

"What's Worth Risking Eternal Damnation for": Modernism,
Language and the Social Impact of Art in the Works of James
Joyce, Hozier, and Lil Nas X



Miss Saranpat Chiangprom

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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"สิ่งใดคุ้มเสี่ยงสาปส่งลงอเวจี": แนวคิดโมเดิร์นนิสม์ ภาษา และผลกระทบทางสังคมของศิลปะ
ในงานของเจมส์ จอยซ์ โสซีเออร์ และลิลนาสเอ็กซ์



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By Miss Saranpat Chiangprom
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INDEPENDENT STUDY COMMITTEE

..... Chairman
(Associate Professor DARIN PRADITTATSANEE,
Ph.D.)
..... Advisor
(Associate Professor VERITA SRIRATANA, Ph.D.)
..... Examiner
(KATARZYNA ANNA ANCUTA, Ph.D.)



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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ศรันย์ภัทร์ เชียงพรหม : "สิ่งใดคุ้มเสี่ยงสาปส่งลงอเวจี": แนวคิดโมเดิร์นนิสม์ ภาษา และผลกระทบทางสังคม
ของศิลปะในงานของเจมส์ จอยซ์ โฮซีเออร์ และลิลนาสเอ็กซ์. ("What's Worth Risking Eternal
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รัตนา

ผลงานสารนิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการนำเสนอเรื่องเพศวิถี ในผลงานวรรณกรรมโมเดิร์นนิสม์ของ
เจมส์ จอยซ์ กับบทประพันธ์ดนตรีแนวโพสต์โมเดิร์นนิสม์ของโฮซีเออร์และลิลนาสเอ็กซ์ที่สื่อให้เห็นถึงกรวิพากษ์คริสต์
ศาสนาและความหลากหลายทางเพศวิถี โดยแสดงผ่านการตีความทางเพศและจิตวิญญาณของตัวละครหลักใน *A Portrait of
The Artist As a Young Man* หรือใน *Ulysses* ผ่านฉากการประกอบอัครกามในที่สาธารณะ ซึ่งจอยซ์นั้นได้ใช้คำ
ในภาษาอังกฤษที่มีหลายความหมาย ดอกย้ำให้ผู้อ่านทราบถึงการละทิ้งความเชื่อทางศาสนาและเพศวิถีของปัจเจกบุคคล ใน
ศตวรรษต่อมา เพลงโซลชื่อ "Take Me to Church" ของแอนดรูว์ จอห์น โฮซีเออร์ บรายนหรือที่รู้จักในนาม โฮซี
เออร์ และเพลงฮิปฮอปชื่อ "Montero (Call Me by Your Name)" ของมอนเทโร ลามาร์ ฮิลล์หรือที่รู้จักใน
นาม ลิลนาสเอ็กซ์ สื่อถึงเนื้อหาที่เอื้อให้ผู้ฟังสามารถตีความไปในทางที่คล้ายคลึงกันกับงานประพันธ์ของจอยซ์ร่วมกับการใช้สื่อ
โสตทัศน์ โดยผลงานสารนิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ ได้ตีความผลงานจากศิลปินที่กล่าวมาข้างต้นว่าเป็นงานศิลปะทางวรรณกรรมและดนตรี
ที่วิพากษ์สังคม โดยไม่แบ่งศิลปะชั้นสูงชั้นต่ำตามยุคสมัย ในขณะที่ผลงานของจอยซ์โจมตีความเชื่อดั้งเดิมในคริสต์ศาสนา
ผลงานของโฮซีเออร์ และ ฮิลล์ นั้นทั้งวิพากษ์และท้าทายความเชื่อทางคริสต์ศาสนาเกี่ยวกับเพศวิถีที่ถูกกำหนดด้วยปัจจัย
ทางด้านชีวภาพ วัฒนธรรม และสังคม โดยผู้เขียนมีความเห็นว่าจิตวิญญาณและแนวคิดโมเดิร์นนิสม์นั้นมิได้สูญหายไป ทว่า
ผลงานจากแนวคิดดังกล่าวยังคงมีอิทธิพลต่อการรังสรรค์ผลงานของศิลปินในยุคถัดมา ซึ่งบทประพันธ์ดนตรีในแนวโพสต์
โมเดิร์นนิสม์ได้รับเอาแนวคิดบางส่วนของโมเดิร์นนิสม์มาต่อยอดและก้าวข้ามข้อจำกัดของยุคสมัยดังกล่าว การนำเสนอเรื่อง
เพศวิถีของจอยซ์ในช่วงต้นศตวรรษที่ 20 ยังมีการอิงทฤษฎีความคิดแบบคู่ตรงข้ามอยู่มาก ในขณะที่เนื้อหาในผลงานของศิลปิน
ยุคหลัง ได้ขยายขอบเขตความเข้าใจและมุมมองทางเพศวิถีและเพศสภาพที่ถูกกำหนดโดยสังคมและวัฒนธรรม



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X. Advisor: Assoc. Prof. VERITA SRIRATANA, Ph.D.

This research investigates the notion of human sexuality in selected modernist literary works from James Joyce to postmodern music by Hozier and Lil Nas X regarding the criticism of institutionalized beliefs and the depiction of sexualities. From the sexual and spiritual awakening in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to the public onanism scene in *Ulysses*, Joyce has intensified one's apostasy and sexuality by optimizing and experimenting with the multiplicity of the meaning of words. The postmodern music selected for analysis which comprises a mid-tempo soul song titled "Take Me to Church" by Andrew John Hozier-Byrne, and a hip hop electropop song named "Montero (Call Me by Your Name)" by Montero Lamar Hill, known by his stage name Lil Nas X, construe the similar conceptualization via the presence of visual media. Regarding the subject matter of the social impact of art, the study approaches the mentioned works from Joyce, Hozier, and Lil Nas X as politically figurative novels and songs. By rejecting the "highbrow" and "lowbrow" hierarchical position of literary works, this study reevaluates the value of modernist and postmodernist arts and their interconnectedness. While Joyce insinuates his agnostic belief and attacks the Roman Catholic Church in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, Hozier's and Hill's works deprecate the Catholic Church's indoctrination and challenge the notion of sexualities as being regulated by biological factors and cultural and social influences. Hence, I argue in this research that modernism's spirit has survived and expanded through time. Postmodern music, as part of postmodernism, has embraced some modernist characteristics and transcends the limitation of modernist works. Joyce's attempts to celebrate human sexualities in the early 20th century; are, nonetheless, relevant to postmodern music artists. While Joyce vacillates between the binary opposition of the two sexes, Hozier's and Hill's works can be interpreted as an outstretch of art's capacity to represent diverse sexualities beyond the dominant cultural view of gender two-sex model.



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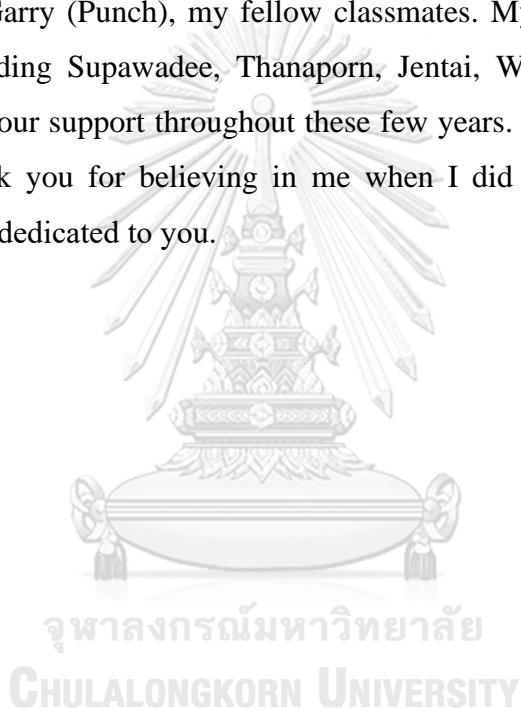


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Introduction

“Art is not an escape from life...Art, on the contrary, is the very central expression of
life”

(Joyce, *Stephen Hero* 86)

“To discover the mode of life or of art whereby your spirit could express itself
in unfettered freedom” (Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* 267)

The periodization of modernist and postmodernist literary movement has long been debated in academia (Lorr 2; Perkins 65; Perloff 1-2). The ongoing arguments on the distinctive boundary between modernist and postmodernist literature, in a way, constitute the various timelines in its conclusions (Kramer 11). While Larry Solomon and Ihab Hassan propose the “checklist approach” to compare the standard features of modernist and postmodernist traits, Jonathan D. Kramer suggests that such an approach does not do justice to the continuation of postmodernism and the projection of modernism (12-14). With a sense of “coming after” in postmodernism, Kramer recognizes postmodernism as *modernist* in more extreme incarnations. Since Kramer looks at modernism and postmodernism as both periods and attitude, the intertwined relationship between the two is inevitable. His observation of modernists was and is Oedipal: they are against their antecedents and seek to displace the major figures in their past. Postmodernists “are more like adolescents than children” (Kramer 13) since they have transcended their Oedipus conflicts with their modernist parents, yet their correlation with modernists is; nevertheless, an uneasy one. Postmodernist attitude likely to include modernist ideology and earlier epochs (15-16). Therefore, when entering the arena of literary criticism study, the disputable distinction between the two allows one to treat modernism and postmodernism heuristically to oppose or defend their idiosyncrasy and existence (Orr 6).

In agreement with Kramer, literary modernism, I argue, is a pinnacle of the psychological and sociopolitical tenor of modernity which was influenced by industrialization, urbanization, and nationalism in the early 20th century (Gablik 30).

