



Dédalus en Compostela

Vicente Risco

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Translated from the Galician by Aoileann J. Lyons

Xunta de Galicia

Fundación Vicente Risco



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(*Pseudoparáfrase*)

O que vou referir aconteceu como volo conto nunca mañá de seca-fría, quinta-feira, día da Ascensión do Noso Señor do ano de 1926 da Era Cristiá, cento e vinte anos despois da invención do Corpo do Santo Apóstolo Sant Iago Zebedeo, e sendo o autor deste escrito de corenta e un anos.

Día nebracento e fresqueiro, con moito gando en Santa Susana, e rapazas de trenza cunha lazada no cabo andando polas rúas de tenda en tenda.

Foi a segunda vez que atopei a Stephen Dédalus. El xa estivera aquel inverno no meu despacho de Ourense, Santo Domingo, 47-2º, en corpo e alma, coa súa barbiña e os seus anteollos, e a solapa do sobretodo subida, con chapeu negro, e dun xeito que semellaba que ía enloitado, sen estalo... O certo, para contar verdade, é que esta súa presenza colleu realidade no terceiro mundo dos tres mundos interiores de cada home, a saber: Mundo sensíbel, Mundo intelixíbel, Mundo maquinábel (segundo algúns: previsíbel), triplo, micro e quizais non macrocosmos – polo menos así pensaba eu daquela –; mais para o caso disto escribir, tanto ten, ademais de que sempre será unha caste coñecida e non nova de realidade do terceiro mundo... Ocupada a mesa de braseiro polos que xogaban o *mahjongg*, cómplices meus no pecado de orientalismo, Stephen Dédalus acomodouse na gran mesa Biedermeier, collida dun modelo alemán, e acugulada de libros, revistas, brochuras, papeis, cartas, tarxetas, secantes, cabichas e un dobre decímetro que serve para pór a escala as plantas das igrexas románicas. Soamente que cando estivo na miña casa, tiña Stephen corenta e tres anos ben cumpridos, e cando o atopei en Sant Iago algún tempo despois, tiña dezanove anos, misterio que ben puidera enxergar sen botar contas sobre a relación matemática dos anos de Stephen Dédalus cos anos de Leopoldo Bloom; abonda con pórse na realidade das cousas e xa está, porque resulta probado que non soamente unha reversión do tempo é teoricamente posíbel na física matemática, senón que de certo unha tal reversión acontece realmente no soño, de onde se deduce que o espírito pode ler no libro do tempo para atrás ou para adiante, tal e como se len as escrituras arias, ou tal como se len as escrituras semíticas, sen que o escrito perda a súa significación, aínda que quizais o misterio do acontecer se puxera claro para aquel que soubera ler de enriba para abaixo, como se len as escrituras mongólicas.

Tampouco penso eu que sexa estraño atopar con Stephen en Compostela, onde poida que haxa máis dun.

O caso foi coma vou referir: saín eu dunha tenda de ultramarinos da Azabachería, toda chea de latas ordenadas coma os libros dunha biblioteca. A semellanza non está soamente na orde-

Dedalus in Compostela

(Pseudo-paraphrase)

What you are about to read happened just the way I tell it, on a cold-dry Friday morning, the Day of the Ascension of Our Lord in the year 1926 of the Christian Era, one hundred and twenty years after the invention of the Mortal Remains of the Holy Apostle St James son of Zebedee, the author of this story being then in his fortieth year.

The day opened fresh and misty, with cattle crowding into and around Santa Susana, and young girls with plaited hair and ribbon ties trailing from one shop to the next.

It was my second encounter with Stephen Dedalus. Once already that winter he had stood in my office in Ourense, Santo Domingo, 47-2º, body and soul, bearded and bespectacled, with a black hat and the collar raised on his overcoat, looking as if he was in mourning, not that he was... In fact, truth be told, the reality of his presence existed in the third of the three interior worlds inside of every man, these being the Sensible, the Intelligible, and the Mechanical (as some would have it: the Predictable); a threefold micro- rather than macrocosm – so I thought then, at least. Not that it matters much in the present context, of course, except to observe that the reality of the third world is always familiar and never new... Observing that the mahjongg players – my partners in orientalist sin – had already taken up residence over by the stove table, Stephen Dedalus made himself comfortable at the great Biedermeier, modelled on one in the German style, and just then crammed with books, reviews, paperbacks and papers, journals, letters, cards, blotters, cigarette ends and the kind of ruler stick one uses to plot a scale for the levels in a Romanesque church. The thing is, when he came to my house, Stephen was well into his forty-third year; and when I met him in Sant Iago some time later, he was nineteen. Not that one has to start reckoning the mathematical relation between Stephen Dedalus's age and Leopold Bloom's to find an answer to the mystery; merely place oneself inside the reality of things and there it is. Men have proved not only that reversing time is a theoretical possibility of mathematical physics, but that a reversal of this sort actually takes place in our dreams. Thus the spirit may read backwards or forwards through the book of time, just as Arian or Semitic writings are read, without the meaning of the piece being lost – although the mystery of the incident might be clear all along to anyone able to read from up to down, as Mongolic texts are read.

I do not find it strange, either, though, that I should have come upon Stephen in Compostela, where it is always possible that there may be more than one of him.

