understanding Joyce's portrayal of children in *Ulysses*. Correspondingly, if direct parallels are made between contemporary childhood theories and *Ulysses*, it is of interest that the historicizing of children's lives actually undermines the view of children being unique sentient beings symbiotically engaging in a world of reflexive adults. Subsequently, the dialectical discussion between text and context in the article summaries presented hereafter, also invite a dialectical discussion between text and critical theory in future studies.

# 5. Article Summaries and Synthesis

## The Portrayal of Children and Childhoods in Joyce's Fiction

Apart from an interest in the collapse in distinction between adulthood and childhood in *Finnegans Wake*, the topic of childhood in Joyce's fiction has not captured the imagination of Joyce scholars despite the considerable research output in recent decades. For the greater part, children are often considered to be treated indifferently by Joyce, and childhood is often deemed as unchanging within the major themes. However, if the previous research presented in this thesis is treated as a scholarly discourse, then there is reason to argue that there already exists acknowledgement of a discrepancy between earlier and later portrayals of children and childhood in Joyce's fiction. Previous research indicates that the portrayal of childhood in Joyce's early literature is distorted by the rancour and shame of older narrators, while later portrayals function as foils that expose hidden adult motivations.

However, each article in this study provides evidence that portrayals of children and childhood are uniquely defined in Joyce's works of fiction. Just as importantly, when the articles in this study are presented together as a body of scholarly work, the distinctive portrayals of children and childhood interlock into a cohesive pattern of change *within* the constancy of major themes in Joyce's fiction. Accordingly, while on the one hand Declan Kiberd states that Joyce is "one of the great recorders of Irish childhood and what it was like" (Kiberd "Hundred" 30:30-31), he also argues that Joyce's "whole enterprise is to subvert [wanting] not only to enter his reader's consciousness, but to *alter* it" (Kiberd "Inventing" 348; emphasis in original). Keeping Kiberd's argument in mind, the tendency to treat children in Joyce's fiction as incidentals within a grander plot, from the evidence presented in this chapter, does not hold up to scrutiny.

## James Joyce's "The Sisters": Implied Pederasty and Interpreting the Inexpressible

Joyce's first example of published prose, *Dubliners*, comprises a collection of fifteen short stories written between 1904 and 1907 (Gabler xxii). As a whole, the collection is organised chronologically, beginning with childhood, proceeding towards old age, and eventually with stories about public life. Even though it was Joyce's brother Stanislaus, and not Joyce, who decided on the final sequencing of the stories; all three stories about childhood treat the child's initiation into the world of adult sexuality as traumatic encounters into the unknown.

In general, all three stories are narrated retrospectively, and all three protagonists feel attraction when the mysterious world of adult sexuality opens up for them. Likewise, all three protagonists experience rancour and grief when they come to understand that they have become co–authors in their own corruption. In *Dubliners*, therefore, sexuality marks the boundary between adults and children, but in the first of the stories, "The Sisters," – the sexual boundary between adults and children is most complex – the sense of corruption greatest – and the feelings of anger and remorse more malignant and disturbing than in proceeding stories. For these reasons, the boy's story in "The Sisters" is treated as representative for the portrayal of childhood elsewhere in *Dubliners.*

Correspondingly, "The Sisters" has received extensive, often conflicting commentary about the sexual nature of the relationship between the boy and Father Flynn. More specifically, disparate sexual identities such as perversity, sublimated homosexuality, and paedophilia have been common themes in previous commentary. On one level, this is unsurprising, as the three terms "paralysis," "gnomon," and "simony" in the opening paragraph are widely considered to be leitmotifs that inform not only "The Sisters," but *Dubliners* as a whole, and Joyce's employment of these terms gestures towards the boy being involved in an adult sexual drama. However, Ryan argues that on the one hand, this sexual drama exists within the realm of the unspeakable in Joyce's Dublin, which can be traced to the boy visiting Father Flynn's bedroom (Ryan "Sisters" 95–96). On the other hand, the boy does not fully understand the nature of the infraction, and his experience can also be considered to exist within the realm of the unsayable (Ryan "Sisters" 93). Thus, Ryan argues that the boy's story in "The Sisters" can be usefully

considered to exist at the crux of the unspeakable and the unsayable, and it is the "sense of violation, and not the infraction itself, that should form the basis of inquiry" (Ryan "Sisters" 93).

In order to ground his argument, Ryan draws on the scholarship of the sociologist Marie Keenen in her ground–breaking study of Catholic clerical sexual abuse of children in Ireland. For Keenan, explanations grounded in disparate sexual identities such as perversity, sublimated homosexuality, and paedophilia, were found to be unhelpful. Surprisingly, many of the clergy in her study did not understand the nature of the infringement until it was explained to them in therapy. Instead, Keenan abandoned what she knew of masculine sexual identities, and asked instead how it came to be that children's suffering was unacknowledged by otherwise sensitive adults. Keenan argues that it was through an alternative masculine identity that depended on the purging of sexual identity that the acts became confused (Ryan "Sisters" 94–95).

For Ryan, Keenan does not provide an alternative to past arguments. Rather, Keenan's study provides support for arguing that the sexual boundary in the story is constructed across two, antithetical, ideals of masculinity that are derived from recognisable discourses from early modern and medieval periods.[20] The former of these ideals, Irish Catholic masculinity, supports theories of the child being corrupted by Father Flynn. While the latter, Irish Catholic clerical masculinity, supports theories of the child being a corruptive influence on Father Flynn.[21] Within the context of "The Sisters," these

[20] As discussed in Chapter 3, the Christian repulsion towards human sexual potentiality in late antiquity and the medieval period is arguably displaced in the modern period by the formation of a thick sexual boundary between adults and children. Masculine sexual identity, thereafter, became associated with adulthood, and infractions were often considered to corrupt the child's sexual innocence. This contrasts with the medieval period where the child's original corrupt state is to be overcome in order to gravitate towards a unified spiritual existence. Implicit to this discourse is that, while a higher order of being is institutionally achieved through acceptance into the confraternity of the priesthood, the child's original corrupt state is a threat to Catholic clerical masculine ideals. The literature indicates that sexual infractions between Catholic clergy and children have often been institutionally interpreted in this way.

[21] The family model in "The Sisters" follows closely the Irish Catholic familial model in the nineteenth century as described by the social historian Tom Inglis. Inglis argues that the alliance between mother and priest, (or aunt in the case of "The Sisters"), drove a wedge of piety and celibacy between family members. The male child, therefore, was brought up in a "schizophrenic" family with an overly protective and emotionally cold mother, and a father who, although providing economic subsistence, was distanced from his children with moral authority handed over to the Catholic priest (Inglis 198). Thus, the male child was brought up to feel social alienation from other family members, and self–alienation through the suppression of sexual desires (Inglis 188–189).

antithetical ideals of masculinity create a double bind for the boy, leaving him with no reasonable grounds for defending his visit to Father Flynn's bedroom, and the discussion that circulates among adults in the story effectively gags him (Ryan "Sisters" 96–97). Thus, within the family, the boy is treated as a portal through which adult desires can be "unreflectingly funnelled" (Ryan "Sisters" 105). Ryan argues, therefore, that "The Sisters" is not primarily about a boy's sexual corruption by a priest, as in other circumstances this could be contested by the boy. Rather, it is a story about the way in which the sexual boundary is policed in Joyce's Dublin, and the ways in which the boy is affected by supressed, but implied, adult sexual experience.