It is a resistant and rebellious attitude that engages individualism and the rigidity of institutionalized traditions. In terms of literary movement, the avant-garde literary movement marks its modernist territory during the first half of the 20th century. The key contributors of the modernist literary movement such as James Joyce and T.S. Eliot distinguish themselves from cultural production on a large scale in their publication media and their audience (Goldstone 22). This literary dominance could influence how scholars approach the texts. Their [scholars] attempt to scope the modernist canon with existing modernist standards possibly promotes the hierarchy of authorial prestige and overlooks those deemed “unworthy” (24). Thus, the values and characteristics of literary modernism rely mainly upon its aesthetic innovations more than ever (Gablik 30). The concept of pure aesthetic and social detachment has been poorly perceived and critiqued as “spiritually sterile and corrupt” among Marxist thinkers. For Marxists, true art necessarily scrutinizes social and political reality and does not constitute its aesthetics abstractly. Art must be the social force for the masses and is subjected to the public primarily for social needs; most importantly, it is not a separate reality (33-36). Each position’s standpoint delineates its intelligibility as well as radicality. Since each of them dismisses its opponent’s attribute, it appears to be challenging to endorse either position wholly. The unresolved contradiction has been brought to discussion throughout the years; however, neither of these views has reached the point of its redemption. Therefore, some critics have suggested otherwise. To examine the function of any genre of art, finding the middle ground between two extreme opposing beliefs, has been encouraged in modern society (35-36).

For aesthetic purposes, the artist can be sensitive, perceptive, and delicate in his craft, yet his attitude echoes the public’s because he presents life truthfully and realistically (Sporn 21-22). Therefore, to evaluate the contribution of the artist(s) to society, one must consider the sociopolitical correlation and its history (Gablik 36).

With this approach, the artists’ works could be reevaluated and valued for their aesthetic and sociopolitical impact, regardless of their period-based origin. Therefore, with the agreement of Kevin Dettmar and R. Brandon Kershner, the “untouchable sense” between “high” art and “low” art should be overturned since this hierarchical mentality toward “non-modernism” has hindered the plausible cultural, historical and sociopolitical network between literary works from different periods

and genres (8-9). Moreover, applying the same theory, the death of any prominent modernist writers such as Joyce and Woolf should not be the end of the modernist literary movement. The cultural and social impact of literary modernism has an abiding effect on its successor. Modernist exploratory spirit is well-received and further explored by postmodernism altogether (Kramer 15-18). The dawn of postmodernism which includes the word “modernism,” illustrates the interconnection between the two rather than the repudiation (14). The “after” modernism occupies a similar notion of individualism and modernity in the form of “rethinking” modernism (15).

Postmodernism itself is neither an organized revolution nor sudden societal change. The philosophy of postmodernism first came to academic discourse in Jean-François Lyotard’s *the Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* in 1979. Lyotard sees that the changes of society and the advancement of science and technology are human’s exposure to potentialities. These factors transform the perception of knowledge as “is and will be produced to be sold” (4). While knowledge in modernism entails an aesthetic component, physical productivity and scientific experiments in the late 20th century have redefined knowledge and its value. The materialization and monetization of scientific knowledge behoove the political and educational utility in postmodernism. However, Lyotard does not believe that scientific knowledge is a totality of knowledge itself. His skepticism on the dominance of scientific knowledge raises awareness on the danger of language legitimacy and its authoritative role in society (7-10). *The Postmodern Condition* exhibits and influences the discourse of postmodernist literature, art, and society (Kramer 3). The conceptualization of the suspicion of grand narrative, the preference of subjectivism, and the “society as the principles of opposition” (Lyotard 13), have provided the framework of human understanding in postmodernity (Snipp-Walmsley 407).

Whilst modernist literary works cannot surpass dichotomous thinking and are not acquainted with cultural and social changes in the technological-saturated world of the mid-20th century (Goldstone 23), postmodernism could function as an evolutionary as well as an additional formulation of modernist thinking (Kramer 11). Postmodernism’s capacity to transcend the binary system and totality and its daring

quality to approach the subject matters in language and artworks reinforce the rebellious modernist spirit. The rise of popular culture in the West is the social and political consequences of technological advancement in the second half of the 20th century. Such postmodernist phenomenon is governing its own autonomy as well as reflecting the cultural formation in the larger group of audience (12-16).

Postmodern music is produced to response to aesthetical and philosophical postmodernism. It is, also, a part of popular culture which shares the characteristics of postmodernist art and offers alternatives to high modernism (34). The advent of soul and hip-hop music among the African American community in America in the late 1950s and 1970s, respectively (Kramer 65), is an example of postmodernist products that tend to be neglected by academic discourses. Perchance, modernist literary works' "elite" position is considered more engaging and delicate than vernacular music. According to Patrick Brantlinger, mass culture is a product of the dominance of the middle class, which is intertwined with the totalitarian regimes in the 1930s. It indicates "social morbidity" that contains "cancerous" symptoms, which leads to the negative presumption about popular culture (9). However, R. Brandon Kershner suggests that the differentiation between literary modernism and popular culture must be rejected. Most importantly, the cultural studies approach to literary texts should be prioritized instead (8-9). In *Joyce's Anatomy of Culture*, Cheryl Herr also utilizes cultural studies to compare texts from different historical particulars. She emphasizes that they tend to be "oppositional". Yet, Herr's semiotic methodology allows her to approach texts as "culturally contradictory" and avoid the problem of the study based on the writer or the "high" and "low" cultural opposition (150). Despite the aesthetical differences, modernist literary texts and mass cultural music function as political and cultural practices on historical particulars. For Kershner, the relationship between modernism and popular culture is dialogical (8). Both involve "a dialogue and a dialectics, but a dialectics thoroughly grounded in the material and ideological context of each "voice" (Kershner 9-15).

Consequently, the focus of this study lies in the imbrication of modernist literary movement and postmodern music, which reverberates the utilization of traditional elements—religious and Greek mythological allusions, to convey a message. Starting from one of the most influential writers of the 20th century, James

Joyce, to two of the 21st-century singers, Hozier and Lil Nas X, this research will examine the contribution of the artist(s) from the modernist literary movement to postmodern music. It approaches the subject matter of art as an aesthetic innovation and reflection of human sexualities. The language ambiguity and complexity in Joyce's works, the multiplicity of the meaning of words in Hozier's song, and the vernacular English in Lil Nas X's music will be reevaluated and carefully investigated to bridge the interconnectedness between literary modernism and postmodern music concerning the correlation bounded by art and life. Also, it highlights the postmodernist aspects in the postmodern songs, which transcend the restriction of the traditional binary system. My analysis on Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, Hozier's "Take Me to Church", and Lil Nas X's "Montero (Call Me by Your Name)", as culturally and politically figurative texts is indebted to Jean-François Lyotard, R. Brandon Kershner, and Jonathan D. Kramer for their contribution to the modernist and postmodern music scholar society.

HIC VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST' – Here the Word Become Flesh:

James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Hozier's *Take Me to Church*

Since the serialization of *Ulysses* in The American journal *The Little Review* from 1918-1920, and its first publication in Paris by Sylvia Beach on February 2, 1922, Joyce's 40th birthday, this book had caused controversy both in England and America ("Ulysses").

The death of Charles Stewart Parnell, an Irish Nationalist politician, in 1891, and the trial of Oscar Wilde, in 1895, followed by his death in 1900, had an impact on James Joyce's perspective toward the Irish Catholic Church and his nation (Hibbert 199). Becoming an apostate, Joyce believed that the Catholic Church was responsible for Parnell's political downfall (199). The national hero appeared in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as a topic of discussion among Stephen Dedalus's family, which partially leads to his alienation from the Catholic Church later in the novel (201). The renunciation of Catholicism in *A Portrait* (198) and the notion of individual sexuality in connection with an institutional religion emerges again in *Ulysses*, especially in the thirteenth episode, "Nausicaa".

Due to its obscenity in “Nausicaa”, many might argue that the “Roman Candle” (Joyce, *Ulysses* 350) stresses Joyce’s (liberal) view on human sexuality. Perhaps, “Nausicaa” is Joyce’s own confession of the flesh. It is a story of dissension. Joyce’s attempt on exhibiting the hypocrisy in the Catholic Church and its repressive nature on sexual discourse is intentionally apparent, to some degree, the readers are led blindfolded into the context. Despite Joyce’s aim to differentiate himself from the hypocrisy in the Catholic Church, his empathy toward Gerty MacDowell and her description in “Nausicaa” potentially fail to achieve its hypothesis. “Nausicaa” does not only lacks the ability to encapsulate the essence of woman sexuality, but also exceedingly intensifies the internalized misogyny in human behaviors. This section, I will examine Joyce’s presentation of human sexuality that might reflect the dichotomy thinking ingrained in modernist ideology. Joyce’s portrayal of Leonard Bloom and Gerty MacDowell in “Nausicaa” implies the writer’s hidden misogynistic perception of women. The objectification of MacDowell inevitably reflects Joyce whose psyche is constructed and influenced by the patriarchal Catholic society.

In *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Foucault argues that Christian teachings have subjugated the notion of sex, leading to the censorship of sex in the Western world. Speaking and thinking of sexual desire are deemed imprudent, and such acts have become society’s norms for centuries. While the discourse of sex is being refined, what Foucault called “the confession of the flesh”, instead, continually increases. Despite the institution's intervention (specifically, the Catholic Church) in its members’ sexuality, the French philosopher suggests that the examination and expression of one’s sexuality must be performed (Foucault 19-28). Its repressive nature of the “institutions” enforces the member to comply (33). An exercise of institutional power through the Catholic Church, states, marriage, and family orbits around the correlation between groups of men, in which the woman figures merely function as one of the objects in the exchange, but not the equal (Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* 184). “The relations between men” establishes the idea of patriarchy which is germinated from the interdependence and solitude among men that aims to dominate women (184-185). Therefore, the compartmentalization of female figures’ portrayal in “Nausicaa” will also be examined in order to comprehend the representation of women and men in the patriarchal Catholic society.

In *Ulysses*, the discourse of sexuality in “Nausicaa” is not negatively illustrated. Conversely, the climax of this fragment, where Leopold Bloom performs public onanism at the sight of Gerty MacDowell, rather contains a positive connotation. MacDowell and Bloom appear to be satisfied with their sexual activities, though they are deemed sacrilegious in the eye of the Catholic Church. Joyce’s support for the expression of human sexuality will be discussed in the following paragraph.

