A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man Study Guide

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce

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Introduction

Published in 1916, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* established its then thirty-two-year-old author, James Joyce, as a leading figure in the international movement known as literary modernism. The title describes the book's subject quite accurately. On one level, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* can be read as what the Germans call a *Bildungsroman,* or coming-of-age novel.

Set in Ireland in the late nineteenth century, Portrait is a semi-autobiographical novel about the education of a young Irishman, Stephen Dedalus, whose background has much in common with Joyce's. Stephen's education includes not only his formal schooling but also his moral, emotional, and intellectual development as he observes and reacts to the world around him. At the center of the story is Stephen's rejection of his Roman Catholic upbringing and his growing confidence as a writer. But the book's significance does not lie only in its portrayal of a sensitive and complex young man or in its use of autobiographical detail. More than this, Portrait is Joyce's deliberate attempt to create a new kind of novel that does not rely on conventional narrative techniques.

Rather than telling a story with a coherent plot and a traditional beginning, middle, and end, Joyce presents selected decisive moments in the life of his hero without the kind of transitional material that marked most novels written up to that time. The "portrait" of the title is actually a series of portraits, each showing Stephen at a different stage of development. And, although this story is told in a third-person narrative, it is filtered through Stephen's consciousness. Finally, the book can be read as Joyce's artistic manifesto and a declaration of independence - independence from what Joyce considered the restrictive social background of Catholic Ireland and from the conventions that had previously governed the novel as a literary genre. More than eighty years after its publication, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* continues to be regarded as a central text of early twentieth-century modernism.

Author Biography

Joyce was born on February 2, 1882, in Dublin, Ireland. He was the eldest child of John Stanislaus and Mary Jane Murray Joyce, who had, according to Joyce's father, "sixteen or seventeen children." Joyce's upbringing and education had much in common with that of the fictional Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* Joyce's parents were devout Catholics, and they sent him to Clongowes Wood College, a Catholic boarding school in County Kildare, south of Dublin. Run by the Jesuit order, this was considered the best Catholic school in Ireland. However, Joyce was taken out of Clongowes Wood a few years later when his father suffered some financial losses and the family's standard of living declined. After his family moved to Dublin, Joyce enrolled at Belvedere College, a Jesuit day school, where he was especially interested in poetry and languages.

By the time he entered University College, Dublin (also a Catholic institution), Joyce had become estranged from the Catholic Church and from Irish society in general. However, Joyce gained the attention of the Irish literary establishment with an undergraduate essay that he wrote on the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. Joyce was soon introduced to W. B. Yeats, Ireland's greatest poet, but he rejected Yeats's offer of help.

After graduating from University College in 1902, Joyce went to Paris for a year. He was supposed to be studying medicine but spent most of his time reading and writing, and decided to pursue a literary career. He returned to Ireland briefly when his mother became terminally ill. In 1904 he met Nora Barnacle, a young woman from the west of Ireland who worked as a chambermaid at a Dublin hotel. The two became lovers, and in October of that year they left Ireland for good. They first settled in Trieste, Italy, where the multilingual Joyce taught English at the local Berlitz school and worked on an autobiographical novel titled Stephen Hero. Although he did not finish this novel, he later used some of the material from it in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Joyce and Nora moved to Zurich in Switzerland. (Joyce's most famous comment about the war was that it interfered with the public reception of his first two books.) His collection of short stories, *Dubliners,* was published in London in 1914 after a long dispute with the publisher, Richards. With the help of the American poet Ezra Pound, *A Portrait* was serialized in *The Egoist* magazine in London. It appeared in twenty-five installments from February 1914 to September 1915. Published as a complete book in 1916, the novel established Joyce's reputation as one of the most original authors of his time.

Despite his growing fame, Joyce continued to live in relative poverty. He was also troubled by eye problems - a theme that he touched on in *A Portrait* - and by his daughter Lucia's mental illness. Although he spent most of the rest of his life in Paris and never again lived in Ireland, his subsequent books were all set in Ireland and their characters were Irish. Joyce refined the stream-of-consciousness technique in *Ulysses* (1922), generally considered his most important novel. In *Finnegans Wake* (1939), an extended mythic dream sequence filled with obscure multilingual wordplay, private

jokes, and arcane references, the stream-of-consciousness technique completely obliterated any trace of traditional narrative.