Ryan argues that even though there are reasons to argue that Father Flynn followed a straight path of development towards Catholic clerical masculine identity from an early age (Ryan "Sisters" 96–97), a failure to develop Catholic clerical masculine identity successfully in adulthood heightens Father Flynn's affinity with childhood, creating an indeterminate adult sexual boundary that the boy must negotiate:

> [Childhood] is compartmentalized into two distinct parts. One part becomes a place for adult refuge in order to displace the guilt, shame, and culpability associated with failed adult masculine experience. The other part renders invisible the aspects of childhood that are considered to have contributed to the failed emergence of adult masculine identity. Consequently, […] the site of relief and corruption is directed at childhood rather than adulthood. Thus, Father Flynn would have been able to meander without reflection across the adult-child boundary by considering the boy as both a protégé and a confidant. In effect, the boy would have experienced the boundary as indeterminate, as he is simultaneously expected to be a curious and innocent child in order to support an adult myth of redemption in childhood, and a corrupt surrogate in order to support a man whose masculinity has failed to emerge successfully. The culminated effect is that the boy would have to constantly oscillate between two identities

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The family, therefore, was a site where alternative versions of masculinity locked horns through the portal of the child. In like manner, when the boy in "The Sisters" transgresses the sexual boundary by entering Father Flynn's bedroom, the gendered impasse in the family effectively gags the boy.

> in order to support Father Flynn's emotional needs. (Ryan "Sisters" 102)

Thus, it is argued that this results in two, oscillating, narrative voices, with a younger voice expressing "benevolence and attraction," and an older voice expressing "repulsion and sadism" (Ryan "Sisters" 102–103). Furthermore, Ryan contends that, because Joyce added these qualities in a later version of the story, that Joyce wanted "the child's proximity to the sexual world of adults […] to produce significant effects on the boy" (Ryan "Sisters" 104).

Accordingly, in an effort to understand innuendos and hidden meanings, the boy projects himself into an adult sexual drama. This projection produces a sense of personal shame and alienation, but his gagging also leaves him isolated from kin and community creating a sense of social alienation. However, while these two forms of alienation are indivisibly fused, sexual potentiality is a force that repels both, effectively splitting the voices by never allowing them to merge successfully with experience. For the boy, the controversy remains unresolved, and like Father Flynn, who seeks refuge in the confessional and is found alone either laughing or crying while staring at the locked and veiled window (depending on whose version of his demise one believes), the only place that the boy can find utterance for his conflicted feelings is on the street, also staring at a locked and veiled window.

The suppression of childhood experience is a central theme in "The Sisters," and it contributes to an understanding of the overall effect of broken trust that punctures not only the boy's childhood, but all of the childhoods in *Dubliners*. In this case, childhood experience represents an unvoiced, disruptive potential under close surveillance from kin and community. But more importantly perhaps, the child's voice is also pushed beyond the realm of personal reflection through shame, and the doubling of alienation is given expression through oscillating narrative voices. Correspondingly, nowhere in *Dubliners* does a child's supressed voice contain more disruptive potential than in the stories where sexual deviancy infers the possibility of pregnancy, and it will be argued that nowhere in *Dubliners* is an illegitimate child so effectively used to disrupt the status quo than in the final short story "The Dead."

## Pregnancy and Abjection in James Joyce's "The Dead"

In *Occasions of Sin*, the historian Diarmaid Ferriter discusses several ways in which there has been a "hidden tradition" of quiet collusion in Irish society to eradicate evidence of illegitimate pregnancies and children (Ferriter "Occasions" 21). Ferriter quotes K. H. Connell to exemplify his point: "abortion and infanticide were sometimes practiced; priests, parents and public opinion all did their bit to make legitimate births of illegitimate conceptions, and Irish girls, harshly regarded at home, sometimes had their babies in England" (Ferriter "Occasions" 21). The illegitimate child, therefore, has emblemised sexual promiscuity in Ireland, and concealment took many forms of which Magdalen Asylums, or laundries, was one Catholic institutional response. However, there were also Protestant responses, and the protagonist Maria in the story "Clay" in *Dubliners* works at the "*Dublin by Lamplight* laundry" (Joyce *Dubliners* 83; emphasis in original). When Joyce's brother Stanislaus wrote and questioned what Joyce meant by the laundries name, Joyce responded:

> The meaning of Dublin by Lamplight Laundry? That is the name of the laundry at Ballsbridge, of which the story ["Clay"] treats. It is run by a society of Protestant spinsters, widows, and childless women–I expect–as a Magdalen's home. The phrase Dublin by Lamplight means that Dublin by lamplight is a wicked place full of wicked and lost women whom a kindly committee gathers together for the good work of washing my dirty shirts. I like the phrase because 'it is a gentle way of putting it'. Now I have explained. (Joyce "Selected" 130)

Joyce's irony aside, the absence of the children of "wicked and lost women" in this description of "Protestant spinsters, widows, and childless women" is telling. Moreover, the purging of children from the narratives of fallen women in Catholic asylums was arguably even harsher.

Accordingly, David Weir is, to the best of my knowledge, the first critic to speculate about the importance of Magdalen Asylums for interpreting female narratives in *Dubliners*. In "Gnomon Is an Island: Euclid and Bruno in Joyce's

Narrative Practice," published in 1991,[22] Weir ponders on the gnomic features of Gretta's narrative in "The Dead," and argues that "Gretta's trip to the convent suggests a period of confinement" rather than otherwise (Weir "Gnomic" 355). Thus, if Gretta is pregnant when she leaves for Dublin (which Weir argues can only be speculated upon even though all of the signposts in the story point in that direction), then Michael Furey's statement that "he did not want to live" (Joyce *Dubliners* 192) makes much more sense than if Gretta was only being sent away for a few months of religious training. Moreover, Weir argues that it would also help to explain why Michael Fury would have chosen to sing a heart-rendering song about an unmarried mother and an illegitimate child to begin with (Weir "Gnomic" 355). For Weir, this type of speculative analysis correlates well with the gnomic structure found throughout *Dubliners*,[23] and Weir argues that it differs little from the speculative epiphany experienced by Gabriel at the end of "The Dead."

