
Neurotic Anxiety of Submissive Personalities: A Psychoneurotic Analysis of Mary Dedalus in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

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Motivated by the insights of Karen Horney into submissive and compliant personalities, this study delves into the perpetual vulnerability, fear of helplessness, and isolation portrayed in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* through the lens of psychoneurosis theory. Individuals with obsessive appeasement tendencies experience excessive dependency and restlessness, reinforcing their feelings of helplessness and often resulting in manipulative attachments to powerful figures and self-defeating behaviours. Neurosis amplifies these maladaptive responses, intensifying anxiety stemming from individual, familial, social, or religious fears, thereby significantly impacting social functioning. This study aims to analyse the submissive personality of Mary Dedalus in Joyce's novel from the three distinct perspectives of need for approval, sense of unsupportedness, and fear of the church. An in-depth exploration of these aspects not only enriches our comprehension of Joyce's work but also offers valuable insights into the portrayal of neurosis and its impact on human behaviour within a competitive societal framework.

Introduction

Submissive personality disorder, characterized by an excessive and pervasive need for caretaking, results in a person's restless and submissive behaviour in addition to his or her anxiety of separation. A submissive individual is more 'vulnerable to the

feelings of helplessness and isolation that accompany basic anxiety' (Shatz 2004: 1256). Submissive people who are also recognized as compliant people 'accept their own helplessness and try to gain reassurance and protection against the basic anxieties by attempting to win the affection of others and sometimes attaching themselves to a person or a group that they perceive as powerful' (Coolidge *et al.* 2001: 1388). Karen Horney (2013) illuminates the concept of submissiveness in her exploration of neurotic trends, specifically identifying it as the 'moving toward people' tendency, which is also recognized as the compliance type within neurotic personalities. According to Horney (2013), the compliant type of neurotics move toward people, and 'appease them at any interpersonal cost like self-subordination and the dropping of any claims to individuality; they also evaluate themselves by what others think and become overly dependent on other people for love and safety' (Horney 2013: 104). The result of compliance and submissiveness to others is the restlessness and the confirmation of helplessness. Moreover, a submissive person may attach themselves to other people in order to gratify their needs and desires. In other words, submissive people willingly submit themselves to the power of others. They may become compliant, on the one hand, because of helplessness, and, on the other, because of a trick to take advantage of others to get their own goals. However, in both aims they produce their own failure in supplying their needs. A deficiency in personal empowerment and self-trust gives rise to a neurotic personality, culminating in both frustrated responses to societal and personal challenges, as well as heightened anxiety.

Anxiety, a complex emotional state encompassing restlessness, nervousness, and worry often tied to forthcoming events or uncertain outcomes, can be triggered by individual, familial, social, or religious fears and feelings of helplessness. Psychologically, it manifests as a nervous disorder marked by excessive apprehension and unease, frequently accompanied by panic attacks or compulsive behaviours. Horney's theory posits that neurosis originates from core anxieties rooted in interpersonal relationships. Submissive personalities, also referred to as compliant personalities, may experience heightened anxiety as they actively pursue dominant partners, affection, and approval. As Stefan Hofmann (2010: 19) perceives 'Humans generally require social acceptance and thus sometimes dread the disapproval of others [so,] apprehension of being judged by others may cause anxiety in social environments'. Moreover, neurotic disorders, stemming from abnormal anxiety, can notably 'impair a person's ability to function at work, school, and in social situations; [they] can also interfere with a person's relationships with family members and friends' (Zavala *et al.* 2016: 6). These disorders, whether they appear as short-term reactions or endure as lifelong conditions, consistently provoke restlessness and fear.