Ulysses could be seen as Joyce’s love-hate confession to his home country. The accuracy of the geographical details in Dublin indicates the hyperrealist elements of the text. Also, the use of a stream of consciousness hints Joyce’s profound yet mixing feelings and emotions to Ireland (Hibbert 198). The shifting of narrative with the interior monologue grasps the reader’s attention and concentration. The “Nausicaa” episode is partially filled with obscenity and profanity. It criticizes the hypocrisy of the Irish Catholic Church in worshipping the Virgin Mary, in reality, ordinary women are oppressed and underestimated. Joyce draws the contradictory image of the pious Catholic community and the subjugation of women in the following passage:

“And then there came out upon the air the sound of voices and the pealing anthem of the organ. It was the men's temperance retreat conducted by the missionary, the reverend John Hughes S. J., rosary, sermon, and benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. They were there gathered together without distinction of social class (and a most edifying spectacle it was to see) in that simple fane beside the waves, after the storms of this weary world, kneeling before the feet of the immaculate, reciting the litany of Our Lady of Loreto, beseeching her to intercede for them, the old familiar words, holy Mary, holy virgin of virgins. How sad to poor Gerty's ears! Had her father only avoided the clutches of the demon drink, by taking the pledge or those powders the drink habit cured in Pearson's Weekly, she might now be rolling in her carriage, second to none. Over and over had she told herself that as she mused by the dying embers in a brown study without the lamp because she hated two lights or oftentimes gazing out of the window dreamily by the hour at the rain falling on the rusty bucket, thinking. But that vile decoction which has ruined so many hearths and homes had cast its shadow over her childhood days. Nay, she had ever witnessed in the home circle deeds of violence caused by intemperance and had seen her own father, a prey to the fumes of intoxication, forget himself

completely for if there was one thing of all things that Gerty knew it was the man who lifts his hand to a woman save in the way of kindness deserves to be branded as the lowest of the low. (Joyce 338-339)”

The writer asperses to the ideological hypocrisy of the male-dominated religion (the Catholic Church) by paralleling the cult of the Virgin Mary and the unfair treatment of women. Catholicism’s belief in the eternal virginity of Mary has inflicted damage on women over the centuries. They turn a symbol of an authoritative woman into a tool of the patriarchy. Christians’ self-image and dignity are torn by Joyce’s portrayal of Gerty MacDowell which highlights the Christian community’s incompetence and inconsistency when it comes to practicality. While men are praying and worshipping a “female” God-like figure, namely, Holy Mary. The life of an ordinary woman, Gerty MacDowell, is far from pleasant in the Catholic community. MacDowell has suffered lifelong domestic abuse and discrimination, both physically and mentally, from her alcoholic father who is part of the Black Madonna’s worshippers. The Catholic Church’s believers are subjected to the patriarchal and hierarchical ideologies which are responsible for women’s subordination in society.

The secondary social status of women can be traced back to The Old Testament. Eve is believed to be the cause of the fall of man (Genesis 3:6). In the course of history, women are, most of the time, victim of the inhuman punishments defined by men (Resen 541). Women are never seen as equal. The Catholic Church consistently promotes the power relationship between men and obstructs women’s progression. The Virgin Mary is surrealistically viewed as “an ideal woman”. The perception of the Virgin Mary as a role model for Christian women is based on “fantasy” rather than “reality”. Though she was “a human being”, she has been perceived as a “Goddess-like” character who was a “virgin” and miraculously “bearing the Son of God”. While Mary’s voice is partially allowed, in a filtered tone, to ring out across the Church at its scheduled time. The real women’s voices are completely silenced. The image of Lady of Loreto (Joyce, *Ulysses* 338) illustrates Catholic Church’s assumption on the Blessed Virgin Mary. Joyce condemns the beliefs of Catholicism on constructing the standard of womanhood and diminishing women sexuality. If women who refuse to follow the social construction are regarded

as “wicked”, or “impure”, are women the more to blame for the impossible-to-achieve quality in the Virgin Mary prototype?

The patriarchal society propagandizes the violence in men and the submissiveness in women. Male-dominant institutions hold the absolute social power. The marriage institution, for example, offers women the only economic proposition. Women are pressured to meet society’s beauty standards to attract their potential suitors. In MacDowell’s case, her deformity worsens her situation. Her portrayal in this excerpt exemplifies how women are restricted and confined by the ideal beauty set by men, the religion led by men, and the grand narrative written by men.

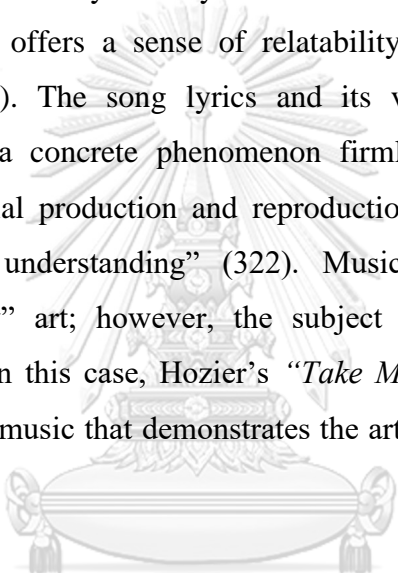
Though one might propose that Joyce’s depiction of MacDowell hints a sense of liberation, the Madonna-whore dichotomy and MacDowell’s hypersexual description seem to imply otherwise. Joyce’s portrayal of women in “Nausicaa” can be problematic at times. Joyce’s visual perspective of MacDowell employs what Laura Mulvey called the “male gaze” which stresses the sexual imbalance between active/male and passive/female (Mulvey 808). The writer’s obsession on MacDowell highly sexual qualities empowers men and diminishes women simultaneously. She is described as “slight and graceful”, “her hands were of finely veined alabaster”, she has a “high arched instep” (Joyce, *Ulysses* 333), and so on. Her endless association with the color “blue” resounds Joyce’s limited perception of women. The inclination on homogeneity in her depiction means MacDowell cannot be “more” than one or the other end of spectrum. As Bloom pleasures himself with MacDowell’s sight, he could see her “other things too. Nainsook knickers the absence of her mutual self-pleasure emphasizes the social inferiority of women. The fabric that caresses the skin...has had a full view high up above her knees...he couldn’t resist the sight of the wondrous revealment” (Joyce 350). According to this passage, MacDowell’s role is being looked at and displayed to serve Bloom’s erotic impact. Her “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey 809) affirms the patriarchal legacy lingered in Joyce. Though the act sounds consensual and reciprocal, MacDowell is treated as Bloom’s sexual object rather than a human counterpart. Bloom’s ejaculation and its exciting consequences are the focal point of “Nausicaa”, whereas MacDowell’s sexual climax tends to be neglected somehow. Although the indifference on MacDowell’s orgasm and Joyce’s internalized misogyny are observed in this study, I do not claim that his empathy

toward women is delusional. The emergence of the Madonna-whore dichotomy would connote Joyce's attempt to reevaluate the structured belief on gender. The attacks on domestic violence toward women and gender inequality are worth praising. In such a manner, Joyce could only be the product of patriarchy and has failed to surpass its influence.

Almost a century after the publication of *Ulysses*, an Irish singer, Hozier self-produced and released a controversial song titled "*Take Me to Church*" in 2013 (Hozier). Being inspired by Joyce's *A Portrait of The Artist as A Young Man*, Hozier admitted that Joyce's work has shaped his perspective toward the idea of self-reconciliation against the expectations of nationhood, nationalism, and religion. He stated "[the] ideological hypocrisy is still ideological hypocrisy a hundred years on, this [*A Portrait*] might have been written a hundred years ago, but that ideology remains the same even if public relations might change." ("Hozier: Interview on Victoria's Secret, Gay Rights, James Joyce Singing with A Choir and Sex," 00:02:00 - 00:03:15). Growing up in a Quaker family, Hozier had learned about the hierarchical and problematic system of the Catholic Church at a very young age. He mentioned in the interview that his Quaker upbringing also influenced his perspective toward the Roman Catholic Church ("Hozier Shares Thoughts on His Quaker Upbringing," 00:02:00 - 00:02:50). The institutionalized Catholic Church intervention on one's life and sexuality is "worth criticizing" (00:03:10 - 00:05:00), and he expressed this frustration through his music. Hozier insisted on using music as a tool to convey the political message to the audience, he mentioned that "people nearly intend that their music is apolitical and in some way that it is completely void of something that can be considered political, but for me, music is political no matter what, no matter what it is about. There are so many negative connotations when we talk about things being political, but if something concerns the experience of people, it concerns some political dimension ("Hozier: "Music is Political No Matter What," 00:01:25 – 00:02:05). His interest in sociopolitical influence on people's lives has been shown not only through his music, but also his activism. He performed in solidarity with survivors of abuse in the protest against the Roman Catholic Church in Dublin during the visit of Pope Francis (00:05:03 – 00:05:22). He added, "the legacy of the Roman Catholic Church in particular history with people of Ireland in regard to its treatment,

obviously of women in particular with the laundries and mother and baby homes, and the treatment of children and kids in industrial schools (00:06:10 – 00:06:51)”.