Following this line of thinking, in "Pregnancy and Abjection in James Joyce's 'The Dead'," illegitimacy is treated as a central aspect of an untold female narrative that emerges when Gretta Conroy listens to the ballad *The Lass of Aughrim* (whose themes are illegitimacy and abandonment) at the end of the Morkans' party. When read contextually, it is argued that Gretta Conroy's stay at a convent gestures more towards a period of internment than employment (Ryan "Dead" 46). Moreover, Gretta's emotional response to the ballad, and the slow and cryptic confession that follows, gestures towards Gretta struggling to both suppress and find expression for the more painful aspects of her relationship with Michael Furey.

The ballad, through the dynamics of "melodic expression and narrated representation" (Ryan "Dead" 48), it is argued, provides the conditions for repressed memories to momentarily resurface, distorting the social conventions within the Morkans' household. However, Gretta is unable to

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[22] Weir's useful observations were unfortunately hidden by the obscurity of the article's title when I wrote "Pregnancy and Abjection in James Joyce's 'The Dead'," and his article did not influence my reading. However, Weir's observations correlate well with my own argument, and support the development of the line of interpretation in my own article. Nevertheless, looking back, I think that my article would have admittedly been helped if my writing style at that time had come closer to the more balanced style of Weir.

[23] Martha Stallman and Margot Backus have written a more recent article pointing out the importance of taking stigma into consideration in *Dubliners*, and argue, as Weir does, that speculation is important for understanding the deflections in female narratives in Joyce, especially when it comes to the vexed issues of sexual deviancy and illegitimate pregnancies (Stallman and Backus 129–146).

fully reabsorb the emotional resonance, leaving an inerasable trace, or a counter epiphany, as "the memory of the infant can neither be fully absorbed, nor fully ejected, and Gretta's emotions oscillate between these two poles 'like an inescapable boomerang'" (Ryan "Dead" 49). In psychoanalytic terms, it is argued that, for Gretta, the child suffers a symbolic death and leaves an enduring emotional trace.

Accordingly, even though Gretta successfully deflects Gabriel's probing as to whether or not she had loved Michael Furey after leaving the party (Ryan "Dead" 46), those same deflections create an ambiguity that gestures towards a far more tragic set of circumstances than interpreted by Gabriel. Subsequently, Gabriel's irritation at the unwelcome threat (Joyce *Dubliners* 191), and his conclusion that "such a feeling must be love" (Joyce *Dubliners* 194), is indicative that for Gabriel the impending crisis has been diverted. However, being unable, or unwilling, to fully grapple with Gretta's biography, Gabriel reframes Gretta's story as a romantic tragedy as he must either:

> [abandon] his values and beliefs as he understands them, or maintain them through repression and self-denial [by displacing] Gretta's emotions towards another object. It is just this mix of concealment, disclosure, and rejection that push the social conventions that underpin their relationship to their breaking point. [Thus, there] are actually two epiphanies relating to alienation in the story that, in effect, cancel each other out […] What remains then, is a split that contains a barely distinguishable trace of a child, (a form that can neither be fully extinguished, nor fully made present), in turn, symbolising a failure of relations through its very persistence. (Ryan "Dead" 49–50)

Subsequently, Ryan argues that the illegitimate child in "The Dead", even when abandoned, buried, or almost forgotten, resurfaces as a threatening presence, disturbing historical continuities. Importantly though, even though this reading is admittedly speculative, (which is considered a necessary strategy for understanding the deflections in female narratives in *Dubliners* by Weir, Stallman, and Backus), as Gabriel is himself suspicious of whether or not he has heard the full story, the ambiguity alone conjures up traces of suppressed presences that threaten to resurface in "The Dead."

The sexual boundary between adults and legitimate children in *Dubliners*, therefore, while on the one hand being policed through coercion and repression, as discussed in "The Sisters," also functions as a guillotine, and the

amputation of undesirable children from community and kin arguably triggers an emotional resonance akin to a phantom limb. Accordingly, while the portrayal of the child functions as a support for adult anxieties throughout *Dubliners*, with "The Dead" being a more mature piece written after the other stories, it seems reasonable to suggest that, by 1907, Joyce's thinking about children and childhood was already sophisticated. Given these points, it will be argued hereafter that the distortion in the portrayal of children's experiences in *Dubliners* just discussed is thoroughly explored by Joyce in "Portrait."

## "Arisen from the Grave of Boyhood"? Nostalgia and Misopaedia in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is the third and final version of a story Joyce began writing in 1904. The first version, titled *A Portrait of the Artist*, written in the form of an essay that was submitted to, and refused by, the Irish literary magazine *Dana* (Fargnoli and Gillespie 134–135), is a consolidation of philosophical analysis and fictional narrative that bears many hallmarks of a manifesto:

> His Nego […] was drawn up valiantly […] Perhaps his state would pension off old tyranny […] Already the messages of citizens were flashed along the wires of the world […] To those multitudes not as yet in the wombs of humanity but surely engenderable there, he would give the word. Man and woman, out of you comes the nation that is to come, the lightning of your masses in travail; the competitive order is employed against itself, the aristocracies are supplanted; and amid the general paralysis of an insane society, the confederate will issues in action. (Joyce "Portrait" 265–266)

Joyce's credo, therefore, at least at this stage in his writing, is to deny, rather than to challenge the status quo. Accordingly, the aim is to pass control of the word onto future, as yet, unborn, generations. Even at this early stage in Joyce's writing career, therefore, there is an aim to change perceptions; especially young people's perceptions. However, Joyce's view of children, at least as it is represented in this early essay, is of malleable and irreversibly distortable beings. Notwithstanding, this view is built upon the narrator's

belief in a lack of his own distortion, or what Nicholas Fargnoli and Michael Gillespie refer to as the "presumption of distinction in [Stephen Dedalus's] nature" (Fargnoli and Gillespie 136). Effectively, the narrator presumes that he both stands outside, and is the source, of History.

The second version of the story, *Stephen Hero*, was started almost immediately after the editors of *Dana* refused *A Portrait of the Artist*, and it can be usefully considered a transitional work between the conception and birth of the final "Portrait." By the time that Joyce abandoned this version in 1905, and eventually threw it into a fire sometime in 1911, (with the remaining portion being rescued by his sister Eileen), it is understood that Joyce had written some 914 manuscript pages, or about half of the book by his own estimation (Fargnoli and Gillespie 155). However, while the style is much more literal than the highly subjective view of the final "Portrait," and the text is considered by some as useful for filling in gaps in the final version, Joyce's treatment of characterisation is far more sympathetic than in the final "Portrait." Joyce's treatment of childhood, however, is for the greater part missing from the fragment, and while Stephen is far more integrated into the economy of the family in the part of the story that remains, the ironic clang in the title gestures towards an undermining of the earlier ahistorical position.