In this article, I delve into the character of Mary Dedalus, exploring her submissive personality in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* through Horney's psychoneurosis theory. While the realm of neurosis within Joyce's literary works has received attention from various scholars (Baumeister and Exline 1999; Agnew *et al.* 2002; Bandura 2002; Eisenberger *et al.* 2003; d'Aspremont 2009; Bukobza 2011; Moffitt *et al.* 2011; Farahmandian and Shao 2021), it is noteworthy

that the examination of female characters in the context of this particular novel has been notably scarce. My study aims to rectify this oversight and provide a novel perspective to enrich the ongoing discourse. As a mother, Mary grapples with anxieties rooted in her son's indifference, her husband's arrogance, and the influence of her religious beliefs, leading to severe anxiety and compliant submissiveness that contribute to her psychological distress and make her neurotic. Consequently, I examine Mary's 'profound need for approval', her 'sense of unsupportedness' and her 'fear of the Church', shedding light on the maternal anxiety that plagues her.

Karen Horney's (2013) psychoneurosis theory is particularly suitable for studying Mary Dedalus's character. Horney's emphasis on the development of neurotic behaviour stemming from core anxieties and unresolved conflicts in interpersonal relationships aligns perfectly with Mary's submissive personality traits and underlying anxieties. Her constant need for approval reflects a deep-seated insecurity and fear of rejection, while her sense of unsupportedness due to her husband's arrogance contributes to her feelings of helplessness and reinforces her submissive tendencies. Furthermore, Horney's theory acknowledges the role of societal and cultural influences in shaping neurotic behaviours, as seen in Mary's fear of the Church and the conflict between her religious beliefs and personal identity. By applying Horney's theoretical framework, this study aims to unravel the intricate layers of Mary's character, providing new insights into the complex interplay between her interpersonal dynamics, internal conflicts, and neurotic responses within the novel's context.

Mary's Need for Approval

Approval, in essence, signifies the acceptance or validation of something or someone. The human need for approval stems from a deep-seated sense of emotional vulnerability and the perception of indifference from others in social settings. This need often engenders a form of dependency, driven by a lack of self-assurance in individuals who seek external validation: 'The dependence on others is aggravated by a compulsive need for approval and affection, combined as it usually is with attitudes of compliance, appeasement, and avoidance of fight' (Horney 2013: 29). Individuals who seek approval harbour an intense desire to be liked, conform to others' expectations, and fulfil the wishes of those around them. They are acutely sensitive to criticism and rejection and fear encountering hostility or anger from others. According to Horney (2013), individuals with a neurotic longing for acceptance and affirmation from others are often described as 'needy', as they continually seek love and approval. Furthermore, to secure the approval of others, a neurotic individual must adopt a submissive and obedient demeanour, catering to the preferences and desires of those they seek approval from. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Mary's pursuit of approval is depicted as unsuccessful in various ways, including her failed quest for love, a deficiency in filial affection, and a yearning for a dominant partner.

The absence of genuine love within a marital relationship, as the primary catalyst, can significantly heighten the craving for approval. Love, characterized by profound

affection and a deep personal connection, encompasses a spectrum of intricate mental and emotional states, often experienced with great intensity and depth: ‘Love can also be a virtue representing human kindness, compassion, and affection – the unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another; it may also describe compassionate and affectionate actions towards other humans, one’s self or animals’ (Fromm 2006: 80). Additionally, the concept of love among human beings is commonly referred to as interpersonal love, inherently tied to interpersonal relationships. Such affectionate connections can materialize within couples, among friends, and among family members. Individuals who find themselves lacking love within their relationships often seek solace in others to fulfil their need for love and affection. However, this inclination towards seeking external approval can breed a neurotic restlessness born from their submissive tendencies. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Mary, who ‘was a nice mother’ (Joyce 1916: 4) for Stephen and good wife for Simon, exhibits a compliant and submissive personality, partially driven by her profound yearning for genuine spousal love as a form of approval within their relationship. The love dynamic between Mary and her husband appears starkly imbalanced. Mary exudes unwavering love for her husband, Simon; however, he fails to reciprocate this affection in both public and private spheres. She shoulders the burdens caused by Simon’s recklessness, fulfilling her duties as a devoted wife and tirelessly working to restore harmony in her fractured and estranged family, driven by her overwhelming desire for external approval. Her husband’s emotional indifference towards Mary and other family members – as evidenced by comments such as asking Stephen, ‘is your lazy bitch of a brother gone out yet?’ (Joyce 1916: 203) – takes precedence in his relationships, even within the public domain, such as Christmas dinner, where he displays aggression and disrespect towards his wife, rudely dismissing her opinions. Mary, acutely aware of her husband’s lack of admiration and love, remains trapped in her submissive role, driven by the anxiety of insecurity. This imbalanced exchange of affection within an interpersonal relationship can cultivate a submissive-dominant dynamic, ultimately giving rise to restlessness and insecurity. Joyce artfully illustrates this lopsided dynamic between Mary and her husband, a relationship that significantly shapes the child’s future perception of love in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