This is basically how it happened: I emerged from a grocer's on Acibechería, from a shop stacked high with tins as the books in a library are. The similarity between the two is not

nación en alzadeiros: está máis aínda en que as latas coas súas etiquetas e rótulos e co que levan dentro, teñen algo de libros de Historia Natural, onde a Natureza está tan morta coma nas latas e nos cadros de moitos pintores, tanto dos que pintan naturezas mortas, coma dos que pintan naturezas vivas que saen mortas. Dei a volta pola Praza do Pan, onde Cervantes, seccionado e estilista, está no medio da fonte, obxecto de arte propio para premio de Certame Literario, se non fora o custe do carreto, e tomei polo Preguntoiro, e despois dunha pousa no 32, tenda de óptica, baixei pola Calderería, e logo por Tras de Salomé á Rúa Nova. Pasei o Pórtico de Salomé, sacando o chapeu ao pasar diante da porta, e na librería do lado estaba Stephen.

Hora e media andamos en amor e compañía por baixo dos arcos da Rúa Nova, daquela desertos e doados para que o espírito camiñe máis do que camiñan os pés, para deixalo voar coma un papaventos, sempre un tendo man da corda, sen frear de máis.

Tristeiro coma decote, Stephen falaba: e eu falaba con el, sen medo ningún, e vou pór aquí a nosa conversa para instrución de escarriados.

E dixo Stephen Dédalus:

— Xa sei que non te estraña o verme aquí. Comprendes que eu sexa o último romeiro de Sant Iago. Arelo que o meu corpo descanse a carón do Apóstolo, porque ben visto, xa pouco me queda por facer no mundo, máis que morrer, e morrerei aquí, coma Gaíferos de Mormaltán, ou coma Guillerme de Aquitania. Quero descansar na vosa cova, ser enterrado aquí convosco e coa vosa alma. De aquí para diante, xa non virán máis que turistas: o tempo dos peregrinos pasou para sempre. Eu quero ser o derradeiro.

E dixen eu:

— Quero que me expliques tres cousas: primeira, por que, sendo así que ti andas polo mundo fuxindo da Cruz, vés aquí na procura da sombra do Santuario. Segunda, por que, se procuras o Santuario non o procuras na túa terra. Terceira, por que, se foxes dos homes da túa raza, vés aquí, entre os homes da túa raza.

Dixo Stephen Dédalus:

— Cada unha das tres preguntas que me fas contén ademais un suposto, e a pregunta pende dese suposto, porque pensas que hai contradición entre ese suposto e a miña conduta. Na primeira pregunta, o suposto é certo e verdadeiro. Eu ando polo mundo fuxindo da Cruz: nin na vida nin na morte quero ser da Santa Compañía.

Dixen eu:

— Iso proba que ti sabes ben o que representa o misterio da Santa Compañía, que non é máis que a Igrexa Padecente que se fai visíbel para as almas perdidas de todo, o cal até certo punto vén a ser equivalente. Mais daquela, debes saber tamén, porque se cho non deprende a sinxeleza, deprenderíacho a picardía, que cando un camiñante se atopa coa Santa Compañía, para que non lle metan a Cruz, abre os brazos en cruz, e berra: “Esta é a miña Cruz!”

Dixo Stephen Dédalus:

— Nin sequer me cómpre abrir os brazos: eu son a miña Cruz. Eu son a miña penitencia, a miña pena, o meu castigo, o meu verdugo, a miña condenación.

Dixen eu:

— Distingamos: cando un anda coa Cruz, devece o corpo e esmorece a alma, mais sálvase o home. Que xa sabes que o home real e verdadeiro non é o corpo só nin a alma soa, senón o composto de alma e corpo, e por iso é polo que está disposta a resurrección da carne.

one of shelving only, but is still more in the way the tins with their signs and their labels and the stuff inside of them have a certain something that is reminiscent of the books in a Natural History section, where the Nature captured in the pictures of many painters lies as still and dead as it does in those tins, whether their subject be still life or the living Nature they smothered with their brush. I turned into the Praza do Pan, where Cervantes's severed wordsmith sits at the centre of his fountain, an artwork worthy of a Certame Literario prize, if it weren't for the cost of carting him there. Then set off down Preguntoiro, stopping briefly by the optician's, N° 32 (ground floor), and after down Caldeirería, and across Tras de Salomé to Rúa Nova. I walked by the Pórtico de Salomé, lifting my hat as I passed the door, and there in the bookshop next door stood Stephen.

An hour and a half we ambled in merry companionship, up and down the arcades of Rúa Nova, deserted then and inviting more to spirit wanderings than strolling feet; loosing the soul like a kite, and just a light hand to hold it in.

Stephen spoke, morose as ever; and I spoke to him, bold and unburdened. And here, for the edification of any not quite up to speed, is what was said.

Said Stephen Dedalus:

'I know you aren't surprised to see me here. You understand that I am the last pilgrim of Sant Iago. My deepest wish is for my body to rest beside the Apostle James because, quite frankly, there's little left for me to do in this world, apart from die; and here I will die, like Gaiferos de Mormaltán, or William of Aquitaine. My wish is to be laid to rest in the same tomb, to be buried here with your people and with the soul of your people. From now on, only tourists will be making the journey here: the days of the pilgrim are gone forever. I want to be the last.'

And I said:

'I want you to explain three things to me: firstly, if you spend your life escaping from the Cross, why have you come here into the shadow of the Holy Shrine. Secondly, if it's the Shrine you're after, why not look for it in your own land. Thirdly, if you flee the company of men of your own race, why come here, amongst men of your own race.'

Said Stephen Dedalus:

'Each of the three questions you have asked me contains a supposition, and each one is based upon that supposition, because you see a contradiction between your assumptions and my conduct. In the first question, your view is valid and correct. I do spend my life avoiding the Cross: I have no wish to become a member of the Santa Compañía, in life or in death.'

I said:

'That proves that you do understand something of the meaning of the Santa Compañía, which is to say the Church of the Suffering Spirit that appears to the souls of the damned, the two being more or less the same thing. But you must also know, therefore – for if common sense hasn't taught you, craft should – that when a man runs into the Santa Compañía, to stop them from putting the Cross on him, he opens his arms out wide and shouts: "This is my Cross!"'