Correspondingly, in "'Arisen from the Grave of Boyhood'? Nostalgia and Misopaedia in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," it is argued that the characteristics given to the young child correlate well with historically recognisable models of the child that can be found in the writings of Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Augustine. For instance, in the opening short section, the fundamental characteristics given to the young child correlate well with the writings of Aristotle. However, Ryan argues that the characteristics awarded to the young child are curiously more in line with an infant in Aristotle's writing (Ryan "Nostalgia" 6). The importance being, when Stephen hides under the table from Dante and his mother at the end of the first short section; the lack of emotional complexity in response to Dante's barbed verbal attack that "the eagles will come and pull out [Stephen's already weak] eyes" ( Joyce "Nostalgia" 9), gestures towards the narrator recoiling from being historically situated in his own demise, as "the act of emotional purging distances the narrator from self–corruption by retroactively erasing any degree of intentionality" (Ryan "Nostalgia" 9). Thus, for Ryan, the child that emerges at the end of the first short section is influenced more by a fusion of the child

as it is theorised by the Catholic philosophers Aquinas and Augustine, than it is by Aristotle.

Accordingly, Ryan contends that the fusion of the Thomist child, who has yet to develop the free–will to overcome it's lowly corrupted nature, and the Augustinian child, who is born a wilful creature and needs no outside guidance to overcome it's lowly corrupt state, informs the "Portrait" as a whole (Ryan "Nostalgia" 9).[24] This results, Ryan argues, in a trajectory towards maturity that depends on a synthesis of the child being both a redemptive potential and a human deficiency. As a redemptive potential, immaturity is depicted as an ideal form, maturity as a deficit, and inculpability provides immunity from humiliation coming from within. As a human deficiency, maturity is depicted as an ideal form, and intentionality provides immunity from humiliation coming from without. For Ryan, "the synthesis of these two trajectories creates a self–negating oscillation, with Stephen recoiling from the experiences of his younger self, while simultaneously being dependent on a notion of innate autonomy" (Ryan "Nostalgia" 4). The combination of these two philosophical positions, therefore, leans on a material/spiritual nexus that has been discussed in this thesis as originating in late antiquity and the medieval period, rather than the modern period. Importantly, if treated separately, these positions function to either support or undermine the Bildung theme, which concurs with the critical dissonance that surrounds "Portrait." As an alternative approach, Ryan suggests that if these trajectories are treated as a synthesis rather than separately, then "Portrait" provides a potential for self–awareness through an understanding of the distortion of childhood memory by an older narrator. It is contended, therefore, that it is possibly more productive to approach "Portrait" through its potential, rather than through its depiction (Ryan "Nostalgia" 18).

Correspondingly, with *Dubliners* and "Portrait" being contemporaneous up to a certain point, the theme of children's experiences being distorted by

[24] As discussed earlier, the human entity in Christian philosophy in late antiquity and the medieval period was envisioned as existing in lower and higher forms. Thereupon, the material conditions of childhood were to be overcome in order to gravitate towards a unified spiritual existence in a chain of being. Thus, it is useful to envision the human entity as a nexus on a sliding scale with material and spiritual stopping points. As a nexus on a sliding scale, human potentiality is realised by the wilful repulsion of material experiences, which propels the composite human entity towards unity on the spiritual end of the scale. However, propulsion towards the spiritual end of the scale is irreducibly anchored in the human material condition. Thus, for the human soul, the body is a site of simultaneous repulsion and propulsion, which is recognisable in "Portrait" as an oscillating effect that some commentators have, for example, described as schizophrenic.

nostalgia and repression overlap in both works. However, rather than the child's voice representing a disruptive threat, as in *Dubliners*, the child in "Portrait" actually does disrupt through its mis–representation. Ryan argues, therefore, that through the careful choices made in the characteristics of the child, Joyce was in all probability far more aware of this distortion than his younger protégé Stephen (Ryan "Nostalgia" 5). It is, thus, through a greater awareness of the mechanisms of distortion in memories of childhood, at least as Joyce assembles them in "Portrait", that it can be argued that self–awareness starts to overcome alienation in Joyce's early fiction. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the portrayal of children and childhood in Joyce's fiction takes a different trajectory thereafter.

## The Emerging Affective Child in James Joyce's *Exiles*

James Joyce's only surviving play *Exiles* has been treated with mixed reactions since its earliest reception. Some commentators consider the play to be inferior to Joyce's prose and, therefore, not worthy of the erudite attention that Joyce's fiction generally attracts. Hélène Cixous, for example, describes the play as "so hermetically personal as to be almost unplayable" (Cixous 16). Others, however, consider the play to be pivotal in that it was written in the period when Joyce was finishing "Portrait" and starting *Ulysses.* In point of fact, Raymond Williams argues that "the theme of *Exiles* is very close to, indeed integral with, the themes of his major fiction" (Williams 189). Hence, it is considered by some that in *Exiles*, the less and more mature Joyce's overlap in a transformative work, and that central themes common to his major fiction are rigorously re–examined in ways that aided a reworking. This indicates that however one chooses to view the play, central themes that permeate all of Joyce's major fiction arguably take a turning point in *Exiles*. Be that as it may, whatever insights Joyce may have gained by writing *Exiles*, he was able to continue writing *Ulysses* and begin the episode now known as "Calypso," giving birth to Leopold Bloom.

However, while there is some agreement that Joyce's art moves along a parabolic trajectory in *Exiles*, and from this vantage point Joyce gained a footing to re–present the lives of Dubliners, the child in *Exiles* represents a critical conundrum. As discussed earlier, in previous research the child Archie has often been framed as a minor character who contributes little to the adult

plot, while still receiving tacit acknowledgement that he brings relief to an otherwise strained adult world. Subsequently, Archie's contribution to the drama has been largely displaced by either overlooking his contribution, or alternatively, by treating him as a self–contained character by drawing a thick line between adults and children in the play. The reason for this, according to Ryan in "The Emerging Affective Child in James Joyce's *Exiles*," is that a narrow definition of the term "patriarchy," as it relates to sexual relations between a husband and wife, has been consistently applied in critical commentary. Ryan contends that if a broader definition of the term "patriarchy" is applied, one that takes into account both sexual and generational aspects of patriarchy (Ryan "Affective" 2), then the child Archie can be shown to function as a lynchpin within an adult plot, much like it has been shown that Bertha functions as a lynchpin within a masculine plot. From this broader approach, it is argued that Bertha prepares for the impending crisis with her common–law husband by reinforcing her "weak position as wife by emphasising her role as mother" (Ryan "Affective" 5). Accordingly, within her double roles as wife and mother, Bertha takes precautionary measures and encourages Archie to show affection for Richard (Ryan "Affective" 9). This affective turn in relations between adults and the child in the play, according to Ryan, informs the dramatic high point when patriarchy, in its broader terms, eventually collapses through the free–will of both a woman and a child (Ryan "Affective" 15).