The lack of genuine parental affection from the child, coupled with the parent’s persistent efforts to seek that affection, serves as the second catalyst fuelling the parent’s neurotic craving for approval. Affection, defined as a gentle feeling of caring or liking for something or someone, forms the backdrop of this dynamic: ‘More specifically, the word has been restricted to emotional states, the object of which is a living thing such as a human or animal’ (Fernandez 2013: 101). Even without economic or legal imperatives, ‘the persistence of parent care activities has often led researchers and policy makers to focus on affection as the primary motivation for these filial responsibility practices’ (Jarrett 1985: 7). The absence of affection on either side can give rise to a submissive-detached dynamic within the parent–child relationship. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, this deficiency in filial affection and parental responsibilities is evident at various junctures throughout the

novel. Early on, Stephen rejects feminine affection, as he finds solace in the embrace of masculinity. However, as the narrative progresses, Stephen matures and ultimately spurns any form of affection from either of his parents. Conversely, Mary desperately craves his affection to maintain family unity and uphold her religious convictions, but Stephen remains emotionally distant. Despite her nurturing ways, such as when Stephen, described as ‘a university student [who] is so dirty that his mother has to wash him’ (Joyce 1916: 203) and deep concern for Stephen’s future from his earliest years, Mary’s compliant approach fails to secure her son’s affection. Faced with Stephen’s plans to study and live in a foreign country, she attempts to acquiesce to his wishes in a bid to keep him at home, yet her efforts prove futile, leaving her feeling restless and disheartened. Besides, according to Henry Arthur, Joyce illustrates an inverted Oedipus complex in the early pages, elucidating the complex interpersonal relationship between Mary and Stephen. In his childhood, Stephen, unlike the typical behaviour associated with men, ‘hates and fears his mother, while loving and desiring his father’ (Arthur 1975: 3). This aversion endures into Stephen’s adulthood, manifesting in his rejection of Mary’s religious beliefs. Mary’s ongoing submissiveness exacerbates Stephen’s growing indifference and detachment. Joyce suggests that an intense need for affection can evolve into a neurotic disorder, disrupting the equilibrium of approval within an interpersonal relationship. The son’s negligence in fulfilling the mother’s need for affection engenders a neurotic restlessness in her, yet her inner insecurity compels her to repeatedly seek out her son. In general, the pursuit of others’ affection can lead individuals to adopt submissive behaviours and accept compliance in their relationships. Specifically, demonstrating filial affection toward a parent can foster nurturing and warm familial bonds. Conversely, a child’s disregard for their responsibilities toward their parents may instigate a sense of restlessness within the parents themselves.