Said Stephen Dedalus:

'I don't even need to open my arms: I am my Cross. I am my penance, my sorrow, my punishment, my executioner, my own eternal damnation.'

Dixo Stephen Dédalus:

— Ben sei. Mais atrás da Cruz anda sempre o demo. Ao fillo do ladrón de Armenteira, cando foi restituír a Cruz que roubara o pai, e lle fallaban as forzas no camiño, o demo axudouno até que deixou a Cruz na igrexa, mais tan logo como a restituíu, levouno o demo... Mais se eu son a miña Cruz, como me hei arredar dela para que me leve o demo?

Dixen eu:

— Cando un home, por levar con el cruces ou reliquias, non pode entrar no inferno, anda á procura dunha alma caritativa que lle tire a Cruz que leva.

Dixo Stephen Dédalus:

— Mais eu, o único bendito que levo comigo é o meu sangue celta. Namentres non me tiren o meu sangue celta, non me poderei arredar da Cruz; non meu sangue está a miña Cruz, e namentres a miña vontade renega da Cruz, o meu sangue vai cara ela, e coa dela como a seiva dunha árbore decotada na forza da vida en primavera: porque a nosa raza é tamén unha árbore decotada, é tamén un Cristo encravado na Cruz a deitar sangue; baixo das aguias a nosa raza é a viva imaxe de Cristo crucificado. Aquí tes a solución do primeiro dos tres problemas que me puxeches: eu ando polo mundo fuxindo da Cruz, sen que o meu sangue me permita arredar dela, senón que constantemente turra de min cara ao Santuario. Velaquí a primeira razón, que é a razón psicolóxica; mais hai aínda outra razón que é a razón metafísica: xa o dito vulgar, que citei antes, respondendo o teu segundo argumento, dinos que atrás da Cruz anda sempre o demo. En efecto, o demo non se pode arredar endexamais completamente de Deus, por máis que queira. O demo ten a vontade arredada do seu ser; a súa vontade é a que está no inferno... Pois ben, así como o demo non se pode arredar enteiramente de Deus, así eu, que son do demo, non me podo arredar tampouco moito da igrexa. Sinto algo que turra de min cara a ela, cara á liturxia, cara á teoloxía, cara á filosofía escolástica, cara á erudición conventual, cara á disciplina dos claustros: non me podo escapar deste circo máxico, por máis que faga...

Dixen eu:

— A pauliña que leva o demo Satanás é o ser unha criatura de Deus.

Dixo Stephen Dédalus:

— Por iso quere sempre o mal e sempre fai o ben.

Dixen eu:

— Nunca comprendín ben ese dito de Goethe. O que acontece é que o poder do mal é limitado. O foguete foxe da terra até que remata a pólvora da subida.

Stephen Dédalus calou, e eu tamén fiquei calado. Seguimos camiñando cara ao Toural. Na esquina, por fronte ao posto onde venden os xornais, paramos unha miga. Pasaban algúns por baixo dos arcos do cantón, vindo das Huérfanas. Nisto saquei un cigarro e ofrecín outro a Stephen. Non o quixo.

— Non se debe fumar. O tabaco é un veneno e o fumar un gasto tonto. Nin se debe fumar, nin beber. Hai que conservar o corpo san e limpo. Debemos combater todas esas feblezas da vontade.

Dixen eu:

— E mais o demo aconsella os vicios.

Dixo el:

— Era noutro tempo, agora xa non. Eu non teño vicios. Para que os quero? Aínda que che pareza mentira, hoxe os homes xa van tendo menos vicios, porque xa non lles fan falla.

I said:

‘There is a difference: when a man walks with the Cross, his body wastes and his soul wilts, but the man lives. And you know that true man is neither all body nor all soul, but a mixture of both, which is why we have the resurrection of the flesh.’

Said Stephen Dedalus:

‘I know. But the devil always lurks behind the Cross. When the son of the thief from Armenteira went to give back the Cross his father had stolen and grew weary along the way, the devil helped him until he got the Cross to the church. But no sooner had he restored the Cross than the devil took him... But, if I am my own Cross, how do I set it down and let the devil take me?’

I said:

‘When a man has crosses or relics to carry, so that he cannot enter hell, he seeks out a charitable soul to take the Cross from him.’

Said Stephen Dedalus:

‘But the only blessed thing I have to carry around is my Celtic blood. Until they take my Celtic blood, I cannot lose my Cross. My Cross is in my blood, and while my will rejects it, my blood goes to it and drains from it like the sap from a tree hewn down in the thrusting spring of its life. Because our race is also a felled tree, and also a Christ nailed to the Cross, and the blood pouring from him; under the eagles, our race is the living image of Christ crucified. This is the answer to the first of the three questions you asked me: I go through life attempting to avoid the Cross but my blood will not let me break away, and drags me relentlessly in the direction of the Holy Shrine. This is the first reason, the psychological reason. However, there is a further cause, the metaphysical cause: the old saying I mentioned earlier, in answer to your second argument, says that the devil always lurks behind the Cross. In other words, the devil can never get away from God completely, however much he may wish to. The devil’s will is separate from himself; his will is what is present in hell... So, just as the devil cannot detach himself from God, so I, a creature of the devil, cannot drag myself far away from the church. There is some force that pulls me towards it, towards the liturgy, towards theology, scholastic philosophy, conventual erudition, the discipline of enclosure: I cannot escape the magic circle, no matter what I do...’

I said:

‘Satan’s tragedy is that he is a child of God.’

Said Stephen Dedalus:

‘And so is always on the side of evil but always ends up doing good.’