Joyce regarded himself as a genius and refused to make any compromises in his writing to achieve commercial success. His difficult personality alienated many people who came into contact with him, but he enjoyed the devotion of Nora, his brother Stanislaus, and a number of close friends and patrons who recognized and helped to nurture his exceptional talent. Since his death in Zurich in 1941, readers, critics, and scholars have continued to study his works. He is regarded today as one of the most important authors of the twentieth century and as a giant of literary modernism.

Plot Summary

Childhood and School Years

A Portrait devotes the equivalent of only one page to Stephen's pre-school years. The passage contains simple, childlike sentences skipping from subject to subject like a child's attention diverted from object to object. In this short passage, Joyce alludes on one level to Stephen's cultural, political, and familial influences, on another to Stephen's primal joys and fears, and finally to figures of theme and image recurring throughout the book.

From here, the reader is catapulted several years into the future, to the time when Stephen is a young man away at Clongowes, a Jesuit boarding school. The bulk of this first chapter is devoted to Stephen's development from a fearful and confused boy—twice knocked down by other boys— into a brave, confident student successfully protesting to the rector that he, Stephen, has been unfairly beaten on his palms by a prefect.

The school year is only broken up by Stephen's visit home for Christmas. A sole event from the vacation is imparted: a religious dispute at the family's lavish Christmas dinner. All participants are Catholics who favor Ireland's independence from Britain. But while three men object to the Church's participation in politics, one woman, Dante, believes religious involvement is righteous and that the Church must be followed and respected in all matters. By the end of Chapter One, the reader gleans an early version of Stephen's portrait. He is an Irish-Catholic boy confused about language, politics, and religion. He stumbles and falls through childhood, then picks himself up and stands tall before authority, his peers, and himself.

The Girl with the Shawl

Home in Blackrock for the summer, playing, reading, and daydreaming, Stephen increasingly views himself as different from others. That his family fortunes plummet only worsens matters. Forced to pack up and move with his family to Dublin, Stephen walks around the city—young, foolish, and no longer rich.

After a party he walks with an unnamed girl wearing a shawl to the streetcar. The event passes by without even a kiss, yet the memory remains with Stephen throughout the book. In Stephen's second year at the Dublin Jesuit school Belvedere, he performs in a school production as the girl with the shawl watches. His post-performance euphoria is overwhelming and only after running into town and to the stables can the smell of urine and rotting hay bring him back to earth.

Later, Stephen rides with his father to Cork for an auction of his father's family property. Listening to his father's advice and recalling childhood memories and things old acquaintances say about his father, Stephen is struck dumb at the distance between

himself and his father, between himself and his surroundings, and between his present self and his childhood. Stephen feels that he never had what his father did, neither a boyhood of "rude male health nor filial piety." He views himself as cold, detached from life, and lustful, drifting "like the barren shell of the moon."

In the final segment of Chapter Two, Stephen wins money from an essay contest and tries— through gifts and loans—to reconnect himself with loved ones. The scheme fails, however, and Stephen feels even more morosely detached and lustful. One night, looking for connection, he wanders the more "hellish" and grimy streets of Dublin and has sex with a prostitute.

Stephen Sins

Stephen's whoring lies uncomfortably on his mind. At the beginning of Chapter Three, he feels guilty. While remaining convinced of his apartness from others, Stephen is not yet ready to detach himself from the Church, especially from the Virgin Mary, a figure he sees as compassionate. At a Catholic retreat for St. Francis Xavier, students are asked to dwell on "last things": death, judgment, heaven, and hell. After attending sermons on the physical and mental torments of hell, Stephen emerges physically shaken. That evening he awakens from a nightmare and vomits. Finally convinced of the enormity of his sin, Stephen confesses, is relieved, and feels himself joyfully connected with all life, from the muddy Dublin streets to a plateful of sausages. The next morning, fully confessed and kneeling at mass, Stephen readies himself to be reborn.