The third underlying factor driving the need for approval from others is the desire for a powerful partner. Submissive individuals often harbour a profound longing for a dominant and influential figure in their lives, such as a spouse or friend, capable of assuming leadership, providing guidance, and offering protection. Moreover, they can ‘manipulate other people, particularly their partners, to achieve their goals; they often behave in ways others find attractive or endearing’ (Schultz and Schultz 2016: 143). Submissive people, according to Horney (2013), are concerned with living up to others’ expectations and ideals, and they behave in the ways that others see as generous and unselfish. These people usually place an overstated significance on their partner and believe that having a powerful partner can solve all their troubles. Steven Gangestad (2004) claims that women, in general, need a powerful and dominant partner ‘because such men have superior genes. Evidence has shown that women prefer more dominant men when they themselves are at the most fertile point of their menstrual cycle, whereas most men do not similarly seek out dominant women’ (Gangestad 2004: 204). However, what makes those people neurotic is their failure in attaining a powerful partner for protection. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Mary clearly experiences the absence of a supportive partner who can validate

her choices, guide her actions, and offer assistance during challenging times. She ‘feels martyred by frequent pregnancy’ (Zimbaro 2007: 9) because she has given birth to ten children. So, Mary finds herself profoundly ill-equipped to bear the weight of familial and personal burdens, yearning for a robust partner to shield her from the throes of anxieties and insecurities. Regrettably, her quest for support from a dominant figure remains unfulfilled, as her husband proves to be indecisive, burdensome, and unreliable in life. Moreover, Mary faces the challenge of her eldest son, Stephen, maintaining emotional distance; this is highlighted when Stephen’s friend Cranly questions him about loving his mother, to which Stephen responds ambiguously, saying, ‘I do not know what your words mean’ (Joyce 1916: 283). Adding to her predicament, Mary lacks a close and resolute friend who could assume the role of a potent ally. Therefore, her persistent longing for a dominant companion, coupled with her intrinsic fragility, drives her to conform neurotically to societal expectations, seeking refuge from the dangers of anxiety and social disharmony. Joyce underscores Mary’s disheartenment and restlessness, underscoring her fervent need for a dominant, stalwart protector to secure her well-being.

Hence, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* highlights the mother’s inability to attain genuine love, filial affection, and the vital need for a strong partner. These unmet needs ultimately engender a profound restlessness in the pursuit of approval from others. Consequently, Joyce posits that the overwhelming desire for external validation can push a submissive individual towards developing neurotic tendencies as a defence mechanism against anxiety.

Mary’s Sense of Unsupportedness

Unsupportedness denotes the absence of emotional support or encouragement. Throughout history, particularly before the twentieth century, when women’s voices began to gain prominence in several developed countries, they were often perceived as the more vulnerable gender and were granted limited rights, including access to legal careers and educational opportunities. Traditionally, a woman’s role as a mother and wife was deemed her primary and often sole significant occupation. In the nineteenth century, under British common law,

an unmarried woman could own property, make a contract, or sue and be sued, but a married woman, defined as being one with her husband, gave up her name and virtually all her property, inherited or otherwise, and came under her husband’s control. (Brinjikji 1999: 201)

Moreover, women have been usually seen as the others, ‘awesome and strange creatures not subject to the same social, biological or psychological law as men’ (quoted in Campling and Ussher 2016: 15). The sense of insignificance and triviality can lead to women experiencing neurotic needs for support and protection. The portrait of women and that of the Irish nation are quite interlinked in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The analysis of women in the novel discloses them ‘to be

sympathetic portrayals of the situation of Irish women at the turn of the twentieth century' (Gordon 2008: 7). Joyce's portrayal of the insignificance of women in the novel is evident through the marginalization of their roles, and the depiction of female characters such as Mary as weak and neurotic. This portrayal highlights societal attitudes towards women during that time period, emphasizing themes of feminine insecurity, loneliness, and poverty that contribute to their perceived insignificance in the narrative, all of which will be studied further below.