Despite the religious implication on its title, the lyrics ironically depict the narrator’s admiration and affection toward an anonymous female figure against the disapproval of conservative society. The dichotomy between an ordinary woman and the principles of the Catholic Church can be considered highly inappropriate and profane. Nonetheless, it is worth exploring the representation of sexuality through the perspective of the male artists in modernism and postmodernism. The analysis of music tends to be ignored by literary scholars. With the rejection of modernist formality, music itself offers a sense of relatability between the context and its audience (Hooper 314). The song lyrics and its visual media carry their own autonomy. Music is “a concrete phenomenon firmly embedded within both the material reality of social production and reproduction, and the symbolic nexus of human meaning and understanding” (322). Music’s simplicity should not be categorized as a “low” art; however, the subject matter must be methodically elucidated (323-324). In this case, Hozier’s “*Take Me to Church*” will function as exemplary postmodern music that demonstrates the artist’s sociopolitical perspective. As the lyrics go:



“My lover's got humor,
 She's the giggle at a funeral,
 Knows everybody's disapproval,
 I should've worshipped her sooner,
 If the Heavens ever did speak,
 She's the last true mouthpiece,
 Every Sunday's getting more bleak,
 A fresh poison each week,
 "We were born sick", you heard them say it
 My church offers no absolutes
 She tells me, "Worship in the bedroom"
 The only Heaven I'll be sent to
 Is when I'm alone with you
 I was born sick, but I love it
 Command me to be well
 A-, Amen, Amen, Amen,
 Take me to church
 I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies
 I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife

Offer me that deathless death
 Good God, let me give you my life
 Take me to church
 I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies
 I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife
 Offer me that deathless death
 Good God, let me give you my life,
 If I'm a pagan of the good times
 My lover's the sunlight
 To keep the Goddess on my side
 She demands a sacrifice
 Drain the whole sea
 Get something shiny
 Something meaty for the main course
 That's a fine looking high horse
 What you got in the stable?
 We've a lot of starving faithful
 That looks tasty
 That looks plenty
 This is hungry work,
 No masters or kings when the ritual begins
 There is no sweeter innocence than our gentle sin
 In the madness and soil of that sad earthly scene
 Only then I am human
 Only then I am clean
 Oh, oh, Amen, Amen, Amen" (Hozier)

The speaker's lover is first introduced as a "society's disapproval". Her behavior [giggle] at the funeral denotes an act of disparagement which is considered a sinful act, especially in the house of God. Despite her contemptuous behavior, his unquestioning faith in her is not shivered. The first verse informs the speaker's frustration with the false teaching and religious rituals (Sunday mass) in the Catholic Church. The lyrics give a severe reprimand for the Catholic Church's harmful indoctrination. The concept of "all humans are born sinners" has diminished the essence of humanity since birth. The speaker turns away from his old God and proven his faith in his female lover. We can sense his extreme resentment upon the Catholic Church's teachings and regulations that aim to "control" the lives of its believers. The speaker later implies his sexual intercourse with his lover as a religious ritual. In opposition to the Catholic teachings about marital and procreative sex, Hozier opts to romanticize the unproductive sex between men and women.

The song chorus contains the sarcastic tone: “Take me to church, I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies, I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife” (Hozier). Beneath the speaker's humility, he has acknowledged the falsity and sanctimony of the Catholic Church's teachings. Hozier bombards Catholic's indoctrination and its prophet and points out the selfishness and greediness of the people who benefit from the religious institution which is constituted based on people's faith.

In comparison with Joyce's *Ulysses* “Nausicaa”, the representation of women in postmodern music “*Take Me to Church*” should be carefully questioned. The lyrics represent the speaker's tremendous admiration for his female lover. Her description filled with seductive and sexual elements; however, these qualities do not suggest her sexual passiveness. In heterosexual relationship, men display a higher sense of entitlement than women, especially in sexual domain. Men assume a dominant role in bed, while women play a submissive archetype. Yet, the rigid structure of gender is reversed in this song. She is compared to a goddess and the sunlight. Her position appears to be actively superior. The line “She demands a sacrifice” affirms her [the speaker's lover] position of power which debunks the conventional gender roles and stereotypes associated with heterosexual relationship. Hozier's “*Take Me to Church*” implies an equality of sexes: “No masters or kings when the ritual begins” (Hozier). He transcends the social and sexual hierarchies between men and women. The lyrics refer to “a pagan” which is the belief in deities; God and Goddess (“pagan”) could signal the songwriter's view about gender equality. While female sexuality is celebrated and adored in the lyrics, the existence of homosexuality is simultaneously portrayed in the music video where male homosexual couples encounter a group of homophobic youth and a Russian anti-gay rally.



Figure 1: The male homosexual couple in Hozier's Take Me to Church, Columbia YouTube



Figure 2: The male homosexual couple attacked by the young homophobic group, Columbia YouTube

The visual media depicts a homophobic backlash against a young male homosexual couple who flee an angry mob in Russia. The general idea of the video derived from the Russian anti-gay rally after the “Gay Propaganda” law was passed in 2012 by the Russian government on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church (Hill 7-10). The very law aimed to be a “protection of children from information propagandizing rejection of traditional family values” (11). However, it exacerbated the hostility of LGBTQ+ people in Russia, and stifled access to LGBTQ+ inclusive education and support services with harmful consequences for children (UNHCR). Hence, Hozier used the platform of music to directly criticize the institutional religions in connection to the topic of sexuality: heterosexuality and homosexuality (Hozier: “Music is political no matter what” 00:05:15 - 00:07:30).

Hozier's “*Take Me to Church*” is the embodiment of the massive impact of globalization and the technological-saturated world on the postmodern making-song process. The distance between the songwriter and the actual reality in Russia is blurred. Hozier does not experience sexual discrimination himself, yet the emotional solidarity with homosexual people in Russia is perceived as a reality for him. Unlike

modernism, the diversity of sexuality is also an outstanding trait in postmodernism (Kramer 12). The utility of visual media in “*Take Me to Church*” promotes a “small” narrative of the marginalized. The line “We were born sick, you heard them say it” could imply the Catholic’s perception of homosexuality. The intrapersonal conflict between homosexuality and the Catholic Church has been an ongoing state of discrimination (Subhi, Geelan 1382). For ages, Catholicism has regarded homosexuality as morally wrong, based on the Scriptures¹. The Catholic Church’s attempt to “control” the preferred heterosexuality has created the feelings of frustration and hopelessness among young homosexual people. As human sexualities are being condemned, many homosexual people think that Christian renunciation is a necessity when they are identified as a homosexual (1383).

Hozier’s “*Take Me to Church*” circulates around this idea. The song is performed in solidarity with homosexual people who have been discriminated against by authoritative organizations such as religions, government, schools, and family. Whilst *love* is a key attribute of God in Christianity² (1 John 4:8 and 16), the Catholic Church has spread hatred toward the group of homosexual people for centuries. The ideological hypocrisy in Christianity needs to be publicly criticized. The line “The only Heaven I’ll be sent to, Is when I’m alone with you, I was born sick, but I love it, Command me to be well” (Hozier), shows the sense of “self-acceptance” in the speaker. Though religion has denounced his sexual orientation, learning to accept one’s [sexual] identity is what matters because the sense of contentment and peace in individuals is determined by himself/herself, not by the Catholic Church. The celebration of the diversity of sexuality and sexual orientation is part of an inclusive culture in popular cultural art. It exceeds the dichotomy thinking of modernism. If modernism is a foundation of the “newness”, postmodernism is the continuity of its predecessor’s unfinished project. “*Take Me to Church*” Hozier shows us the

¹ Noah and Ham (Genesis 9:20–27), Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1–11), Levitical laws condemning same-sex relationships (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13), two words in two Second Testament vice lists (1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 Timothy 1:10), and Paul’s letter to the Romans (Romans 1:26–27).

² “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” And “So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love; and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:8 and 16)

expansion of human understanding about sexual orientation - whether it is heterosexual or homosexual - is natural. It should not be confined and underdetermined by any laws or rules issued by authoritative organizations.

Speaking of language, wordplay is essential to *Ulysses* and “*Take Me to Church*”. It reinforces the multiplicity of the meanings of words. Joyce demonstrates his interest in a wealth of words through his experiment in *Ulysses*. Similarly, Hozier’s “*Take Me to Church*” lyrics also carry multiple meaning with sexual connotations. The multiplicity of meaning parallels Jacques Derrida’s interpretation of Plato’s notion of *Pharmakon* (Derrida 430-439). Plato argues that speech is viewed as the original form of language. The writing is later developed and is considered *bad*. The lack of interaction between the writer and the recipient leads to Plato’s antithesis on writing. However, Derrida sees Plato’s statement as a defend of a writing itself (433-435). He deconstructs speech as a part of writing and giving the correlation between the words *Pharmakon* (436). *Pharmakon* is a Greek word that contains two opposite meanings - “cure” and “poison”. According to Derrida, *Pharmakon* establishes the play of binary oppositions: good vs. evil, interior vs. exterior and remedy vs. poison, etc., which establishes the disruption of boundaries between the meaning of words (425-439). The way Joyce experiments with the ambiguity of words distributes a layer of meaning. For example, its title, “*Ulysses // Odysseus*,” carries two different meanings - “giver” and “receiver” of trouble. In “*Nausicaa*” itself, Joyce has carefully dissected the rigid meaning of the words. Wordplay functions as “a spectrum,” which means “a broad range of varied but related ideas or objects” (“*Spectrum*”). For instance, at the very beginning of this episode, Joyce describes “the weedgrown rocks along Sandymount shore and, last but not least, on the quiet church whence there streamed forth at times upon the stillness the voice of prayer to her who is in her pure radiance a beacon ever to the storm-tossed heart of man, Mary, star of the sea” (Joyce, *Ulysses* 43). The passage indicates not only the alignment of two different settings but also insinuates the “liquidity” of the word “Mary, star of the sea”. Evidently, “Mary, star of the sea” refers to the name of the Catholic Church which bears the ancient title of the Virgin Mary. The origin of the word “Mary, star of the sea” is as interesting as its function. St. Jerome translates the word from *stilla maris* in Latin - drop of the sea -, yet it is wrongly transcribed into

“star of the sea” in later years and has been used widely ever since (Mass 13). This exemplifies the idea of a wide range of interpretations of the words, still, sometimes, words can be misinterpreted. On the one hand, “Mary, star of the sea”, can be seen as a “guiding star” on the way to Jesus Christ, and is believed to be a guide and protector of the seamen (Mass 24). On the other hand, “Mary, star of the sea” could signal the character of Gerty MacDowell. Later, MacDowell as “Mary” will be the actual “star” [by the sea] of this episode, especially for Leopold Bloom. By staring at each other, MacDowell’s beauty and sensuality have aroused Bloom’s sexual desire. As he performs his sexual act (masturbation), the chemistry and passion between MacDowell and Bloom separate them from reality.

At the moment, Bloom is drowned in the “sea” of lust where MacDowell as “Mary” *guides* him [Bloom] on the way to “Christ//Heaven” or his sexual climax/orgasm. Simultaneously, community members have attended “the Most Blessed Sacrament” in the Church. We can see the link between sacredness and secular sexuality in this climax scene. Comparable with the word “Mary”, “The Most Blessed Sacrament” is placed on the same spectrum as Leopold Bloom’s masturbation. Their intimacy can be seen as a “religious ritual” that features a sense of self-purification and self-salvation, both physically and spiritually. The emergence of the secular “Mary” [MacDowell] has brought Bloom his “Most Blessed Sacrament”. He then, “relieves” and is “relieved” after the sexual *ritual*. The pleasure of sexual culmination as well as the Christian rite somehow provides a holy sensation.