Chapter Four opens with Stephen's immersion in the rituals of devotion and flesh mortification. He begins to doubt his devotion and humility and is only able to keep his doubts at bay by telling himself that at least he has amended his life. Stephen's display of piety is not lost on the director of Belvedere, who asks Stephen to become a Jesuit priest. Realizing he cannot lead a cloistered life, Stephen arrives home to find that his family will once again be moving, presumably because they are unable to pay the rent.

Next, Stephen is shown agitatedly waiting outside the university while his father likely attends to business connected with Stephen's admission. No longer able to wait, Stephen walks to the beach and reflects that, within him, art, nature, and sensuality are gradually overshadowing religion. There is a sense now of Stephen's increasing isolation amid a sea of humanity.

The Final Chapter

Leaving family and religion behind him, Stephen thinks about his courses, classmates, and his increasing poverty. At the university he casually discusses beauty with a dean, attends physics class, and finally meets friends for a political gathering. At the meeting he refuses to sign a declaration for world peace, perhaps because he suspects the emptiness of the gesture and disrespects the classmates who support it, and further, because over the declaration there is a framed picture of the Russian Czar, a figure Stephen dislikes. Stephen's political independence is driven home in a conversation in

which he expresses his distaste for Irish nationalism. Walking out on politics and into another discussion about beauty and art, Stephen later writes a poem to the shawled girl of ten years ago. One evening he stands watching migrating birds over the library, foretelling of his eventual departure from Ireland. Finally, walking and talking with a friend, Stephen declares his distance from family, nationality.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The novel opens with some of the protagonist, Stephen Dedalus' early memories. He remembers a song that was often sung to him; what happens to the bed sheets when he wets them; the smell of his mother and father; his mother's piano playing; his Uncle Charles, Dante, the Vances and their daughter Eileen, whom our protagonist declares he shall marry someday.

Time elapses, and we get a glimpse into Stephen's life away at Clongowes Wood College. It is a place where he pretends to make runs on the chilly rugby field, but his mind is far away, reviewing warm scenes and smells to be found at home. School is a place rife with competition, bullying, rude language, confusing lessons, and confusing jokes. Stephen secretly pastes a number inside his desk whereby he counts down the days to Christmas vacation. A boy named Wells bumps Stephen into a square ditch of slimy, cold water. Stephen is teased about kissing his mother goodnight. He ponders the greatness of God, which makes him tired and makes his head feel "very big."

He remembers Dante telling him Parnell was a bad man: he knows that Parnell has something to do with politics, and that politics involves two sides. Throughout the boys' time in the playroom, in study hall, and during night prayers, Stephen is eager for it all to be over and to be in bed asleep. He prays for his parents, younger brothers and sisters, Dante and uncle Charles. He fears imaginary creatures in the dark of night. In the morning, Stephen has clearly fallen ill from his fall into the square ditch, and he is marched to the infirmary. Stephen imagines one of the priests will personally inform his parents of his illness. He imagines he will die and that the school bell will toll for him. There is another boy in the infirmary whose jokes Stephen does not understand. In what is likely a sickness-induced daze, Stephen has a vision, of sorts, of Brother Michael, the priest who runs the infirmary, standing on the deck of a ship, raising his hand and saying, "He is dead…. Parnell! Parnell! He is dead!"

Time elapses, and Stephen is home for Christmas vacation. By the decorations and the presence of servants, we see that Stephen's family is well-to-do. Along with Stephen's parents, Dante and uncle Charles, a Mr. Casey is also present for Christmas dinner. The dishes are brought in, and Stephen's father keeps one hand on a dish cover while waiting for Stephen to finish saying grace.

Conversation at the table soon leads to controversy among the adults when Mr. Casey repeats another man's criticism of the propensity a local Catholic priest has of mixing politics into his sermons. Dante is outraged that he and, by extension, Mr. Casey would speak against the church in this way and defends the priest. Stephen's mother tries to quell the argument and restore peace. From this exchange, we see a range of attitudes toward the Catholic church, England, and Ireland. Whereas Dante defends the church with an unshakable faith, Stephen's father calls the language of the Holy Ghost "bad

language." Uncle Charles admonishes him not to speak thusly in front of Stephen, but does apparently little to disguise his own very real criticisms. Stephen's mother also tells her husband not to speak in this way in front of Stephen.