The feeling of unsupportedness can initially trigger feminine insecurity. Insecurity, in this context, refers to a prevailing sense of uncertainty, self-doubt, and a lack of self-assurance and confidence. Roya Monajem believes that,

the biological basis for women's insecurity is their relative physical weakness; this together with their major biological role as the gender responsible for the survival of the species used to make them totally incapable of effective self-defense in the face of the stronger sex. (Monajem 1991: 341)

Feminine insecurity may force women to be always in need of a man, such as a husband, father or son for defence and protection. Therefore, feminine insecurity, in its nature, may pave the way to a relatively submissiveness in women and girls, which can result in neurotic behaviours. Christopher Heffner, following Horney (2013) in his feminine psychological studies, finds that, submissive people, especially women, 'are unhappy and desperately seek out relationships in order to feel good about themselves [...] their way of securing these relationships includes projections of their own insecurity and neediness which eventually drives others away' (Heffner 2017: 160). Mary suffers from social and interpersonal insecurities. Her marginalized and insignificant influence within the family underscores the dominance of the male members, exemplified when she attempts to quell the Christmas dinner dispute by urging people to stop, yet her pleas go unheard: 'I appeal to you, said Mrs Dedalus, to let the matter drop now' (Joyce 1916: 31). Mary's husband, Simon, in his aggressive personality, tries to prove his power by degrading Mary and other female members, including Aunt Dante: 'While Joyce's male characters tend to demean women, their epiphanies revolve around the female image; in order to be an artist, Joyce and his male characters need to experience self-fulfillment by rejecting the mothering images' (Kelley 2010: 3). Paradoxically, their artistic escapes draw inspiration from women who embody the very controlling traits that men need to reject. Furthermore, Mary finds contentment in the prevailing masculine dominance within her family and society, as it provides her with access to essential necessities. In essence, she perceives herself as having no alternative but to accept her submissive role in relation to the men in her family. However, her feminine insecurity does not shield her from a life fraught with anxiety. Notably, feelings of insecurity can render women passive in their social and interpersonal interactions. Joyce sheds light on the societal status of women in late twentieth-century Irish society, underscoring their marginalization. Accordingly, it becomes evident that in such a patriarchal society, women may find a degree of contentment in their submissiveness, as it potentially garners them the attention of men, leading to additional favours and benefits.

Likewise, loneliness emerges as an adverse emotion stemming from the sense of unsupportedness. Loneliness, in essence, represents a multifaceted and typically unpleasant emotional response to isolation, often characterized by an uneasy restlessness resulting from a perceived absence of communication or connection with others: 'Loneliness has also been described as social pain – a psychological mechanism meant to motivate an individual to seek social connections' (Cacioppo and Patrick 2008: 81). There is an obvious difference between being socially isolated and feeling lonely. In particular, as noted by Peplau and Perlman (1984: 16) 'one way of thinking about loneliness is as a discrepancy between one's necessary and achieved levels of social interaction, while solitude is simply the lack of contact with people'. Horney (2013) explains that childhood experiences, which significantly contribute to feelings of loneliness, are central to her concept of basic anxiety. She emphasizes that children naturally encounter vulnerability, helplessness, and anxiety, which, if not met with appropriate guidance to navigate social challenges, can persist into adulthood as fundamental anxieties from their early years. According to Horney's theory of neurotic trends, one of the ways to cope with loneliness is to become submissive and move toward other people neurotically. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Mary is afraid of feeling unsupported as a result of being left alone. Therefore, she moves toward other people, particularly the male ones, to overcome her anxiety. Mary becomes compliant with male dominance in order to escape her probable loneliness. She is a symbol of

the womanhood of her country who has existed in darkness, secrecy and loneliness, not necessarily her chosen living conditions but rather the conditions that have been imposed upon her, a condition from which she is waking, symbolizing a new beginning, or a rebirth. (Gordon 2008: 13)

Mary's innate feminine need for protection and her fear of loneliness drive her toward a neurotic reliance on others. Her relentless efforts to dissuade her son, Stephen, from leaving the country stem from her profound dread of being abandoned. Despite her attempts to maintain family cohesion, she is ultimately thwarted by her husband's aggression and her son's indifference. Joyce highlights how loneliness can lead to submission in the presence of powerful and dominant individuals. This sense of loneliness pervades Joyce's female characters, as they seek companions with whom to share their emotions and thoughts. Consequently, as a means to evade the spectre of solitude, Joyce portrays women who grapple with conforming to the desires and wishes of others.