When the “Roman candle burst and it was like a sigh of O! and everyone cried O! O! ruptures and it gushed out of it a stream of rain gold hair threads” (Joyce 350), the word “Roman candle” (350) means a firework that one holds after it has been ignited. It shoots out a fireball from the opposite end (“Roman Candle”). Whereas the “Roman candle” (350) can be interpreted as an act of insertion of a small projectile into the male urethra through the tip of the penis to increase the sexual stimulation during masturbation and add the sexual effect of rapid projection upon ejaculation (“Roman Candle”). When it “burst with a sigh of O!” (350) it indicates the viewers' excitement when the fireball is shot into the sky. It also reads as the act of male ejaculation with the discharge of semen “shooting out” of the urethral opening, which is triggered when the sexual act reaches a critical level of excitement (moaning).

Hence, “It's the bazaar fireworks” (Joyce 353) not only refers to the fireworks display in the sky, but it also implies Bloom’s ejaculation.

Likewise, the conceptualization of Derrida’s *Pharmakon* is also reflected in the song “*Take Me to Church*” by Hozier. The interpretation of this song can convey a radically different message. Hozier utilizes the abundance of the meaning of language to communicate his hidden agenda. Words must be taken into consideration since they can be truthful or deceitful. For example, the lyrics go: “I should've worshipped her sooner...She tells me, "Worship in the bedroom"”. The Church [where the funeral takes place] is a place of worship. It is also considered holy and is used for Christian religious services (“church”). The “Church” in the lyrics portrays two different images “the Catholic Church” and “bedroom” which indicates the metaphorically and sexually blasphemous language. To “Worship in the bedroom” connotes that a house of worship has shifted from the Church to the bedroom. In this sense, the religious rituals conducted in the Church could be equivalent to the “sexual” rituals in the bedroom.

The dichotomy between the Church and the sexual-related place undermines religious spirituality and accentuates the intimacy between the speaker and his “lover”. The sexual activity between him and his lover can be interpreted as a “religious ritual,” which requires the speaker to “perform” or “attend” the sacrament in the designated place, the bedroom. Regarding sexual morality in Christianity, sex is a holy sacrament as long as it is marital. Oftentimes, the Bible compares idolatry to fornication or adultery as the act of sin: “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.” (Hebrews 13:4) Thus, the “allegedly” premarital sexual act between the speaker and his lover is deemed sinful. Nonetheless, he rejects “the Church” and worships the unnamed “female figure” as his new God instead.

Apart from the ambiguity of its title, the emphasis on sexual connotation in the biblical references has emerged throughout the song. For example, the line “If the Heavens ever did speak, She's the last true mouthpiece” (Hozier) signals Jesus Christ as the prophet of Christianity: to be God’s representative. He is an ambassador for spreading God’s word. By contrast, the word “mouthpiece” also implies fellatio. It

insinuates the peak of sexual excitement the speaker received through the act of oral-genital stimulation given by his female lover.

The line “Offer me that deathless death, Good God, let me give you my life” (Hozier) signals the Biblical allusions upon the concept of Jesus Christ’s resurrection and ascension to Heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Baptized Christians are convinced to believe in the advent of God and the Kingdom of God after their lifetime. The believers will be caught up by Jesus after experiencing death. The idea that one will enter *bliss* instantly after death is echoed in the words of Jesus on the cross: “Today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). However, another meaning of “deathless death” is derived from the French expression, *La petite mort*³ or “the little death” which demonstrates “a state or even resembling or prefiguring death; a weakening or loss of consciousness, specifically in sleep or during an orgasm” (“petite mort”). The expression “deathless death” employs two different ideas - the Christian conception of death and the orgasmic sensations. As she becomes his new God, during and after their sexual intimacy, the narrator has been brought to his sexual climax or “heaven”. She offers him the feeling of blissfulness after experiencing the “little death”. She, as well as Christ, possess the qualifications of immortality and saviour.

Wordplay in *Ulysses* and “*Take Me to Church*” demonstrates the flowing quality of language depends on the reader by using religious allusions. Joyce and Hozier have deconstructed the concept of monosemy. Instead of using language as a vessel of absolute truth, these artists utilize the ambiguity and multiplicity of language to challenge the audience’s perception. The literal interpretation of the texts has proved a hindrance rather than a help. Moreover, wordplay has conveyed the artists’ criticism of Christianity, particularly the Catholic Church. Though to make a comparison between holiness and worldly sexuality is sacrilegiously blasphemous, it is rather effective considering each artist’s dialectic. Joyce’s experiment on the multiplicity of the meaning of language shows his obsession with the aesthetical elements which is highly promoted in the avant-garde literary movement (Kershner 10-12). The difficulties, ambiguities and perplexity in *Ulysses* could be its own

³ “Hozier Takes Us to Church”, 00:03:16 - 00:03:30.

Pharmakon. These “hard-to-digest” qualities would elevate *Ulysses*’ position in art forms, yet they restrict access to the potential readers. “*Take Me to Church*” as postmodern music does not completely abandon the multiplicity of the meaning of the language. The lyrics themselves also require the listener’s interpretation and reevaluation to understand the relation between text and meaning. While “*Take Me to Church*” lyrics picture the speaker and the “female” lover, its visual video shows the viewer the male homosexual couple instead. The contradiction between the lyrics and its visual media debunks the understanding of gender-based pronouns. Though “she” in the lyrics might not indicate directly to the male homosexual couple, Hozier’s attempt to include homosexuality in his content manifests a sense of inclusivity, fluidity, and subjectivity in postmodernism.

‘Damnant Quod Non-Intelligunt’—They Condemn What They Do Not
Understand: James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
and Lil Nas X’s *Montero (Call Me by Your Name)*

It is customary to say that there is no coincidence that the protagonist from James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus, can be construed as the embodiment of the writer’s political, social, sexual, and religious ideologies and perspectives toward the ‘modern world’ of the period of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (MacCabe 1). Surrounded by political and social restrictions, Stephen Dedalus, throughout the novel, displays the layers of the character’s complexity that have been targeted for criticism, especially his sexual orientation, for decades after its publication. Joyce and his linguistic ambiguity have encouraged the reader to develop one’s ‘intellect’ for the multiple interpretations of the text.

I argue that the construction of homosexual aspects in *A Portrait* challenges what Michael Warner called “heteronormativity,” which is an idea or narrative that heterosexuality is the default and preferred sexual orientation (Warner 14). Homosexuality is deemed as an “abnormality” which is an object of morality in the Catholic’s eye. Nonetheless, the moral reflection of the Classical Greek culture on homosexual behavior does not seek to justify interdictions, but to stylize freedom (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume II* 8). One’s sexual freedom shows one’s

true freedom from society's restrictions (92-97). In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, the idea of sexuality as a social construct is supplemented by Judith Butler. She argues that biological reality does not determine one's sexuality to gender identity gender (6-8). Thus, one's sexual identity, whether it is heterosexual, or homosexual is historically, institutionally, and socially constructed (8).

If sexuality is constantly constructed and reconstructed through sociopolitical and cultural practices, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's references to "homosexual panic" appear to explain Dedalus's prolonged mental confusion and psychological discomfort of his own "homosexuality." Homosexual panic is the psychologized secular homophobia occurred in the patriarchal society where male entitlement is celebrated (184). While the forming of relations between men establishes interdependence and solidarity among men, women are usually dominated and disregarded. In such a manner, homophobia is conceptualized as a moral standard within male homosociality (184). Plagued by the consternation of potential violence, the legal enforcement, and an obligation to participate in "the overarching male entitlement," one could fear one's own "homosexuality" (184-187).

Therefore, I shall, with respect, agree with Foucault, Butler, and Sedgwick's statement on the social construction of homosexuality. While I am indebted to the forerunners of this subject, it is also my duty, as a fellow researcher, to contribute to the nuances of the subject matter, especially the social understanding of sexuality. By close reading the text, Joyce's *A Portrait* demonstrates one's self-acceptance and self-disclosure. Beyond heteronormativity (Warner 14), the default and preferred sexual orientation are disputed, and instead, the protagonist's sexuality has been examined and confessed. Approaching *A Portrait* from a queer perspective, this section will study the homosexual connotations in Joyce's work that challenges the heteronormative assumption and highlights how "queerness" in Stephen Dedalus from *A Portrait* encourages him for his "unfettered freedom" (Joyce 267), which leads to his [Dedalus] sense of pride and self-acceptance.

Joyce seems to acknowledge that Oscar Wilde's case is a discriminatory treatment toward homosexuality. Although the writer implies his "open-mindedness" toward homosexuality, he does not speak the name of homosexuality so much (Valente 167). The absence of the name of *homosexuality* in his works determines

how critical the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 is during his days. Hence, he utilizes his language skills to employ figurative speech that carries the actual message to comply with the law enforcement.

Throughout *A Portrait*, from chapter one to chapter five, the readers witness Dedalus's psychological experiences, social environment, and changing beliefs and values. The repetition of homosexual allusions is voluntarily finalized in the conversation and confession between two young men, Dedalus and Cranly, in chapter five. It is where the value of the story is tested to its highest degree and the area where Joyce's language ability is challenged the most. From my observation, although Dedalus's aesthetical theory involves "female beauty" (Joyce 226), every time he has an actual "contact" with women, Dedalus is emotionally "stirred" and "bewildered" one way or another. In his first sexual encounter with a woman, when he is asked to "kiss" a lady from the brothel, he refuses and finds it rather "too much for him" (108). Consequently, his intimacy with the prostitute has emotionally overwhelmed him.