I said:

‘I never understood what Goethe meant by that. The thing is that there is a limit to the power of evil. The rocket speeds away from the earth until its launch powder runs out.’

Stephen Dedalus went quiet, and I kept my silence. We carried on walking in the direction of the Toural. At the corner, across from the newspaper seller’s stand, we stopped a moment. A small group of people were passing close by, under the arches, making their way from As Orfas. I produced a cigarette and offered Stephen one. He didn’t take it.

‘You shouldn’t smoke. Tobacco is poisonous and smoking a stupid waste of money. One should neither smoke nor drink. Keep the body clean and healthy. We should guard against all these weaknesses of will.’

Atoparás a moitos que non fuman, nin beben viño, e aínda bastantes que non comen carne. Tocante aos outros pecados, has reparar que se dan moito máis en homes de certos anos. A mocidade é moito menos pecadenta do que era no teu tempo... E a cousa explícase ben: o vicio xa non serve para se condenaren os homes. Os de antes, sendo máis fortes e resistentes, aturaban aínda de vellos unha vida de vicio e podían morrer sen arrepentimento; os de agora, que conservan a saúde a poder de réxime dietético, de hixiene e de deporte, poderán facer algúns anos unha mala vida, mais o seu corpo logo cansa, e teñen que vir ás boas. Esta é a razón física. A razón metafísica é que o vicioso, á fin, é un home que acepta os dons de Deus; poderá abusar deles, poderá ser egoísta e desagradecido, poderá ser hipócrita, mais non é soberbio. O soberbio non ten vicios, o soberbio é pulcro e impecábel. Por esta causa, os homes, conforme se vaian afastando de Deus, han ter menos vicios, e por iso ves triunfar as Sociedades de Temperanza e as institucións fomentadoras da moral pública. Xa verás como se ha de prohibir a prostitución, hase perseguir o opio e a morfina e a cocaína, e non ha haber bailes, nin teatros, nin cabarés. Os homes futuros han ser abstemios, vexetarianos, castos, honrados, tolerantes, ben pensados e ben falados, e as mulleres honestas e traballadoras. Han semellar santos e han ser verdadeiros condenados.

Dixen eu:

— Xa din que o Anticristo ha remedar a Cristo.

Dixo el:

— Estamos divagando. Imos á túa segunda pregunta, de por que non procuro o Santuario na miña Terra. Respondo: do mesmo xeito que fuxo da Cruz, fuxo da miña raza. Primeiro, porque a raza é un vencello e eu quero ser libre; segundo, porque a miña raza é a imaxe viva de Cristo e eu quero ser a imaxe do Anticristo. Respondo aínda: do mesmo xeito que fuxo da miña raza, fuxo da miña terra. Primeiro, porque a miña alma afogaba nela...

Atallei eu:

— Iso pásalle a todos os literatoides de provincia. Canto máis pequena é a alma, máis espazo quere.

Dixo el:

— Por certo. Non podo negar que me imito aos literatoides de provincia. Xa sei que é un defecto, unha mágoa. Non sería quen son se non tivera lixo; daquela non podería ter nado muller.

Dixen eu:

— Tamén Maldoror pensaba que era máis ca iso...

Dixo el:

— Non me poñas en comparanza con aquel pobre home, que segundo o León Bloy, non mereceu ir ao inferno. Eu son outra cousa: de propia vontade, con toda conciencia, cheo de siso, coa miña carne mortal enteira, cos meus cinco sentidos corporais, coas tres potencias da miña alma, escollín a condenación. Teño xa medio corpo mergullado no inferno, dun instante a outro, o meu pai adoptivo de aló embaixo turrará por min, e abur!... Non me atalles máis se queres que che responda as preguntas. A miña terra era para min un nó de silencio na gorxa, unha mortalla no corpo, e uns grillóns nos pés e nas mans. Ademais, aqueles homes queren ser, e eu quero o non ser; aqueles homes soñan e fan unha patria, e eu son o home que non se quixo axeonllar diante da súa nai morta.

I said:

'Yet the devil leads us into vice.'

Said he:

'That was then; not anymore he doesn't. I have no vices. Why should I? You may not wish to believe it but men these days have fewer and fewer vices, because they don't need them now. There are already plenty who do not smoke, or drink wine, and even quite a few who don't eat meat. As for other sins, you'll notice that they tend to occur among men of a certain age. Young men are far less sinful than they were in your day... The simple reason is this: the sins of depravity are no longer punishable by eternal damnation. Men before, because they were stronger and more resilient, were able to maintain their vicious existence right into old age and met their deaths with a clean conscience. Men today, who protect their health by dint of dietary regime, good hygiene and sports, may devote a few years to the bad life, but the body soon gets tired, and then it's time to make good again. This is the physical reason. The metaphysical explanation is that a man with vices is, ultimately, a man who accepts the gifts of God; he may abuse them, he may be selfish, and ungrateful, or a hypocrite, but he is not proud. A proud man has no vices; the proud man is clean and impeccable. And this is why, as men move further and further away from God, they hold onto fewer and fewer vices; and it is also why you see the rise of Temperance Societies and institutions for the encouragement of public morality. You just wait and see: they'll outlaw prostitution, hunt down the opium and morphine and cocaine, and put a stop to dancing, theatre and cabaret. The men of the future will be abstemious, vegetarian, chaste, honourable, tolerant, well-thinking and well-spoken; and the women, honest and industrious. They will look like saints but their souls will be devil-possessed.'

I said:

'They do say that the Antichrist will imitate Christ.'