Poverty, as the ultimate outcome, can indeed kindle feelings of unsupportedness in a woman. As per the World Bank Organization, poverty encompasses more than just financial limitations. It includes being unable to partake in enjoyable events, resulting in, for example, having to prevent children from joining school trips or attending birthday parties, as well as being unable to afford essential medications during illness. Individuals from lower socioeconomic groups hold a serious risk of harsh neurotic problems because living in destitution can subject them to a higher level of social anxiety: 'Poverty causes stress and negative affective states which in

turn may lead to short-sighted and risk-averse decision-making, possibly by limiting attention and favoring habitual behaviors at the expense of goal-directed ones' (Haushofer and Fehr 2014: 862). In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce (1916) reveals poverty as a serious means of unsupportedness and social insecurity in his female characters. Women and girls, as the weak and marginal gender in the novel, have to be submissive to the stronger male gender in order to avoid the anxiety of poverty. Mary, who 'must have gone through a good deal of suffering' (Joyce 1916: 285), feels anxious about the possible poverty of her life and family members. She moves toward others to find a financial protection because she can sense that the family's financial future will be exacerbated compared with the present. Simon, who used to be a

medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a taxgatherer, a bankrupt and at present a praiser of his own past (Joyce 1916: 284)

is irresponsible towards his family. He experiences financial hardship compared with his past situation; however, he still insists on spending his money at pubs and with his friends rather than on his family. In contrast, Mary experiences the problems of poverty and its effect on her children. However, she discovers that conceding to and becoming submissive to her husband's aggression may lead to financial protection. This is because a woman in early twentieth-century Irish society could not protect herself financially without the support of a man.

Joyce paints a picture of a woman grappling with anxiety over her husband's dire financial predicament. Unable to confront the harsh reality of her husband's situation, she experiences restlessness as she submits to his authority, compounded by his inability to provide for her. Joyce adheres to conventional gender roles dictating that women should stay at home, avoid entering the workforce, and take on a submissive role, while men are tasked with making decisions and bearing financial responsibility for the family. Nevertheless, the submissiveness expected of women can evolve into neurotic responses if the man is unable to support the family financially.

In brief, the feeling of unsupportedness can manifest itself as a result of insecurities, loneliness, and poverty. Within this novel, an unsupported individual may resort to submissiveness as a means of escaping their perceived failures. Furthermore, a neurotic submissive person may find themselves resigned to accepting failure as an inevitable destiny. Joyce illustrates that feminine insecurities, coupled with feelings of loneliness and financial hardships, compel his female characters to embrace compliance with the power and aggression of males.

Mary's Fear of the Church

During the early twentieth century in Ireland, the Catholic Church held considerable sway and authority, a position it had strengthened through its expansion across

religious, social, and political domains throughout the nineteenth century: 'There is no doubt that traditional assumptions about the role of women in twentieth-century Irish society mirrored the teaching of the Catholic Church' (Beaumont 1997: 564). Pope Leo XIII clearly outlines the typical duty of a woman when he writes in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (2016 [1891]: 38) that a 'woman is by her nature fitted for home work and it is this which is best adapted to preserve her modesty and promote the good upbringing of children and the well being of the family'. However, it becomes understandable that the idea that 'Irish women were "brain-washed" into submission by Catholicism does a great disservice to the women of Ireland' (Rose 1976: 11). Moreover, people who are submissive to religion fear being seen as imperfect and flawed if they lose their faith. They find religion, unlike people, to be a strong protector of their current and future lives. Joyce demonstrates religion as a major theme in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Women in the novel are often portrayed as more religious than men. This is because they experience, on one hand, anxiety about feeling unprotected without religion and, on the other, the desire for a strong partner. As a strong religious mother, Mary moves toward religion, as she sees it as a dominant force that protects her son and ensures stability in her own life.