To some extent, Dedalus calls it [his sexual encounter with the prostitute] a "mortal sin" (105). He also believes that he is put at risk of "eternal damnation" (110). The image of his "hell" in his dream illustrates Dedalus's homosexual panic. The scene describes the appearances of the creatures as: "goatish creatures with human faces, hornybrowed, lightly bearded and grey as indiarubber...dragging their long tails amid the rattling canisters.... they moved in slow circles, circle closer and closer and closer to enclose, to enclose, soft language issuing from his lips, their long swishing tails besmeared with stale shite, thrusting upwards their terrific faces...Help!" (148-149). If these creatures' tails signal phallus, Dedalus' dream of his hell appears to be his nocturnal emission.

Later, Dedalus rushes to wash himself and "vomit profusely in agony" (149). It implies a homophobic reaction rooted in his homosexual panic. The pressure from heterosexual society has led him to emotional, spiritual, and physiological torture. The dehumanization and degeneration of this process push aside Dedalus's true sexual identity. Dedalus's fear of social ostracization and law violation has shadowed and tormented his mentality and delayed his sexual expression until the end of the novel.

Dedalus's perception of women is rather strange. He finds a woman's face "lecherous cunning" (105), and his intimate activity with her gives him "a sense of

transgression” (105). Yet, when Dedalus is in the presence of male friends, he tends to be comfortable and more relaxed. Prior to the mentioned coming-out scene is the notorious epiphany scene in the novel, Dedalus and his “birds” (243). The similarity between *Stephen Hero*, and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Youngman*, Joyce’s critical revelation appears to occur in the [male] lives in the making. By epiphany, Joyce indicates “a sudden spiritual manifestation” (Joyce, *Stephen Hero* 211), it is “a moment when an ordinary object is perceived in a way that reveals its deeper significance” (215) Though the word “epiphany” does not appear in *A Portrait*, Joyce mentions it in the surviving pages of the early draft of *A Portrait*, known as *Stephen Hero*. As Stephen Dedalus explains his aesthetic theory to his close friend, Cranly:

“This triviality made him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments... You know what Aquinas says: The three things requisite for beauty are, integrity, a wholeness, symmetry and radiance....The mind considers the object in whole and in part, in relation to itself and to other objects, examines the balance of its parts, contemplates the form of the object, traverses every cranny of the structure. So the mind receives the impression of — the symmetry of the object. The mind recognises that the object is in the strict sense of the word, a thing, a definitely constituted entity. You see?... This is the moment which I call epiphany.” (Joyce 211-213)

Joycean’s epiphany is part of the perception of beauty and spiritual revelation. Dedalus provides the complete epiphany moment based on St. Thomas Aquinas, the medieval Catholic theologian. Among the three qualities of “integrity, symmetry, and radiance”, radiance is the most important. The revelation will take place when the radiance is perceived by the beholder. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the definition of “radiance” is 1: warmth or heat or bright light and 2: an expression of great happiness, hope, or beauty. Deciphering the elements lead to the epiphany moment; to some extent, “the bright light” functions as a bridge between “the object” and “the subject.” Without “the bright light” or “the feeling of great happiness,” the

event cannot be called “epiphany.” The word “light” itself solely relates to an act of “illuminating” a light in the dark and “enlighten,” which means to give (someone) greater knowledge and understanding about a subject or situation.

In agreement with Robert Scholes and Florence L. Walzl, “there are at least two distinct meanings of epiphany in Joyce’s criticism which mean *revelation* or *illumination* in certain literary and technical senses.” The first significance is Joyce himself may use the religious term epiphany in the brief narratives and vignettes, which he describes in *Stephen Hero* as recordings of “the most delicate and evanescent of moments.” Second, Joyce himself utilizes the term epiphany as a *spiritual or intellectual apprehension* that represents *enlightenment*, where the reference Aquinas used as an apprehension that “*Claritas is quidditas*”(Joyce 213; 152). While I concur with Hendry’s argument on “Joyce’s Epiphanies” that they can be construed as an “esthetic revelation” and Joyce’s works are “a tissue of epiphanies, great and small, from fleeting images to whole books, from the briefest revelation in his lyrics to the epiphany that occupies one gigantic, “enduring” moment (28-31). Still, Walzl suggests that it is worth considering the religious and liturgical significations in Joyce’s epiphanies as well as their aesthetic (154). Therefore, the bird scene ushers Dedalus’s homosexual as well as spiritual awakening, to some extent, it is one’s liberation experience:

“What birds were they?...They flew round and round the jutting shoulder of a house in Molesworth Street. The air of the late March evening made clear their flight, their dark darting quivering bodies flying clearly against the sky as against a limp hung cloth of smoky tenuous blue. He watched their flight; bird after bird: the dark flash, a swerve, a flash again, a dart aside, a curve, a flutter of wings...for two came wheeling down from the upper shy. They were flying high and low but ever round and round in straight and curving lines and ever flying from left to right, circling about a temple of air.” (Joyce, *A Portrait* 243)

The birds in this scene could function as a catalyst to Dedalus’s sexual revelation. Their “dark flash, a swerve, a flash again, a dart aside, a curve, a flutter of

wings” (243) echoes the Greek mythological imagery, the rape of Ganymede⁴. The story of Ganymede depicts the homosexual relationship and homoerotic passion between Zeus and the mortal. Zeus disguised himself as an “eagle” and abducted Ganymede to Olympus (“Ganymede”). The image of birds also signals the phallus. The bird (with wings) was sent as a love gift among homosexual men and boys in ancient Greek. The birds also share the same motion: “circling, wheeling down, flew round and round” (243) with the man-look-alike creatures who “moved in slow circles, circling closer and closer, swished in slow circles round and round the field” (149) which appear in Dedalus’ dream. Dedalus also experiences a sense of “ecstasy” (242) with “a soft liquid joy” (245) when he gazes at the birds. The word “ecstasy” in English has a sexual as well as a spiritual connotation. The homosexual epiphany moment leads to Dedalus’s coming-out scene at the end.

Beyond the surface-level literal meanings of words, in this scene, Dedalus, whose superstructure is built by patriarchal culture as well as institutional religion over homosexual desire, readily renounces his Catholicism as well as confesses his homosexuality to Cranly. An act of Dedalus’s self-affirmation strengthens his identity formation and maintenance. In this scene, Dedalus starts the conversation by saying:

“–Cranly, I had an unpleasant quarrel this evening.
 –With your people? Cranly asked.
 –With my mother.
 –About religion?
 –Yes, Stephen answered. After a pause Cranly asked:
 –What age is your mother?
 –Not old, Stephen said. She wishes me to make my easter duty.
 –And will you?
 –I will not, Stephen said.
 –Why not? Cranly said.
 –I will not serve, answered Stephen...
 –Do you believe in the eucharist? Cranly asked...
 Addressing it as it lay, he said:
 –Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!

^{4 4} Ganymede (pronounced GAH-nuh-meed) is a youth in Greek mythology who is abducted by Zeus because of his great beauty and brought to Mount Olympus to serve as cupbearer. The story first appears in Homer’s Iliad without any suggestion of a sexual connection, but Ganymede later became associated with male same-sex relationships and homoerotic passion (Encyclopædia Britannica).

Taking Stephen's arms, he went on again and said:

–Do you not fear that those words may be spoken to you on the day of Judgement?

–What is offered me on the other hand? Stephen asked. An eternity of bliss in the company of the dean of studies?

–Remember, Cranly said, that he would be glorified.

–Ay, Stephen said somewhat bitterly, bright, agile, impassible and, above all, subtle.

–It is a curious thing, do you know, Cranly said dispassionately, how your mind is supersaturated with the religion in which you say you disbelieve. Did you believe in it when you were at school? I bet you did.

–I did, Stephen answered.

–And were you happier then? Cranly asked softly, happier than you are now, for instance?

–Often happy, Stephen said, and often unhappy. I was someone else then.

–How someone else? What do you mean by that statement?

–I mean, said Stephen, that I was not myself as I am now, as I had to become.

–Not as you are now, not as you had to become, Cranly repeated. Let me ask you a question. Do you love your mother?

Stephen shook his head slowly.” (Joyce 259-261)

The subtlety of Dedalus's self-disclosure is blanketed beneath an act of Catholic renunciation. For me, the mother [ly] or women [ly] figure that appeared can be interpreted as a symbol of the unspoken and perceived sense of social norms embedded in Dedalus as a member of the ethnoreligious group—Irish Catholics. The shared standards of “acceptable” or “normal” behaviors, including compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 631) and religious inheritance, have been internalized and cause Dedalus's experience of homosexual panic (Sedgwick 185). For example, when being asked about the “mother's kiss” (10), Dedalus replies, “I do” without knowing if it is “the right answer to the question” (10). The confusion and hesitancy in Dedalus's sexuality is caused by a patriarchal and heteronormative society.

We can see that Dedalus's divergence from his “mother [ly]” illustrates the first step of his self-liberation process. When Cranly asks him about “the religion?” (259) the word “religion” epitomizes the belief in heteronormativity influenced by Catholic teachings (Warner 14). Heteronormativity is naturally preferred in society and is believed in *religiously*. Hence, the “I will not serve” act is Dedalus's rejection of such belief. “I will not serve” represents his life-affirming religion. To some

extent, Dedalus's homosexual disclosure to Cranly establishes a sense of true freedom which transcends any reason, just like a religious experience. With all things considered, Dedalus's self-exile to Paris appears to be an elixir for his long yearning for sexual, religious, spiritual, and political "true liberation". From Joyce's *A Portrait* to Lil Nas X's "*Montero (Call Me by Your Name)*", the non-heterosexual innuendoes in these two different literary works appear to promote similar conceptualizations: self-acceptance and a critique of intuitional thinking. Though there is no correlation between two artists from different periods, some elements used are worth investigating, especially how "queerness" strengthens one's pride and self-worth.

The word "queerness," according to Jay Stewart, is "politics necessarily celebrate transgression in the form of visible difference from norms" (62); however, Butler suggests in *Playing with Fire: Queer Politics, Queer Theories*, that this term, along with queer theory is "collective contestation" of what the society sees as "normality" and "should not be fully owned" (19-20). Thus, the word "queerness" should accommodate the marginalized who encounter discrimination regarding their gender and sexuality (Eng et al. 15).