Said he:

'We're getting sidetracked. Let's look at your second question, as to why I don't look for the Sanctum in my own Land. The answer I'll give you is this: just as I wish to escape from the Cross, so also do I flee from my own race. For one, because race is a bond and I wish to be free; and second of all, because my race is the living image of Christ and I wish to be the image of the Antichrist. And I'll tell you another thing: just as I try to escape my race, so have I left my country behind. Firstly, because my soul was suffocating there...'

I interjected:

'That's what every scribbler out of the provinces says. The smaller the spirit, the more space it needs.'

Said he:

'True. I can't deny that I'm just like any of those scribblers. And it's a failing, I admit, and a shame. My faults have made me who I am, though; and being born of woman, it could not have been otherwise.'

I said:

'Maldoror had the idea that he was more than that, too...'

Said he:

'Don't compare me to that poor man, who Léon Bloy says should never have ended up in hell. I'm a different animal: by my own will and in full consciousness of the facts, my

Dixen eu:

— Tamén por esta banda hai moitos coma ti.

Dixo el:

— Ben sei. Xa non precisas que che explique a túa terceira pregunta.

Ditas estas verbas, seguimos os dous en silencio até o cabo sa rúa Sonorosa de tan calada. Despois pola Conga, a Quintana, as Praterías, a Praza do Hospital – Montero Ríos estaba o día aquel invisíbel – e por debaixo do arco, de novo á Azabachería, e un pedazo polos soportais que dan riba do patín da Catedral.

Stephen volveu falar:

— Non sei, mais semella que eu sinto, andando por estas rúas, algo que camiña cara ao non ser. Que soño é o que envolve estas pedras?... Aquí atopei xente que non soña, e coido que non lles vai mal. Non levan vento na cabeza, discorren demasiado ben, pódese falar con eles, porque ao mesmo tempo tampouco se pasman de nada.

Dixen eu:

— Eses son os que che simpatizan?

Dixo Stephen:

— Non che me fan mal, déixame acougar. Pode un morrer tranquilo entre eles.

Dixen eu:

— Moito lles queres...

Dixo Stephen:

— Por iso que dixeches antes é polo que eu, fuxindo dos homes da miña terra, veño aquí procurar os homes da miña raza. Olla: alá, na miña terra, os meus irmáns camiñan cara ao ser. Aquí todo camiña cara ao non ser, pola vontade e pola industria destes meus irmáns de aquí. Estes son os meus. Veño aquí gozarme no suicidio da miña raza. Por iso, porque aquí todo corre á perdición, quero vir aquí morrer, vivindo entre os mortos os meus días derradeiros. A deles, que xa non son de aquí, é a miña patria verdadeira.

Dixen eu:

— Será patria dos sen patria.

Dixo Stephen:

— A miña patria é a patria dos sen patria.

Dixen eu:

— Os sen patria non son dignos de amor.

Stephen Dédalus quixo que fose tomar café na súa compañía no Quiqui Bar.

Dixen eu:

— Por que nese café precisamente?

Dixo Stephen:

— Por que é dunha arquitectura odiosa.

Dixen eu:

— Vulgar, nada máis.

judgement unimpaired, my mortal flesh intact, my five bodily senses alert and the three powers of my soul disposed, I have chosen eternal punishment. I am already half sunk into hell; from one moment to the next, my adoptive father down below may hoist me hence, and then it's goodbye!... Don't interrupt me again, if you want your questions answered. My country was a knot of silence in my throat, a shroud across my body, shackles on my feet and hands. Besides which, men there want to be, while I look for unbeing; those men are dreamers and nation-builders, whereas I am the man who did not care to kneel before the body of his dead mother.'

I said:

'There are plenty like you here, as well.'

Said he:

'I know. And so you don't need me to answer your third question.'

So saying, we continued on our way in silence, to the end of the hush-loud street. And carried on up Conga, through the Quintana, to Praterías, the Praza do Hospital – Montero Ríos was invisible through the fog – through the archway, and once more up Acibecherà, and a little further again beneath the arcades that overlook the northern entrance of the Cathedral.

Stephen Dedalus spoke again:

'I'm not sure but it's as if, walking these streets, I can sense some thing that leads me towards unbeing. What dream is it these stones are wrapped in?... Here I discovered people who don't have dreams, and I think they may be better off. There is no wind in their heads, their ideas are utterly sound; yet they're easy to talk to, because, at the same time, nothing seems to shock them.'

I said:

'And you like these people?'

Said Stephen:

'I don't dislike them, I find a kind of peace in their company. One could die quietly among them.'

I said:

'Very fond of them you seem...'

Said Stephen:

'That is why, as you have said already, in trying to escape from the men of my own land, I have come here in search of the men of my race. Look: back in my country, the path my brothers follow leads towards the self. Here, everything tends towards the non-self, by the will and industry of my brothers in this land. They are my family now. I have come here to rejoice in the suicide of my race. For this reason, because everything here is already set upon the path to perdition, I have come here to die, to live out my final days among dead men. This land of men who have ceased to belong, this is my true homeland.'

I said:

'That must make it a nation of the nationless.'

Said Stephen:

'My homeland is the nation of the nationless.'

I said:

'The nationless are not worthy of love.'

Dixo Stephen:

— Non hai tal. Aquela arquitectura realiza bastante ben a contra-estética.

Dixen eu:

— Que entendes por contra-estética?

Dixo Stephen:

— Cómpre distinguir entre contra-estética e an-estética. A primeira, inconsciente e involuntaria, é un fenómeno universal nos nosos días: está nas mans de calquera que teña cartos, coma calquera ditador oriental, chámese Mustafá Kemal ou Amanullah. A segunda non pode ser abranguida máis que por naturezas xeniais, coma Le Corbusier: esas casas que fai le Corbusier, que semellan cómodas cos caixóns abertos, son a an-estética realizada na arquitectura. Unha e outra opóñense á beleza: a an-estética suprimeaa, a contra-estética derrámaa. É o caso do Quiqui Bar... Tamén me gusta unha casa que hai no Preguntoiro e algunhas outras máis.