Consequently, Ryan treats the child in *Exiles* as an integral part of the adult drama, and argues that the relationship between the adults and the child in *Exiles* is more compatible with twenty–first century accounts rather than earlier perspectives (Ryan "Affective" 1). As discussed in previous chapters, in the nineteenth century adults are often considered to have viewed children through a disinterested gaze, with children being unseen, unheard, and unfelt. While in the twentieth–first century, adults are often considered to view the child as being a unique sentient entity that is seen, heard, and felt to act.[25] It is argued that the revised relationship between the child and parents in *Exiles* results from a strained set of adult relations caused by exilic experience. Accordingly, while Richard and Bertha suffer the destructive effects of displacements and separations common to exilic experience, the resulting

[25] For an extended discussion, see the section "Dancing with the Affective Child in the Twenty–First Century" in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

oscillatory effect of attraction and repulsion produces a secondary effect in the form of a more constructive form of exile. Within this more constructive form of exile, the bond of obligation between a son and father is broken, and the child is empowered in the new familial model through affective choice (Ryan "Affective" 15).

Up until this point in Joyce's fiction the child is barely seen, heard, or felt by adults in Joyce's rendition of Dublin. By comparison, the eight–year–old child Archie in *Exiles* is seen, heard, and felt to act by his parents, but interestingly, not by the other adult characters in the play. In *Exiles*, therefore, there exists a disjuncture between the way the child is viewed by adults that have been living in exile, and the way that the child is viewed by adults that have stayed in Ireland. Subsequently, while parallel sensitivities towards the child exist in *Exiles*, that Ryan suggests are worthy of further scrutiny in *Ulysses* (Ryan "Affective" 16), it is also argued that the affective child in *Exiles* is a product of adult concerns, and "the revision of familial relations invests Archie with the responsibility of compensating for a failure, rather than providing a point of connection, in adult relations" (Ryan "Affective" 2). Accordingly, in "Interpreting the Lives of Working Children in James Joyce's *Ulysses*" these concerns are explored, and it is argued that in *Ulysses* the portrayal of children and childhood in Joyce's fiction changes trajectory once again.

## Interpreting the Lives of Working Children in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

While most would agree that, in terms of plot, very little happens in *Ulysses*, the novel's technical virtuosity has captured the imagination of a vast number of critics. As a result, commentary on *Ulysses* is far more extensive than is the case with Joyce's earlier fiction, and Derek Hand writes in *A History of the Irish Novel* that, in *Ulysses*, Joyce's:

> [very] local world […] is rendered truly universal. [The] arc of reflection of Joyce's cracked mirror is very wide [and] *Ulysses's* openness to interpretation is extraordinary in that none of these readings cancels out other readings: it can be all of them simultaneously. The novel's emergence just at the moment when Ferdinand de Saussure's […] dismantling of the traditional connection between word and world inaugurated the modern

> theoretical turn in literary studies [meant that, as the field] expanded and developed […] *Ulysses* became *the* theoretical text *par excellence*. [Consequently,] linguistic theories, structuralist and post–structuralist theories […] political readings […] Marxist, feminist and post–colonial theories have enlightened the general engagement with the novel. In many ways, the history of modern critical and literary theory is bound up with the history of reading, or readings, of *Ulysses*. [It is a text wherein readers and theorists] discover themselves and find their own stories [being] reflected back at them. In *Ulysses*, they see not James Joyce but versions of themselves. (Hand 145; emphasis in original)

Hand's reflection seems, at least to me, to capture the critical reception of *Ulysses* well, with critical turns occasionally being influenced by the technical innovations developed in the novel.[26] However, despite the exhaustive theoretical treatment *Ulysses* has received, to date there exists negligible critical interest in children and childhood in the novel.[27] This is remarkable as, if *Ulysses* is considered to have universal qualities that are bound up with a "history of modern critical and literary theory," as Hand indicates, then the absence of children and childhood should be enough to trigger alarm bells. However, it is not that children do not exist in *Ulysses*, as actually, when searched for, their presence can be found throughout the novel. Rather, children are interestingly kept, and it must be added, often keep themselves, at the periphery of the story. As a result, the children of *Ulysses* have, for the larger part, remained invisible in Joyce scholarship, and it is perhaps for this reason that childhood has also remained obscured.

Accordingly, in "Interpreting the Lives of Working Children in James Joyce's *Ulysses*," Ryan argues that, when taken as objects of study in their own right, the children of *Ulysses* are no less coy than their adult counterparts. Moreover, even though existing at the periphery of the story, children's lives are portrayed as being equally complex. In order to map out the possibilities and limitations for interpretation of children's lives, Ryan contends that it is necessary to first define adult perspectives towards children in the novel, and second to take the activities of all children into consideration in order to thresh out the dissonances that exist between adult beliefs about children and childhood, and the activities of children themselves. Thus, it is argued that

[26] For example, both Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan have acknowledged their debt to Joyce.

[27] For a comprehensive account, see the *Ulysses* section in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

two formations of the adult/child dyad are organised as counterpoints in *Ulysses* (being emotional detachment and attachment).[28] In order to demonstrate how these two views function to distort the portrayal of children in *Ulysses*, Ryan describes their internal dynamics in Figure 5 below.

| **General Depiction of Childhood Characteristics** | **Leopold Bloom's Depiction of Childhood Characteristics** |
|---|---|
| Extrinsic value | Intrinsic value |
| Non-imaginative | Imaginative |
| Unemotional attachment | Emotional attachment |
| Material reciprocation | Emotional reciprocation |
| Collective | Individual |
| Invisible | Visible |
| Determined | Undetermined |
| Short Shrift | Deliberative |
| Object | Subject |
| Incompetent | Competent |
| Deviant | Innocent |
| Essential | Multiple |
| Dependent | Autonomous |
| Unsusceptible | Vulnerable |

Figure 5: Contrasting views of childhood characteristics (Ryan "Working" 4)

[28] As discussed earlier, the portrayal of children in Joyce's early fiction aligns well with notions that children were unseen, unheard, and unfelt, with the adult/child dyad being formed through emotional detachment. However, the portrayal of the child in *Exiles* aligns more accurately with twenty–first century accounts, with the child often being considered a unique sentient being symbiotically engaging in a world of reflexive adults, with the adult/child dyad being formed through emotional attachment. For an extensive discussion see Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis.

In the first of these views, referred to as a general depiction of childhood characteristics in *Ulysses*, the child is woven into a web of material reciprocation before birth, with little, if any consideration given to the child's desires or feelings thereafter (Ryan "Working" 4). This view fits Mary and Simon Dedalus exceptionally well, and it is the cause of excruciating emotional pain for their son Stephen. In the second view, which it is argued belongs to Leopold Bloom, the child is woven into a web of emotional reciprocation before birth, and very little consideration is given to material reciprocation (Ryan "Working" 4–5). Needless to say, the infant Rudy Bloom's failure to return the look of emotional reciprocation, having died just eleven days old, is a devastating blow for both Leopold and Molly Bloom. Correspondingly, as the previous research presented earlier in this thesis also demonstrates, Bloom's relationship with Milly is infused with incestuous undertones thereafter (Ryan "Working" 10). However, even though there is ample evidence to suggest that these opposed views affect both Stephen and Milly, there is little to suggest that either character is completely determined by them.