While *A Portrait* was published during the time when homosexuality was illegal, a century later, full self-disclosure and social equality for non-heterosexual people have been positively celebrated. Since the gay liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the movement has challenged a cultural system that marks the non-heterosexual as inferior (Foucault 10). In the 21st century, human sexual orientations have become more celebrated (Eng et al. 15), the American rapper and singer Lil Nas X is one who has responded to that remark. Lamar Hill, known by his stage name Lil Nas X launched "*Montero (Call Me by Your Name)*" as his "coming-out" song on March 26, 2021 ("Lil Nas X Talks 'Montero', Realizing His Fame, Recalling Life Before 'Old Town Road' & MORE!", 00:03:45 - 00:03:57; Kaufman). Despite the notion of queer themes including its sexually explicit homosexual video, it debuted at the top of the Billboard Hot 100 inside and out America (Billboard). On April 22, 2021, "*Montero*" was certified platinum in the United States by the RIAA, and received nominations for Record of the Year, Song of the Year and Best Music Video at the 2022 Grammy Awards. (RIAA, Grammy).

“*Montero*” is inspired by the 2017 film titled based on the book of the same name *Call Me by Your Name* which centers on a homosexual relationship (SONY Pictures Classics). The rapper employs the challenging message about homosexuality through his art and visual media. His father was “a literal gospel singer” in Georgia. Hill admits that “his upbringing surrounded by religion” and the prejudice toward homosexuality among African American community (Baska, TIME). The social expectation forces him into confusion and agitation about his sexuality. He adds “It’s not like being forced, it’s growing up, I am grown to hate this shit. Homosexuality, Gay people, come on now, if you are really from the hood, you know it” (“The Shop: UNINTERRUPTED | Lil Nas X on Coming Out (Season 2 Episode 3 Clip)”, 00:00:10 - 00:00:50). Hill also explains that his belief in Christianity was juxtaposed against his determination to live his truth (Baska). In *GQ Style*, Hill confesses “That was one of the main reasons why I never wanted to be gay...I even thought, ‘If I have these feelings, it’s just a test. A temporary test. It’s going to go away. God is just tempting me....Like I’m gay, but I’m not ‘gay’... Like I’m gay, but I have to make sure you feel like I can be straight-passing too”. Nonetheless, the rapper comes out as “gay” publicly and states how much “backlash” he receives after his coming out (“LIL NAS X being GAY & Glastonbury interview”, 00:01:05 - 00:01:50). Before “*Montero*”, he claims that he has to keep his music “very safe and PG-13”. Hill must be “respectable” even as a gay artist. He adds that he feared he wouldn’t be “allowed to be really sensual or anything”. Yet, after releasing the song, he confesses, “it was like the most real...even vulnerable at times, what it represents a song itself within this industry...this is why it is important to me and a lot of people, it feels really great” (“Lil Nas X “*Montero (Call Me by Your Name)*” Official Lyrics & Meaning”, 00:00:10 - 00:00:25). He expresses: “I feel like that’s really important for representation in general..And this is gonna open more doors for one day when someone’s like, ‘Oh, this person said that, and I didn’t even think about it.’” (00:06:35 – 00:06:54). He also describes how he wants to normalize queer lust: “It’s about time I say something out of pocket in a song...let’s normalize having these fucking lines in songs, the same way somebody might talk about fucking a girl or fucking a guy, with opposite gender, you know” (00:06:10 - 00:06:35).

In comparison to Joyce's *A Portrait*, the process of self-disclosure in Hill's "*Montero*" is more graphically and deliberately explicit. With the decriminalization of homosexuality in all 50 states in the last homosexual case in 2003 (*Lawrence v Texas*, 539 US 558 (2003)), the celebration of sexualities in America has become inclusive. Hill's *Montero* utilizes religious allusions to denote one's self-revelation journey. The reoccurrence of Greek mythological imagery, Ganymede, might not be coincidental regarding its homosexual references. Hence, the deployment of canonical and Greek mythological references as a symbol of the coming out process between *A Portrait* and "*Montero*" illustrates artists' attempt to challenge the dominant structured system on human sexualities as well as embrace the notion of self-empowerment. In Hill's "*Montero*", the speaker also romanticizes the male homoerotic relationship, especially the sexual activity, as the lyrics go:

"I caught it bad yesterday
 You hit me with a call to your place
 Ain't been out in a while anyway
 Was hoping I could catch you throwing smiles in my face
 Romantic talking? You don't even have to try
 You're cute enough to fuck with me tonight
 Looking at the table all I see is weed and white
 Baby, you living the life, but nigga, you ain't livin' right
 Cocaine and drinking with your friends
 You live in the dark, boy, I cannot pretend
 I'm not fazed, only here to sin
 If Eve ain't in your garden, you know that you can
 Call me when you want, call me when you need
 Call me in the morning, I'll be on the way
 Call me when you want, call me when you need
 Call me out by your name, I'll be on the way like
 Mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm
 Mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm
 Ayy, ayy
 I wanna sell what you're buying
 I wanna feel on your ass in Hawaii
 I want that jet lag from fucking and flying
 Shoot a child in your mouth while I'm riding
 Oh, oh, oh, why me?
 A sign of the times every time that I speak
 A dime and a nine, it was mine every week
 What a time, an incline, God was shining on me
 Now I can't leave

And now I'm acting hella elite
 Never want the niggas that's in my league
 I wanna fuck the ones I envy, I envy
 Cocaine and drinking with your friends
 You live in the dark, boy, I cannot pretend
 I'm not fazed, only here to sin
 If Eve ain't in your garden, you know that you can
 Call me when you want, call me when you need
 Call me in the morning, I'll be on the way
 Call me when you want, call me when you need
 Call me out by your name, I'll be on the way like
 Oh, call me by your name (mmm, mmm, mmm)
 Tell me you love me in private
 Call me by your name (mmm, mmm, mmm)
 I do not care if you lying
 Well, I'm just feeling, mm-uh
 I wanna get, mm-uh
 I'm in my, into my, uh
 I'm mm, mm
 I'm still, mm, mm-mm, ooh" (Hill)

In the first verse, the speaker refers to a person whom he “caught it bad” which means falling in love or catching romantic/sexual feeling. No matter what that person does, the speaker always finds him attractive. Prior to the pre-chorus: “Looking at the table all I see is weed and white, Baby, you living the life, but nigga, you ain't livin' right” (Hill) the lyrics imply the “party cultures”. The words “weed” and “white” allude to the substances abuse from marijuana and cocaine that the person has partaken. The speaker notices that the person he has a feeling for “ain't livin' right” (Hill); albeit the person is having fun with friends. From the party scene to “You live in the dark, boy, I cannot pretend” can be a double entendre. The double meaning of “ain't livin'right”, “you live in the dark” convey how this individual is pretentious to be happy and does not embrace (his) true sexuality by hiding “in the closet”. The sentence “I cannot pretend” shows how the speaker notices the liked person's insincere body language.

The pre-chorus and chorus part where the speaker says, “I'm not fazed, only here to sin” suggests that the speaker does not wish to “bother” this person because he is merely socializing and flirting with other people at the party. Yet, “If Eve ain't in your garden, you know that you can call me when you want, call me when you need”

hints at the speaker's homosexual desire upon this specific person as long as it is consensual and reciprocal. The absence of "Eve" in his garden connotes male homosexuality which is the central concept of the song. Moreover, in the chorus part, Hill employs the male homosexual reference from the homo-erotic film *Call Me by Your Name* (Sony Pictures Classics) which is based on André Aciman's book of the same name. It demonstrates Hill's first exposure to a male homosexual movie. ("Lil Nas X "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" Official Lyrics & Meaning", 00:04:50 - 00:04:59) The rapper is impressed with the idea of "calling somebody by your own name as lovers, and try to keep it between you two" (00:05:00 – 00:05:05).

In the post-chorus, however, the song echoes the more desperate feeling of the speaker. Since it is "a lust song" (00:05:50 – 00:05:59), when the speaker mentions, "I wanna feel on your ass in Hawaii", it graphically depicts the act of sodomy which is the precise sexual act performed among male homosexual society. The speaker also illustrates how "(he) want that jet lag from fucking and flying, shoot a child in (his) mouth while (he's) riding", this line envisages how the speaker wants to taste the euphoric feeling from sexual activity and substance use, and how the speaker wishes the person to swallow his semen.

The line "why me? A sign of the times every time that I speak", intends to reflect Hill's perspective on his homosexuality and what "*Montero*" has represented. The rapper stresses that "I'm opening my mouth for so many people, not because I'm Lil Nas X, it's simple because my identity itself too" (00:06:55 – 00:07:10). This song is a sign of "how things are changing" (00:07:10 – 00:07:18) through this line "A dime and a nine, it was mine every week, What a time, an incline, God was shining on me" (Hill). It shows his success from "*Old Town Road*" which was ranked number one for nineteen weeks ("Lil Nas X "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" Official Lyrics & Meaning", 00:07:32 – 00:07:45) (Billboard), despite Hill's homosexuality. This musical success epitomizes how society's perspective toward homosexuality has changed positively in the 21st century.

The speaker's lust turns to extreme desperation when the bridge sings "call me by your name (mmm, mmm, mmm), Tell me you love me in private, Call me by your name (mmm, mmm, mmm), I do not care if you lying, Well, I'm just feeling, mm-uh, I wanna get, mm-uh" (Hill) the speaker exudes his extreme erotic frustration. He does

not care if his counterpart's feeling for him [the speaker] is genuine which implies the toxic traits in the relationship where the feelings between two people are unbalanced.

Speaking of "*Montero*" music video, the visual message effectively supplements the process of Hill's self-revelation. The aim to interrupt heteronormativity and Christianity by portraying his (sexual) Satanism glorification has provoked some Christian audiences. Pastor Greg Locke refers to Hill's video as "demonism and wickedness" (Cernei). Nevertheless, when being questioned about his attention to "*Montero*" video, the rapper replies on Twitter: "Dear 14-year-old Montero, I wrote a song with our name in it. it's about a guy I met last summer. I know we promised to never come out publicly, I know we promised to never be 'that' type of gay person, I know we promised to die with the secret, but this will open doors for many other queer people to simply exist. you see this is very scary for me, people will be angry, they will say I'm pushing an agenda. but the truth is, I am. the agenda to make people stay the f— out of other people's lives and stop dictating who they should be. sending you love from the future. -lnx" (@LilNasX). In this regard, "*Montero*" music video inclines to serve personal purposes on his coming out as well as a commentary message on the society about human sexualities.