Dixen eu:

— A beleza é cousa que vén de Deus.

Dixo Stephen:

— Por iso hoxe os homes quérena desbotar de todo... Mais imos á Catedral. Eu gozo co-rendo risco, por iso ando sempre ao redor da pía de auga bendita: bebería nela de boa gana, coma o cabalo de Almanzor... Se non estivera chea de microbios...

Dixen eu:

— Mais o demo gózase no podre e na porcallada.

Dixo Stephen:

— Tamén iso era noutro tempo. O demo agora fíxose moi pulcro. Velaquí a verba.

Dixen eu:

— Esa verba emprégana aquí todos os filósofos.

Dixo Stephen:

— Ben sei. Mais esa verba de cuarto de baño, que evoca a billa, o *water-closet*, o irrigador, o *bidet* e a bobina de papel, vénlles do materialismo práctico. Tocante ao podre, o demo non o pode amar, porque é a descomposición da materia, e ademais porque, por unha beira, o podre produce unha nova vida, e por outra, porque nela, como no sufrimento, a materia espiritualízase: é o caso tan coñecido do Cristo de Grünewald e do cadro de Valdés Leal no Hospital da Misericordia de Sevilla...

Cruzabamos o patín da Azabachería. Entramos na Catedral, demos a volta polo Pórtico da Gloria, sen ollar Stephen tan sequera para as figuras. Soamente voltándose cara á banda da Epístola e ollando a parede lisa, dixo:

— Este é o lugar do San Cristovo. Aquí non o hai; vós, en troques, tédelo en Ourense. Din que o San Cristovo tiña cara de can; o que me ha de levar a min ten cara de coello...

Andamos cara á cabeceira e entramos no deambulatorio. A portíña por onde un baixa cara ao sepulcro estaba aberta, e baixamos os dous. Diante da arca de prata, as luces ardendo quedas e inmóbiles, que aluman sen que se sintan arder, semellan lámpadas perpetuas. Stephen enmudeceu á entrada, e púxose branco coma papel. Coa voz tremente e baixa, dixo axiña:

— Non. Imos, imos de aquí. Pronto.

Stephen Dedalus wished me to come for a coffee with him at the Quiqui Bar.

I said:

‘Why that café in particular?’

Said Stephen:

‘Because the architecture is execrable.’

I said:

‘It’s vulgar, that’s all.’

Said Stephen:

‘It’s nothing of the sort. What that architecture represents is quite a good example of anti-aesthetics.’

I said:

‘What do you mean by anti-aesthetics?’

Said Stephen:

‘One has to make a distinction between anti-aesthetics and the unaesthetic. The first is unconscious and involuntary, and a universal phenomenon of the times we live in; anybody with enough money can make it his own, like any of these oriental dictators, whether his name is Mustapha Kemal or Amanullah. The second is only ever reached by men of genius, like Le Corbusier: those Le Corbusier houses, that look like desks with the drawers open, are the architectural realisation of the unaesthetic. Both are rebellions against beauty: unaesthetic art suppresses it; anti-aesthetics destroys it. That’s what the Quiqui Bar does... There’s a house on Preguntoiro that I like, too, and a few others besides.’

I said:

‘Beauty comes from God.’

Said Stephen:

‘Which is why people today want to do away with it altogether... But let us go to the Cathedral. I like to live dangerously, which is why you will always find me in and around by the holy water font: I’d be quite content to drink straight from it, like the horse of Almanzor... Only that it is so full of microbes...’

I said:

‘But the devil delights in filth and putrefaction.’

Said Stephen:

‘That, too, was before. Since then, the devil has got himself all cleaned up. That’s the term for it.’

I said:

‘All the philosophers here use it.’

Said Stephen:

‘I know. But this bathroom terminology of theirs, with its connotations of taps and water-closets, showerheads, bidets and toilet-paper rolls, is straight out of the world of practical materialism. As far as putrefaction is concerned, the devil cannot love it because it involves the decay of matter. As well as that, for one thing, the process of decomposition brings forth new life; and, for another, by rotting, as by suffering, matter becomes spiritualised. It’s the

Sáímos, e cando se repuxo, dixo:

— Non podó estar embaixo. Alí hai algo; de alí sae unha forza que non podó aturar.

Dixen eu:

— Séntese a eternidade do Espírito e a eternidade da Terra. Olla logo que non importan canto fagan os desleigados, porque non han poder suprimir o que é eterno na mente de Deus. A Terra é eterna na lembranza, e a alma é da natureza da lembranza que é a súa esencia, e o lugar da lembranza é o Entendemento divino, realidade das realidades. Aí embaixo temos a promesa de que a lembranza ha reencarnar, e tanto ten que as almas de hoxe estean esquecidas, porque esas almas non han de estar sempre neste mundo, e outras han vir, e algunhas xa están aquí, anunciando os tempos. E os tempos han pasar, e se cadra aínda antes que morras has ver o trabucamento e o erro no teu camiño.

Daquela xa se repuxera Stephen, e respondeu:

— O meu camiño está escolleito dunha vez para sempre. Tanto ten que sexa bo coma ruín. Se é unha cousa ou outra, nin ti o sabes, nin eu tampouco. Para calquera lado que me leve, hei ir sen remordemento. O que che digo de certo é que aí embaixo non hai máis que unha cova onde toda lembranza e toda esperanza fican soterradas para sempre. Por iso, aínda que fuxo dela, eu amo esa cova, e desde aquí písoa cos meus pés.