Children's lives in *Ulysses*, therefore, are not reducible to the beliefs held by adults in the novel. Ryan argues, therefore, that children's lives can be more usefully understood if separated from adult beliefs about children,[29]and by mapping out children's working activities, Ryan demonstrates the extent of children's engagement at the periphery of adult activities in *Ulysses* in Figure 6 below.

[29] For this reason, I have found Corsaro's approach of "interpretive reproduction," as described in Chapter 4 of this thesis, to be useful for interpreting children's lives in in *Ulysses*. While children are dependent on, and contributors to, Dublin's institutional life as this term is defined by Corsaro; when given the slightest opportunity, children in *Ulysses* are not completely dominated by their circumstances.

| **Children's Formal Working Activities** | **Children's Informal Working Activities** |
|---|---|
| Altar boy (pp. 11, 79, 80, 100) | Housework (pp. 164, 217) |
| Photography assistant (pp. 21, 148-9) | Running errands (pp. 68, 153, 240-2) |
| Teaboy (pp. 247-8) | Prostitution (pp. 104,290, 420, 546) |
| Messenger boy (p. 82) | Shoeblack (p. 112) |
| Navy (p. 315) | Fruit seller (p. 139) |
| Servant (p. 100) | Trader/pawning (p. 145) |
| Telegram boy (p. 114) | Pick pocket (pp. 415-6) |
| Newsboy (pp. 123-5, 137-40, 444, 476) | Political canvasser (p. 156) |
| Factory worker (pp. 140, 320) | Mourner (p. 97) |
| Shop assistant (pp. 144, 156, 219) | Child minder (p. 331) |
| Maid (p. 15) | Pottery repairer (pp. 716-7) |
| Singer (p. 607) | |

Figure 6: Children's working activities (Ryan "Working" 6)

It is argued that, in order to interpret the co–ordinates of children's lives in *Ulysses*, as children often just "flicker by like single frames in a film," consideration should be given to those children that are awarded more space (Ryan "Working 7).

Accordingly, in the episode "Wandering Rocks," the birds–eye technique flattens out the imbalance in the portrayal of adults and children that exists elsewhere in *Ulysses*, laying bare the "disingenuous veneer of adult intentions" (Ryan "Working" 12). Accordingly, while adults are viewed by children as often being necessary, children are also coy enough to understand the power

disparities and adjust their strategies accordingly. Subsequently, with adults and children often competing for the same resources, working children are portrayed as collaborating to meet their basic human needs (Ryan "Working" 11–13) – as providing encouragement to each other all too often missing elsewhere (Ryan "Working" 13–15) – as being invested in their own futures (Ryan "Working" 11–13) – as protecting their own skins when threatened with assault (Ryan "Working" 14) – and when weaknesses are spotted, children are also shown to seek retribution (Ryan "Working" 15). Moreover, children are shown to use the public space to limit the chances of reprisal when pressuring adults into contributing to their survival (Ryan "Working" 15).

However, some children in *Ulysses* do not survive long enough for their actions to be interpreted (Ryan "Working" 15–16), and Ryan argues that it is through awareness of these children that the creative aspects of working children's lives can be properly appreciated. These children, who are often emaciated and starving, are reduced to spectators and survive by looking for opportunities outside of capitalist markets. Therefore, childhoods in *Ulysses* cover a much broader span than is often appreciated, being organised along a continuum based on social class:

> On one end of the scale, there are those children that work towards producing enough for survival in the present, with little if any hope of a future. On the other end of the scale, there are those children that, despite coming from advantaged families, are forced to perform repetitive schoolwork with a keen focus on the future, but with few obvious benefits in the present. Between these two extremes, however, are children that for a variety of reasons manage to make use of the interstices of the market place to negotiate their survival. For some of these children, sacrifices must be made in the present for the possibility of a future, and for others, the opposite would be more accurate. [However] what working children have in common in *Ulysses* is a heightened awareness of vulnerability that, when the opportunities are available, translates into a sense of sympathy all but missing in their adult counterparts. (Ryan "Working" 17)

For these reasons, Ryan argues that children's lives in *Ulysses* are historicized, as there is no single way to talk about children's experiences, actions, or choices. Thus, the notion of children being a part of an abstract collective,

and childhood being a shared collective experience, is undermined in *Ulysses*. Accordingly, the depictions of children and childhood found in Joyce's earlier fiction are portrayed as being distorted through an adult gaze. However, in *Ulysses*, children live a portion of their lives beyond the distortion of an adult gaze, and the warmth, sensitivity, and humour often found in this depiction of children in *Ulysses* is simply miles apart from the portrayal of rancour and shame in *Dubliners*. Thus, while continuities in Joyce's depiction of children and childhood do admittedly exist,[30] the shift in sensibilities between *Dubliners* and *Ulysses* would indicate that, if children are to be treated as historical artefacts within a Joycean aesthetic, discussions would be more convincing if children's experiences, and the childhood's that they engage with, were treated as following a trajectory of revision, rather than remaining static. Consequently, Ryan does not find it surprising that the relationship between Bloom and Stephen remains unresolved at the end of "Ithaca," as "the adult gaze dominates despite good intentions [and] Stephen's rejection of Bloom is arguably […] an act of historical repossession that, like all of the childhoods in *Ulysses*, is best assessed on its own terms" (Ryan "Working" 17–18). Subsequently, from the arguments made in this study, the tendency to treat children in Joyce's fiction as incidentals within a grander plot would benefit from revision.

[30] Adulthood and childhood are separated by a clear sexual boundary up until *Finnegans Wake*, which is emphasised by the critical responses to Bloom's incestuous undertones discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

# 6. Conclusion

*Book II of the "Wake" […] concerns itself with the growth [of] children from early childhood to sexual maturity. [The] actual process through which children mature was not [Joyce's] main emphasis in his earlier books. Only "The Sisters," "An Encounter," and "Araby" in 'Dubliners' are about children, [and] only the first part of "A Portrait" [is devoted] to really young children and next to nothing in 'Ulysses.' [Inasmuch] as this area was almost virgin territory for Joyce, he had to educate himself in it, and hence the [difficulty] with [writing] Book II.* (Epstein 29)

*Essentially, the materials of both "Portrait" and 'Dubliners' are gleaned from the same rich reservoir of Joyce's vividly remembered experiences of childhood and youth, his observations of family and friends, and his personal reactions to Dublin society and culture. [From] the beginning, Joyce had reserved the central experiences of his own life from childhood on for his "autobiographical" novel. Numerous studies have demonstrated the fidelity of most of the autobiographical detail in 'Stephen Hero' and "A Portrait."* (Walzl "Dubliners" 168)

## Joyce's Literary Childhoods: Tracing the "Curve of an Emotion"

The dissonance in opinion towards Joyce's treatment of children and childhood in the above passages is, oddly enough, not the result of scholarly disagreement. Both of these essays appear side by side in *A Companion to Joyce Studies* (considered essential reading for students of Joyce in the 1980s and 1990s). The views of Epstein and Walzl are, actually, representative of the field at the time of writing. Indeed, given the vast proliferation of Joyce studies in the last few decades, one would expect Bloom's attitude towards children and childhood, differing to the extent that it does from that of his fellow Dubliners, to have already been exhaustively explored by Joyce

scholars. However, this thesis demonstrates that this is not the case, and it is indeed curious that the above comments are still largely representative of the field as it stands today.