Prompted by Stephen's father, Mr. Casey begins to tell a story about a heated verbal exchange he had with a woman surrounding this man named Parnell. As told by Mr. Casey, the woman screamed at him: "Priesthunter! The Paris Funds! Mr. Fox! Kitty O'Shea!" all of which were allusions to a scandal involving Parnell. In response, Mr. Casey spit tobacco juice in her eye. Stephen's father laughed loudly upon hearing this, seemingly very satisfied with Mr. Casey's actions. Dante, on the other hand, was terribly angry. Stephen follows all of this talk as best he can, though he does not understand fully what it is about.

Dante suggests they take pride in being a race full of priests, but Mr. Casey asks if in doing so can they not also love their country of Ireland and follow "the man that was born to lead us?" Dante proclaims the man to which Mr. Casey refers, Mr. Parnell, to be a traitor and an adulterer. Mr. Casey recalls four historical events in which bishops and priests of the church in reality only helped to thwart Ireland's attempts at independence from England. Dante answers that their decisions in those events were correct. Mr. Casey and Dante argue back and forth over this.

Time elapses, and Stephen is back in school at Clongowes. Five boys have run away from the school and been caught, and Stephen listens to his schoolmates talk about it while the rest of the fellows play cricket. It is rumored that the runaways drank the altar wine. Stephen wonders how they could have done that. We learn that Stephen has been recently bullied again, this time thrown onto a "cinderpath" which caused his eyeglasses to break into three pieces. Another boy offers up an explanation as to why the five ran away: they were caught "smugging" in the square with two younger boys from the school, Tusker Boyle and Simon Moonan. All of the boys fell silent, suggesting the seriousness of this infraction. Stephen remembers Eileen, and we learn that she is a Protestant. We see that Stephen doesn't understand what "smugging" is, but it must not have been an idle joke because the boys involved had run away. The conversation continues, and the boys discuss the punishments to be meted out: flogging for Simon and Tusker, and a choice between flogging and expulsion for the older boys. Four of them are taking expulsion; only one, a boy named Corrigan, has chosen the flogging.

Back in the schoolroom, Stephen's mind is a bit free to roam due to the fact that his glasses are broken and he has been given an exemption from his studies until a new pair of glasses arrives from his parents. The writing lesson ends, and the Latin lesson begins. When several of the boys cannot answer a question correctly, the teacher, Father Arnall, gets upset. Stephen wonders whether or not it is a sin for Father Arnall to be upset, but then settles the question in his mind by saying to himself, "It was because he was allowed because a priest would know what a sin was and would not do it." Soon, the prefect of studies, Father Dolan, enters the room. "Any boys want flogging here, Father Arnall?" he asks. When he sees Fleming kneeling on the floor (due to getting into trouble earlier in the class), he harasses him a bit and then tells him to stand up. He tells him to hold out his hands. Fleming does so, and Father Dolan smacks each of

Fleming's outstretched hands six times with a pandybat. The prefect then wonders why Stephen is not working like the rest of the class. Father Arnall explains that Stephen is exempted from work because of his glasses. Father Dolan suggests that Stephen broke his glasses himself in order to get out of his schoolwork. Stephen's hands too then, are given whacks with the pandybat. He then is told to kneel. After Father Dolan leaves, Father Arnall helps some of the other students in the class and then tells Fleming and Stephen that they may return to their seats.

After class, some fellows from the class encourage him to report the incident to the rector. The rector agrees to speak to Father Dolan. Stephen bows and leaves the room and once out of it, walks faster and faster through the gloomy corridors excitedly until it becomes a run toward the fellows who, when they hear the account of his conversation, fling their caps in the air, cheer, and hoist him up among them, carrying him along.