Dixen eu:

— Aínda que así fora, esqueces a resurrección da carne e a restauración que ha vir de todas as cousas no terceiro Reino: a Apocatástase.

Dixo el:

— Iso cheira a doutrina platónica. E mais ti dixeches unha vez que nós non podíamos comprender a Platón.

Dixen eu:

— Mais podemos comprender a San Agostiño.

Dixo el:

— O que eu digo é que o terceiro Reino ha ser o do Anticristo.

Dixen eu:

— Ese non é un convencemento, senón un desexo. Eu comprendo ben que o que escolleu o inferno queira que todos vaian a el, que é o que quere Satanás.

Dixo el:

— Quere, mais é por amor. Satanás ama os homes con amor infinito, e quere que todos sexan para el. As penas do inferno son os espasmos do amor sádico de Satanás. De que un empeza a servilo, xa comeza a sufrir, porque Satanás é unha fonte sen fin de amor que dá sempre sen esgotarse, e como non ten máis que dor, soamente dá dor. Eu que me entreguei a el sen pauto, por libre doazón graciosa do meu ser, non por iso fiqui sen paga: levo comigo o seu don; deume o desacougo para sempre. O que eu comecei a sentir cando aínda era un santo na Illa dos Santos e que me leva polo mundo fuxindo da lembranza que vén decote comigo como unha fada, punxente no corazón como aquel cravo que levaba Rosalía... Teño medo que esta lembranza non me deixe entrar no inferno, coma o hábito dos empanados, quixera deitar fóra todo o meu sangue, toda a substancia das miñas células... Coñezo un crego, preto do Ferrol, que estudou as ciencias ocultas. Quizais el, polo poder da máxica preta liberal que todo fai, poida evocar o vampiro que deixe o meu corpo resequido como a momia daquel

same old story as the Grünewald Christ, or the Valdés Leal painting in the Mercy Hospital in Seville...’

We were crossing the entrance court from Acibecherà. We entered the Cathedral and walked around by the Pórtico da Gloria; yet Stephen seemed not even to see the statues, though. Except when, turning and facing the epistle side of the church, he looked at the smooth, bare wall and said:

‘This is where St Christopher is supposed to be. But he’s not here; your people in Ourense have him, instead. They say St Christopher had a face like a dog; the one coming for me has a face like a rabbit...’

We walked towards the main altar and around into the ambulatory. The door down to the crypt was open, and in we both went.

The lights in front of the silver casket were burning silently and still, bright but not searing, like so many perpetual lamps.

Stephen was struck dumb as we entered, and turned white as a sheet. In a small, trembling voice, he said suddenly:

‘No. We have to go, we have to leave this place. At once.’

We left, and when he recovered, he said:

‘I can’t be in that place. There is something down there; there is some force there that I cannot bear.’

I said:

‘That force you feel is the eternity of the Spirit and the eternity of the Earth. In time you will see that it doesn’t matter what the disaffected and ungrateful do, they cannot shut out what is eternal in the mind of God. The Earth is eternal in memory, and soul is made from the stuff of memory which is its essence. The place of memory is divine Understanding, the ultimate reality. Down there in the crypt lies the promise that memory will be reborn; so what of it if the souls of today are forgotten? Those souls will not remain in this world forever; others will come, some are already here, heralding a new age. Your day will pass; you may even live to see the error and foolishness of your ways.’

Quite recovered by this time, Stephen replied:

‘The path I have chosen is final. Fair or foul, it’s all the one. Which it is to be, neither of us can say for sure. Wherever it decides to take me, I will not go sorrowing. What I can say with certainty is that the only thing at the bottom of those steps is a grave in which all memory and all hope have been interred forever. So, even though I flee before it, I love the tomb, and from here above I can lay my feet upon it.’

I said:

‘Even if that were so, you are forgetting the resurrection of the flesh and the restitution of all things to come in the third Kingdom: the Apocatastasis.’

Said he:

‘That smells like Plato to me. And you once said that there was no understanding Plato.’

I said:

‘But we can understand St Augustine.’

Faraón que pagou na alfândega inglesa coma peixe seco, segundo refiren Eça de Queiroz e Dimitri Merejkowski; mais pouco importa, porque non hai un átomo no meu corpo que non sexa substancia gaélica... E despois de todo, se non houbera inferno? E que máis terá que o inferno estea no centro da terra que que estea aquí?

Despois bateu cunha man na columna, e dixo:

— A pedra de gran é ben dura, ben apertada, resiste ben. Semella que para ela non hai tempo. O tempo que rilla, que desfai e esfarela. O outro todo é doado nesta terra; mais non haberá no mundo quen queira facer o gasto preciso para destruír estas pedras a poder de dinamita. Cantas toneladas farían falla? Semella isto unha revolta da materia contra Satanás. Velaquí outro punto difícil que me preocupa.

Dixen eu:

— Antes desfarás a pedra gran a gran, que mates o espírito que vive nela e a mantén erxeita. Bota abaixo todas estas torres e todas estas columnas: o espírito volverá erguer outras tantas; queima todos os libros; o espírito volverá facer outros novos. E contra o espírito nada pode Satanás.

Dixo el:

— Contra o espírito combate o espírito. Satanás é unha parte do espírito revoltada contra do espírito todo.

Dixen eu:

— Ese esforzo de negación e de revolta está fadado a perderse no propio baleiro que anda a procurar.

Dixo el:

— Niso está o seu triunfo.

Dixen eu:

— E niso está a fundeza da paz derradeira.

Daquela Stephen Dédalus e mais eu fixemos as paces. Stephen mergullou os dedos na pía de auga bendita e ofreceuma, e eu fixen o sinal da Cruz.