It feels reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the dissonance in opinion in the above examples result from a lack of scholarship between "Portrait" and *Finnegans Wake*, and the aim of this thesis has been to provide a platform for bridging that gap. In this thesis it is argued that Joyce's treatment of children and childhood changes continually throughout his oeuvre, and that it is useful to view these changes as following a "curve" of revised sensibility. This thesis, therefore, attempts to build congruence between the assertions made by Epstein and Walzl by explaining how Joyce treats children and childhood in all of his major works of fiction up until *Finnegans Wake*. Accordingly, rather than viewing children and childhood as either a topic of minor importance, or as unchanging up until *Finnegans Wake*; this thesis expands upon, and adds complexity to previous discussions by providing evidence of an uninterrupted trajectory of change that informs major themes in Joyce's fiction.

In *Dubliners*, even though a thick line is admittedly drawn between adults and children through the concept of sexuality; it is argued in this thesis that adult sexuality still seeps into children's experiences and kindles curiosity. Sexual curiosity, however, is converted into rancour and shame when older narrators are unable to fully disassociate themselves from being participants in erotic conspiracies. Subsequently, depictions of childhood are distorted by older narrators recoiling from memories of their younger selves. Thus, sexuality functions as a boundary that simultaneously attracts and repulses, and childhood experience is kept in check through adult repression.

Likewise, sexual stigma is also a force that controls female narratives throughout *Dubliners*, and it is argued that the sexual repression that keeps children's narratives in check throughout *Dubliners* is disrupted by the memory of an illegitimate child in "The Dead." The child's presence in *Dubliners*, therefore, even when confined to the margins through narrative distortions and stigma, is a threat that contains the potential to erupt from the interstices and disrupt adult dramas.

Correspondingly, in the article in this thesis that treats "Portrait," it is argued that Joyce thoroughly explores the aspects of repression that distort memories of childhood in *Dubliners*. It is argued that the trajectory towards maturity in "Portrait" depends on a synthesis of a view of the child as both redemptive and deficient potentialities. In the former, immaturity is depicted

as an ideal form, and inculpability provides immunity from humiliation coming from within. In the latter, maturity is depicted as an ideal form, and intentionality provides immunity from humiliation coming from without. However, the synthesis of these two trajectories creates a self–negating oscillation, effectively splitting childhood experience by never allowing memory to merge with experience. Thus, even though the theme of children's experiences being distorted by nostalgia and repression overlap in both *Dubliners* and "Portrait," by unfolding the carefully layered dimensions of childhood assembled by Joyce, it can be argued that self–awareness provides a potential to overcome the sense of alienation that is consistent throughout Joyce's fiction.

Thereafter, Joyce's treatment of children and childhood changes course, and while it seems reasonable to argue that children are unseen, unheard, and unfelt by adults in Joyce's earlier literature, the child in *Exiles* is viewed by his parents as being a unique sentient entity that is seen, heard, and felt to act. It is argued that the revised relationship between the child and parents is produced by a strain on adult relations caused by exilic experience. Exilic experience, however, enables a new chain of familial relations and a more constructive form of exile. Within this more constructive form of exile the bond of obligation between a son and father is broken, and the child is empowered in the new familial model through affective choice. However, there remains a disjuncture between the way the child is viewed by adults that have been living in exile, and by adults that have stayed in Ireland in the play. It is argued that both of these perspectives are organised as counterpoints in *Ulysses*.

Accordingly, the two models of emotional detachment and attachment between adults and children discussed up until this point in Joyce's fiction are organised as opposed adult points of view in *Ulysses*. In the first of these views, the child is woven into a web of material reciprocation before birth, with little, if any consideration given for the child's desires or feelings. In the second of these views, the child is woven into a web of emotional reciprocation before birth, and little consideration is given to material reciprocation. However, even though these views clearly affect the lives of Stephen Dedalus and Milly Bloom, there is little to suggest that either character is completely determined by them. Accordingly, when de-coupled from the distortion of the adult gaze, there is no single way to talk about children's experiences, actions, or choices, in *Ulysses*. It is argued that

children's lives are as complex and varied as their adult counterparts, and the warmth and sensitivity found in the depiction of children in *Ulysses* is legions apart from the portrayal of rancour and shame in *Dubliners*. Thus, rather than viewing these changes as radical breaks with past depictions – as the conditions of children's lives remain stable up until this point in Joyce's fiction – it is possibly more useful to see these changes as following a trajectory of revised sensibility.

In order to demonstrate the range of portrayals of children and childhood employed in Joyce's fiction up until *Finnegans Wake*, a broad array of theoretical models of childhood that span from classical antiquity to contemporary critical childhood perspectives have been drawn from. When it comes to the portrayal of childhood in Joyce's fiction, therefore, the interpretative arch is very wide indeed. However, despite these differences, continuities remain. For example, up until this point in Joyce's writing, adulthood and childhood are separated by a sexual boundary, and sexual maturity is defined through biological, psychological, and sociological difference (despite the potential of this boundary being imaginatively transgressed by Bloom in his musings about Milly). Thus, despite the broad differences in portrayals of childhood in Joyce, there remains an interdependency of biological, psychological, and sociological factors, much like those discussed in the subsection on contemporary scientific disciplines in Chapter 4 of this thesis. However, according to the scholarly discourse on *Finnegans Wake* presented in the introductory section, the sexual boundary between adults and children arguably collapses in Joyce's final work of fiction. If this is the case, then rather than viewing Joyce as developing an understanding of childhood at this stage in his writing as argued by Epstein at the beginning of this chapter, it is possibly more reasonable to consider Joyce's treatment of childhood as being radically altered in Book II of *Finnegans Wake*.

As interesting as this last point may be, the concerns of this thesis have been tapered to suit the purpose of exploring how Joyce's treatment of children and childhood changes before the distinction between adults and children arguably breaks down in his final work of fiction. Notwithstanding, from the arguments made in this study there is reason to assert that Joyce's treatment of childhood is more sophisticated, theoretically elastic, and thematically important than previous research might suggest. Accordingly, as

the terms *child*, *children*, and *childhood* are treated as umbrella terms in this thesis, there are a number of subtopics that may prove productive in future studies.