First, the fear instilled by the Church, and religion in general, can significantly increase their influence over an individual. In Ireland, the Church holds a significant sway over public sentiment. The Catholic Church has assumed a formidable role in politics, particularly during the 1860s when it achieved success in negotiations with the British government for nationalist causes, solidifying its standing as a powerful political player. Furthermore, Catholicism is successfully

conjoined with Irish nationalism by its identity as a persecuted Church, by the faithfulness of its followers, by the ability of the Church to organize and meet social circumstances, and by the need for nationalism to have some widely accepted source of identity in society. (White 2007: 46)

From a sociological viewpoint on religion and power, when a person or institution exerts authority over others, those individuals often seem willingly submissive. This submission can stem from the belief that religion provides protection against hostilities. However, the submissiveness of individuals toward religion may leave them restless and anxious because they are unable to show any strength against it: 'Anxiety and depression are related to subordination and submissiveness, as well as a desire to avoid subordination' (Johnson *et al.* 2012: 692). Joyce reveals Mary's deeply religious and apolitical ideas through her faithfulness to the Church. She eagerly becomes submissive to the religion because of its huge and fearful power both in society and in people's hearts. Mary is a very pious mother who compliantly admits religion's dominant power. She gives religion priority over other things and people. Joyce unveils Mary as an Irish individual who believes that national consensus and union can be reached if the Church has priority in society. During a discussion regarding the Church and government, at the conclusion of the Christmas dinner scene, she sides with Dante, prioritizing 'God and morality and religion' (Joyce 1916: 40) over the Irish 'fight for autonomy and independence' (Ćurko 2010: 105).

Furthermore, Mary's lack of conviction in asserting her religious beliefs about the Church renders her susceptible to internalizing her faith. Her insecurity in expressing her beliefs fuels her anxiety. In response to her husband's aggression and her son's indifference, Mary turns to religion and the Church as a potential source of protection. Joyce underscores that the Church's power holds a strong allure for many women who feel unsupported and grapple with anxiety stemming from the need for a powerful advocate. Consequently, seeking solace in the Church becomes a deliberate response to the absence of a robust partner or supporter, among women and girls in society.

Moreover, a demanding mother may always push her children to pursue her own religious habits, because of the fear of religion. A demanding mother is one who represents her children with an intense dilemma, 'Either develop complex and constricting coping mechanisms to maintain a relationship with me, at great cost to your own outlook, imagination, and values, or suffer ridicule, disapproval, or rejection' (Apter 2012: 8). Likewise, a neurotic mother may ask her children to trail her motherly wishes. She can force them to follow her beliefs about religion because she believes that what is good for her, should be good for her children, too. A strictly submissive mother to a specific religion shows anxiety for her children's future if they cannot deal with whatever she follows. A mother's trust in her children originates from her love for them. However, the rejection by children to follow their mother's wishes may result in the mother's frustration and neurotic need for approval and support. In *A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man*, Mary is resolute in her efforts to sway Stephen's stance regarding the Catholic Church, a faith to which she adheres fervently. In her view, Mary believes that Stephen's ultimate contentment can only be realized within the Church's embrace, and that his salvation hinges upon donning the robes of the priesthood. However, when Stephen ultimately reaffirms his decision not to pursue the priesthood, he shatters all the idealized hopes cherished by Mary, leaving her heartbroken. She frets that Stephen will not find happiness living abroad, far removed from the Catholic faith, family and friends. Nevertheless, unable to alter Stephen's course, Mary's heartache deepens as he eventually departs Ireland for good. As a consequence of Mary's unreasonable guidance, Stephen, 'will reject not only the religion he was born to and raised and educated in, but he will discard the very idea that his Irish race is to be defined on the basis of its belonging to the Roman Catholic Church (Ćurko 2010: 101). Mary entreats Stephen 'to make [his] easter duty' (Joyce 1916: 281) and to attend confession, as she fears the anguish of witnessing sacrilegious acts. Despite her pleas, Stephen adamantly refuses to go, embodying a sense of defiance and marking the initial step in causing his mother's heartbreak. As a result of Stephen's rejection, Mary experiences a neurotic self-perception of weakness and yearns for someone's approval. Joyce suggests that a determined mother may cling to specific religious beliefs for the sake of her children, but if her entreaties are repeatedly rebuffed, it can lead to a sense of unsupportedness and anxiety. Furthermore, it becomes evident that unwavering insistence on a religious belief that continually meets resistance is rooted in a craving for approval and a need for support.