Pode que alguén dea como apócrifas estas declaracións de Stephen Dédalus. El non as ha negar, porque aínda que todos sexamos hipócritas neste mundo cando falamos de nós mesmos, Stephen Dédalus non debe ser hipócrita, se non quere deixar de ser soberbio. Tocante aos demais, eu non respondo da autenticidade empírica destas declaracións; respondo da súa absoluta necesidade metafísica. Non hai máis que xuntar o que sabemos de Stephen, para deducirmos loxicamente con seguranza crítica todas e cada unha das verbas que neste escrito lle son apostas. Ademais, eu non son tampouco culpábel de ter lido de cabo a rabo o *Portrait of the Artist as a young man*, que o mesmo Dédalus me obrigou a mercar aquel día na tenda de libros da Rúa Nova. Pode tamén que Stephen Dédalus falara doutro xeito en Dublín ou en Zurich; en Compostela é seguro que falou como eu digo, e non podería falar doutra sorte, sen deixar de ser el quen é segundo o *Portrait*, e sen deixar de ser o que é Compostela segundo a verdade.

Tamén é certo que polas circunstancias especiais da miña vida – o anecdótico – eu tiña por forza o día aquel que atopar a Stephen Dédalus; e que se dixen ao comezo que a presenza del collera realidade no terceiro mundo interior, o que iso quere dicir é que foi nese mundo

Said he:

'I say that the third Kingdom will be the kingdom of the Antichrist.'

I said:

'That's you hoping, not a conviction. I know this much, that the man who chooses hell wants everyone else to go with him, because it's what Satan wants.'

Said he:

'Satan does want that, but only out of love. The love he has for man is infinite, and he wants all men for himself. The tortures of hell are his spasms of sadistic love. His suffering begins the moment a man begins to serve him, because he is an endless fount of ever-renewing love; but because he only knows pain, he can give only pain. I who have made no pact with the devil, who gave my soul freely as a gift, have yet got something in return: I have his gift to me – anguish for all time. The feeling I first began to have while I was still a saint on the Island of Saints, and which compels me around the world, running and hiding from the memory that follows me everywhere like a spirit-vision, stabbing at my heart like that nail of Rosalía's... My fear is that this memory should prevent me from entering hell, like the winding sheet of the dead. I wish I could drain all my blood, all the contents of my cells... I know a priest, from near Ferrol, who has studied the dark arts. Maybe he, by the limitless power of liberal black magic, might be able to call forth a vampire who would drain my body dry like the mummy of that Pharaoh who was sent through customs in England as dried fish, so the story goes according to Eça de Queiroz and Dimitri Merejkowski. But what matter, since there isn't an atom in my body that is not Gaelic... And what if, after all, there is no hell? And what does it matter whether hell is at the centre of the earth or right here with us?'

He knocked on one of the columns, and said:

'A good, hard rock, granite; good and firm, and hard-wearing. Time doesn't seem to exist as far as it's concerned. Corrosive time, that breaks things up, and grinds them down. Most everything else in this world is straightforward; but surely no-one on earth would be willing to make the requisite sacrifice and dynamite these stones. How many tonnes would it take? This is like a mutiny of matter against Satan. Which brings us to a further sticking point that has me worried.'

I said:

'Even if you took the rock apart grain by grain, you still couldn't kill the spirit that lives inside it and keeps it standing. Knock down all these towers and all these columns: the spirit inside them will raise as many again. Burn all the books: the soul will make new ones. Satan is powerless against soul.'

Said he:

'The fight is spirit versus spirit. Satan is one part of the spirit turned against the spirit as a whole.'

I said:

'This effort of negation and rebellion is destined to lose itself in the very vacuum it seeks.'

Said he:

'Therein lies the victory.'

I said:

'And therein lies the ultimate foundation of peace.'

onde eu o *percibín*, non que, fóra do meu ser, non fose a súa unha presenza real en corpo e pensamento, en carne e óso, o cal ben puido acontecer, embora tampouco eu poida asegurar a realidade empírica do feito.

E despois de todo, se cadra, pode que non sexa tan fero coma el se quere pintar...

(1929)

At which point Stephen Dedalus and I made our peace. Stephen dipped his fingers in the holy water and offered it to me, and I made the sign of the Cross.

There may be some who will call these speeches by Stephen Dedalus apocryphal. He himself will not deny them; for even if all the rest of us in this world are hypocrites when we talk about ourselves, Stephen Dedalus cannot be a hypocrite, not if he wishes to remain proud. As to the rest, I cannot guarantee the empirical authenticity of the statements; but I will vouch for their absolute metaphysical necessity. Just putting together all that we know about Stephen, it becomes possible to make, to a critical and logical certainty, a case for each and every one of the words which have been attributed to him in this piece. Besides, I can hardly be blamed for reading *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* from cover to cover – which Dedalus himself forced me to buy that day from the book shop in Rúa Nova. It could also be that Stephen Dedalus spoke differently when he was in Dublin or Zurich; but, I can assure you, when he was in Compostela, this is how he spoke. Nor could he have spoken otherwise, unless he was not the man he was in *Portrait*, or unless Compostela was no longer what in truthful fact it is.

It is also true that owing to the special circumstances of my life – anecdotally – it was inevitable that I should encounter Stephen Dedalus that day. And if I said at the beginning that the reality of his presence that day existed in the third interior world, what I mean is that I perceived him inside of that third world. Which is not to say that outside of my self he was not also present in body and mind, flesh, blood and bone, as that may well have been the case; though I could not attest to the empirical reality of the fact.

And perhaps, when all is said and done, he is not even so depraved as he likes to make us think...

(1929)



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