## Limitations: Suggestions for Further Research

In this study the adult gaze has been explored as it relates to children. However, considering that James Joyce is a male writer, it feels equally important to explore how the male gaze functions in the portrayal of girlhood in Joyce's fiction. As discussed earlier, James Brown argues that Joyce's depiction of childhood is strongly gendered, and while male children are often depicted as internally complex, the internal worlds of young female characters are suppressed by the marginalizing "gaze of the male spectator" (Brown 80). However, as with the adult gaze, the male gaze arguably varies considerably in Joyce's writing, and keeping in mind the complexity of Joyce's treatment of children and childhood, a gendered approach to childhood may prove very productive in future studies.

Likewise, this study has drawn from the social historical account as it relates to the Catholic community in Ireland. However, the recent treatment by scholars of Protestant children and childhoods in Ireland may well open up new avenues for exploration in Joyce. It is difficult to speculate how the topic could be approached at this stage, but considering the range of aspects relating to childhood discussed in this thesis, and the creativity of Joyce scholars generally, this approach may well prove a lucrative avenue for exploration. Moreover, a number of extended studies relating to Jewish themes in Joyce's fiction exist. Accordingly, considering the differences between the depiction of general Irish Catholic, and Leopold Blooms perspectives towards children as described in this thesis, a more exhaustive exploration of the topic as it relates to Jewish constructions of childhood may be able to add contextual complexity to the arguments presented here.

Similarly, in this study I argue the importance of remaining sensitive to social class perspectives in Joyce's treatment of children and childhood in *Ulysses*. When reflecting over my work, however, I consider that I have not fully exhausted this perspective. In particular, I feel that social class perspectives could be usefully applied to explore continuities in aspects of gender, identity formations, education, and social class stratification in *Dubliners*, "Portrait," and *Ulysses*. Moreover, while I do not feel that future

discussions will necessarily undermine the results achieved in this thesis, they may well add complexity to the arguments made here.

In a similar fashion, the exponential growth of asylums in Ireland in the nineteenth century is a topic that has received extensive scholarly attention. However, the institutional treatment of children deemed abnormal in Ireland at the time of Joyce's writing is a crucial aspect of childhood studies that would benefit from further scholarship. Consequently, I consider that explorations of abnormality in *Ulysses* may provide interesting ways of thinking about childhood in Ireland that may prove useful to Irish historians.

Additionally, the vexed issue of (adult)sexuality in Joyce's rendition of children's lives is underlined in this thesis, and is clearly supported by previous research. Moreover, the approaches taken in the articles in this thesis about "The Sisters" and "Portrait" also gesture towards the development of the technique of free indirect discourse being possibly important for understanding retrospective interventions in the depiction of children's lives. Needless to say, if this approach proves fruitful, then this is an area of research with enormous potential. Furthermore, it will be interesting to see how Margot Backus and Joseph Valente treat the topic of sexuality in their forthcoming book *The Child Sex Scandal and Modern Irish Literature: Writing the Unspeakable*. Backus and Valente consider fictional depictions of children and childhood in Irish literature to be a potent, yet mostly dormant, source for understanding hitherto untapped dimensions of sexuality in Irish society and Irish history, and their study will, in all probability, prove influential.

## Rethinking Children and Childhood in Joyce: Why it Matters

In *The Complete Dublin Diary of Stanislaus Joyce*, reference is made to the actual event that inspired the scene at the end of "Counterparts" in *Dubliners* when an "infant" of six or seven years–of–age is violently attacked by his father. Unable to escape, the boy throws himself onto his knees and offers to say a Hail Mary for his father's sins. By describing this as "an act of appalling cowardice on both sides" (37-38), Stanislaus gestures towards the title of the story. However, Stanislaus also provides testimony of the degree of autonomy that even very young children were expected to have, and the degree of shame projected towards weakness that Joyce was undoubtably familiar with growing up in Dublin. Likewise, Oliver St. John Gogarty (who served as the inspiration

for Buck Mulligan in *Ulysses*) recollects that when he shared the Martello Tower in Sandycove with Joyce, "the blind, bitter antagonism towards the teachings of [Joyce's] childhood […] had already begun. He could be very solemn about it" (Gogarty 70). From these two examples there is good reason to suggest that, as a young man, Joyce's memories of childhood were painful, and that the mix of projected autonomy, pain, and shame, anchored in beliefs about children and childhood common at that time, find expression in Joyce's art. Rethinking children and childhood in Joyce's fiction, therefore, has literary value.

Also, in the introduction of this thesis it is discussed how the shift in Joyce's treatment of children and childhood can be usefully compared to a shift in perspective towards the child in the twentieth century in the Global North. It is also explained how this same shift has had a resounding impact on Irish society in recent decades, and that evidence continues to surface that gestures towards Ireland having been a childhood dystopia. For Fintan O'Toole, the scandals that have ensued threaten to shake childhood loose from its "domain of horror and scandal and deeply felt shame" (Backus and Valente "Child" xii). For the historians Diarmaid Ferriter and Tom Inglis, if combined with historical accounts, Joyce's fiction may well prove useful for understanding how it felt for children to live in the historical moment. Rethinking Joyce's treatment of children and childhood, therefore, has social value.

At the same time, a recent roundtable exchange published in *The American Historical Review*, titled "Rethinking the History of Childhood," was prompted by an article by Sarah Maza who put forward a thesis for re-invigorating historical approaches to children and childhood by writing history *through*, rather than *of* children (Maza "Kids" 1284). For Maza, this would allow historians to:

> [confront] the many ways in which […] the uncanny power of the child has pervaded adults' understandings of their own identity and destiny, offering a plethora of strategies and justifications for the building of national, social, racial, and cultural hierarchies. (Maza "Kids" 1285)

Needless to say, the scholarly response was swift and sharp, incorporating many of the polemics relating to subjectivity, agency, and the modern period discussed in this thesis. However, Maza's response to these critiques is

interesting. Maza argues that by moving the field of study out of the margins is to "[acknowledge] the power of margins to reshape a field's core […] maybe we should think of the core [not as a] mighty 'mainstream' with small tributary rivers vanishing into it, but as a crossroads" (Maza "Response" 1321–1322). As proposed by Derek Hand earlier, "In many ways, the history of modern critical and literary theory is bound up with the history of reading, or readings, of *Ulysses*" (Hand 145). To use the margins to reshape Joycean scholarship, therefore, is to engage with expanding the scope of modern critical and literary theory. Rethinking the treatment of children and childhood in Joyce's fiction, therefore, has universal human value. It is for these reasons that the discussions in this thesis, while admittedly being limited in scope, also possess value.

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