Powerless dependency on the Church is yet another consequence of the fear instilled by the Church and religion in general. The neurotic dependence of a religious individual on others tends to be more profound than that of those who are not religious. In this regard, Graff and Ladd (1971: 503) believe that 'religious people are more affected by social influence, and are more dependent on others, less inner-directed and less self-accepting'. They find that religious people are more submissive and dependent. Religious people show submissiveness and inferiority feelings on several personality tests or self-ratings. One of the reasons that religious people are more submissive is that the church teaches humility, obedience and respect for authority. Another contributing factor could be that individuals with a temperament prone to being easily influenced are more inclined to accept religious thoughts; 'Primary suggestibility is linked with hysteria, and has a definite genetic basis; probably the personality comes first, and reacts to certain religious influences, like revivals, in a characteristic way' (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi 2013: 98–99). Social suggestibility is possibly more a product of social learning, and could be partially learnt from the church. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce vividly illustrates that female characters display a more conspicuous dependency on the Church and on other individuals compared with their male counterparts. Mary exemplifies an extreme reliance on both the Church and the male members of her family, a dependency stemming from her perceived weakness in relation to them. She regards the Church as an indispensable tool for her present and future life, leading her to adopt a highly submissive stance towards it. However, this sense of submission to the Church accentuates Mary's feelings of inferiority, inhibiting her ability to challenge or oppose others, as it contradicts the teachings she has absorbed from the Church. Additionally, she cannot easily part ways with the Church and its doctrines as they represent the sole avenue through which she can safeguard her moral life. Consequently, the Church becomes her sole source of hope following her husband's irresponsibility and her son's departure from home. While she seeks solace in others to alleviate her anxieties, she remains an unswervingly faithful mother whose unwavering belief in the Church sustains her throughout the tumultuous trajectory of her family. Therefore, a primary reason compelling Mary to gravitate restlessly towards religion lies in others' rejection of her neurotic needs and desires.

Religion can indeed foster a greater sense of submission and compliance in individuals. The response to the Church in twentieth-century Ireland stands as one of the central themes in Joyce's novel. He adeptly showcases how the Church assumes a pivotal role in shaping the submissive personalities of women in a society where men wield dominance, often under the aegis of the Church's protection. Furthermore, the novel underscores that the Church not only fails to improve the social and familial standing of women but also drives them to neuroses as they grapple with unmet needs and desires. Throughout the narrative, it becomes evident that maternal anxiety transmutes into neurosis when it centres on an acute need for approval, a pervasive sense of unsupportedness, and fear of social institutions. Consequently, the inability

to attain these needs personally compels individuals to seek solace in others and adopt a submissive demeanour in their pursuit of fulfilment through external sources.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mary's character in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* serves as a poignant illustration of the complex interplay between female psychology, societal norms, and religious influences. Her portrayal highlights the profound impact of the Church and religion on women's lives in early twentieth-century Ireland, where they often grappled with feelings of unsupportedness, insecurity, and anxiety. Mary's relentless pursuit of approval, her longing for a powerful protector, and her fear of loneliness all culminate in a neurotic submissiveness, which is ultimately shaped by the Church's teachings and the dominant male figures in her life. Her unwavering devotion to the Church, stemming from her belief that it represents her only hope amid familial and societal challenges, reinforces her submissive stance. Joyce's exploration of Mary's character underscores the intricate relationship between religion, gender roles, and psychological well-being. It serves as a compelling reflection on how the Church's influence and societal expectations could impact the mental and emotional landscape of women in the early twentieth century, illuminating the multifaceted nature of their struggles and aspirations.

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