*Figure 3: Lil Nas X's (queer) Garden of Eden
Columbia, YouTube*

Hill pushes the satirical subversion of sexual consumption into "*Montero*"'s music video. Saturating with metaphor, the first act occurs in the garden of (queer) Eden, where Hill plays Adam, who is playing guitar under the tree of knowledge. Though there is a debate about whether or not Hill is Adam or Eve or a combination of both, Hill confirms that this scene is inspired by the *Brokeback Mountain* movie,

which is encircled the homosexual relationship between two male friends (“Lil Nas X Talks Montero, Dolly Parton, The Gay Agenda, Why He’s Single & More”, 00:40:00 – 00:40:13). Later, Hill is startled by a serpent creature whose face is also Hill. Joseph Howley, an associate professor of classics at Columbia University says, “The story of the garden is historically misogynist...it aligns women with evils, it aligns sexuality with women and with evil. Lil Nas is turning that on its head with the way that his character and the serpent interact”. The replacement of Eve and the forbidden fruit to sexual consumption with the serpent indicates Hill’s revelation of his homosexuality. From the first minute, Hill expresses his queer desire in the mythological spaces which are never available to the “non-heterosexuality”

The inscription on the tree of knowledge confirms this remark. It bears a quote from Aristophanes’ famous speech in Plato’s *Symposium*:



Figure 4: A quotation from Plato’s *Symposium* on the tree of knowledge, Columbia, Youtube

The phrase taken from Aristophanes’ speech translates to English “Because then the nature is divided, they desire each half” (Chow “*Lil Nas X Interview on 'Montero' Video, LGBTQ Repression.*”; Stovall), taken from 191a: R.E. Allen translation of the Plato’s *Symposium*: “Now when their nature was divided in two, each half is longing rushed to the other half of itself”. The playwright narrates the originality of mankind in which humans were initially two bodies stuck together until the bodies were separated by Zeus, “So saying he cut human beings in two the way people slice serviceberries to preserve them by drying, or as they cut eggs with a hair”

(190e; Stovall). The statement from *Symposium* favors homoeroticism and is popularized in the queer spaces by the musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Stovall).



*Figure 5: Lil Nas X's version of martyrdom
Columbia, YouTube*



*Figure 6: Lil Nas X facing an angry crowd in the
court, Columbia YouTube*

The symbolism in “*Montero*” reflects the idea of self-discovery and self-empowerment, especially from himself. In the second act, Hill is brought into the colosseum-lookalike space and is heckled and judged by the audiences and judges who have Hill’s face. The officers and the judges who wear Marie-Antoinette hairstyle mirror the cross-dressing idea (including the serpent creature). These elements play an essential role as the emblem of Hill’s gender fluidity. The disapproval gestures from himself as a judge and audiences reflect the self-denial of his sexuality in the past. Hil is being chained by his own judgment. However, he also acts as a martyr who sacrifices his life for his own faith.

Roland Betancourt, a professor at the University of California, Irvine and the author of *Byzantine Intersectionality: Sexuality, Gender, and Race in the Middle Ages*, comments that Hill plays “a Christian martyr in the tradition of Roman Catholics getting murdered for their faith” (TIME). When Hill dies from being stoned, his faith in “preferred” God and “preferred” sexuality dies with him.



Figure 7: The angel who resembles Ganymede, Columbia YouTube



Figure 8: The painting “The Rape of Ganymede” by Naldini, Giovanni Battista

Later, Hill ascends to heaven where he is not greeted by Saint Peter (the keeper of the “key to the kingdom”) (Matthew 16:19) at the Pearly Gates (Revelation 21:21). It is rather a male angel resembles the Greek mythological figure Ganymede who has long been symbolized of homosexuality. It also mirrors the image of “birds” as a phallic symbol. Betancourt says, “In the

moment of Christian ascent, you have this very queer iconography and this early example of representation of same-gender desire in antiquity, I see that the scene of salvation as not that he's going to heaven, but rather having a same-gender consummation that is legitimized by Pagan gods.” (Chow, *“Inside Lil Nas X's Record-Breaking, Culture-Changing Summer”*).



Figure 9: Lil Nas X's version of Hell, Columbia YouTube

Hill descends into hell by dancing and riding on the pole. In the Hell's throne room, the phrase in Latin “*Damnant Quod Non Intelligunt*” which translates: “They condemn what they do not understand” appeared on the floor. The passage manifests social perception and discrimination against homosexuality. In a way, it also emphasizes the Christian rejection of homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:8-10, Jude 7). Nonetheless, Hill walks past it. His action symbolizes his indifference toward society's criticism of his sexuality. By grinding on the Devil, his [Hill] sexually tempting act is a religious insult. The exaggeration in clothing and acting infers Hill's attempt to agitate the viewer's reaction rather than actual worship of the Devil. It could be a direct critique of Christianity and its repressive nature on human sexuality. Lucifer, a light-bearer, seems to denote Hill's sexual enlightenment and his self-empowerment's journey as a rebellion against God (Milton 4). The Devil himself is seen to be in the submissive position. In the end, Hill murders the Devil and wears his crown, becoming The King of Hell. This act of self-Christening embodies the notion of self-acceptance. The rejection of both God and Satan depicts a sense of skepticism in religious beliefs. By

disregarding society's expectations of his sexuality, Hill becomes powerful and capable of ruling his own path.

A Portrait and "*Montero*" depict their version of the inferno differently. Joyce's *A Portrait* meticulous description of hell indicates Dedalus's lasting "spiritual and physical torments" (Joyce, *A Portrait* 137) from committing the sexual "mortal sin" (105). Joyce explains one's suffering in agony in the eternal hell with vivid imagery: "Every sense of the flesh is tortured and every faculty of the soul therewith: the eyes with impenetrable utter darkness, the nose with noisome odours, the ears with yells and howls and execrations, the taste with foul matter, leprous corruption, nameless suffocating filth, the touch with redhot goads and spikes, with cruel tongues of flames. And through the several torments of the senses, the immortal soul is tortured eternally in its very essence amid the leagues upon leagues of glowing fires kindled in the abyss by the offended majesty of the Omnipotent God and fanned into everlasting and ever increasing fury by the breath of the anger of the Godhead." (131). This passage is merely one example of the use of imagery to appeal to the reader's possible sense. The detailed description of devils and sinners and the endless pain one must endure in hell enthrone one's self-exclusion from the presence of God. Joyce's projection of hell demonstrates one's extreme fear of purgatory rather than a challenge to the divine. Therefore, Dedalus's atheism does not imply that he will worship Satan. On the contrary, Hill's portrayal of an inferno is his encounter with Satan/Lucifer himself. Hill's brave facial expression and confident movement suggest he overcomes fear of eternal punishment. Hill's hell is the climax of the video. As he slides down the pole, the viewer could anticipate Hill's potential sexual act with Satan. Yet, the twisted ending with the death of Satan is Hill's sexual liberation and his autonomy in political and moral sense.

Conclusion

By re-examining the correlation between Dedalus's sexuality and the religious allusions that appeared in the novel regarding his spiritual liberation, I propose that Stephen Dedalus's homoerotic cathexes are secreted through his disapproval of his homeland's religious, political, and social situation. Joyce's endeavor to challenge the Catholic teachings in the conversation and confession between Dedalus and Cranly

functions as a veil in order to keep Joyce's creation of a character with homosexuality unnoticed and undetected by the law. The display of homoerotic desires and discomfort in Dedalus's journey of self-discovery and the longing for liberation throughout the novel parallels Hill's "*Montero (Call Me by Your Name)*" notion of homosexuality as a part of one's identity journey. Anyhow, the representation of homosexuality in Dedalus exemplifies Joyce's view on sexualities, still, adheres to a sexuality binary—homosexuality vs. heterosexuality, rather than diverse or spatialized sexualities. Hill's "*Montero*" extends the artists' capacity to represent diverse sexualities beyond the dominant cultural view of genders through a binary lens.

Vernacular music plays a massive role in postmodern music. Hip-hop music as it originated in the African American community, epitomizes the notion of postmodernism (Kramer 29). The complexity of language in modernist works becomes more oversimplified and digestible for the larger group of audience. The shifting of Anglocentric to peripheral narratives of the marginalized is apparent in postmodernism (34). The simplicity of postmodern lyrics is challenged by their visual videos, which are packed with symbolism and imagery. To connect two different eras and genres of art, the cultural approach to human sexuality should be utilized. We can see how the artists attempt to use their art as a critique of institutional religion and beliefs and its repressive nature on human sexuality. Each work has its own autonomy and echoes the socio-political context of its contemporary. The idea of ideological hypocrisy of the "institutions" as well as the fluidity of language has never been obsolete. They offer the reader the chance to reassess the multiplicity and extensiveness of words. Language becomes "revelation". The modernist works explore the ambiguity and complexity of the human world. Sociopolitical and sexuality issues are addressed and discussed through the artists' crafts. Yet, they are partially restricted. Postmodern music, however, is reflecting as well as expanding its content in order to reach a greater audience. The very message from Joyce extends to a large audience through Lil Nas X and Hozier's works by the media.

Finally, the artists' utilization of religious allusions in the topic of human sexual orientation, whether heterosexuality or homosexuality, is worth researching. However, beneath the surface of "binary sexuality", the absence of female figures and the lack of representation of other sexualities such as bisexuality and asexuality are

being found in the mentioned literary works. The topic of the misogynistic nature of “male entitlement” hidden in the LGBTQ+ hierarchy should be further studied.



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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

VITA

NAME Saranpat Chiangprom

DATE OF BIRTH 4 February 1992

PLACE OF BIRTH Thailand

**INSTITUTIONS
ATTENDED** Chiangmai University
Payap University

HOME ADDRESS 123/14 Bor Sang Grand Ville 4, Mae Khue, Doi Saket,
Chiangmai, Thailand 50220



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