Chapter 1 Analysis

As the novel opens, the reader glimpses life as it is for one who is not yet differentiated from those around him: our protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, is at first just a baby, at one with his sensory perceptions of the world. As he moves from life with his parents to life at Clongowes Wood College, one sees his emerging sense of self, a beginning awareness of his separateness from his mother and father. From his simple reasoning and from the things that Stephen does not yet understand, one might gather that Stephen has been sent away to school at quite a young age.

Stephen prefers the quiet of the study hall to the violence of the playground, and sometimes prefers his bed even to that. One can see in him a rare sensitivity. Several times, Stephen makes note of the quality of light, illustrating his observant nature. He seems at times almost wary, looking about himself as he tries to understand how this new society of boys and priests works. He is bullied by a peer, pushed into a watery ditch and made sick by it. But he is even more sick for home, his mother, and the warmth and security he knew before coming to Clongowes, which offers him instead a rather regimented and somewhat unforgiving life.

At Christmas dinner, the reader is inducted into a major theme of the book, Irish nationalism and Irish identity. Young Stephen begins to understand that there is, in the minds of those he loves, a lingering question as to whether one can love one's religion without disowning one's country and vice versa. At this point in Stephen's life, his education seems largely limited to religion, politics taking on a vague, ghost-like form in his mind. When one does see him at his geography lesson, he is studying the countries of the American continent, not his own.

Throughout this first section, one also sees how Stephen sees the priests around him as flawless beings, but when he is bullied again, this time by Father Dolan, Stephen does "tell on him" by going to the rector and recounting the unjust punishment he received at Father Dolan's hands. The rector said he will talk to Father Arnall himself, and hands Stephen a great victory. This incident, in closing the first section of the book,

shows a development in Stephen's character: he has successfully learned an important lesson about what he is due and how to seek recourse when he not given it.

The narrator of this story, which takes place in and around Dublin, Ireland, is omniscient, though one might consider him as having a limited point of view as he speaks largely from Stephen's perspective. Characteristics to notice are the babyish memories, the simple language of the early days at Clongowes, the text's circling repetitions, while offered in the voice of a third party, still mimic Stephen's own internal dialogue and perception. The very title of the novel suggests the story to be autobiographical, but it is called a portrait, not a self-portrait. This small delineation has large influence because while it might seem natural to presume that the voice of the narrator is that of the author James Joyce himself, cloaking himself in the voice of an omniscient narrator offers the reader a promise of greater objectivity. The narrator's omniscience, however, only extends to Stephen, and all the other characters are left to be understood based on their words and actions alone.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

It is summer vacation for Stephen, and he has joined his family where they are living on Carysfort Avenue in Blackrock, where they have moved. Stephen spends weekdays with his uncle Charles, carrying messages between his home and the shops of the town. After these errands, uncle Charles and Stephen go to the park where they meet Mike Flynn, who supervises Stephen's runs around the track. On the way home from the park, Uncle Charles often visits a chapel and reads from a well-worn prayer book. The reader learns that uncle Charles has squandered a fortune in Cork.

On Sundays, Stephen, his father, and uncle Charles take long walks together: the older men talking mostly of politics and family legends, while Stephen listens attentively, learning new words, figuring their meanings, and secretly making himself ready to enter into the part he would play in the world, a part he is as yet uncertain about. Stephen befriends a boy named Aubrey Mills, and in their minds, they form a gang of adventurers. They travel to a pasture in the milkman's milkcart where they ride a mare in the field. During the evenings, he is free: he often chooses to read *The Count of Monte Cristo*, to recreate one of that story's scenes from scraps of tissue paper and chocolate wrappers, and to imagine his Mercedes--his own beloved--living in a small, whitewashed house he knows of outside Blackrock.

September comes, but Stephen does not return to Clongowes; Mike Flynn goes into the hospital, so Stephen's appointment at the track no longer stands; and Aubrey is busy with his own schooling. Stephen does still ride around with the milkman on occasion and enjoys catching a rare glimpse of the domestic life within the homes they pass. Without any clear explanation, Stephen intuits that his not returning to Clongowes signifies a change in his father's finances. Also seeing slight changes around the house, where throughout his life, he had never before seen such changes, begins to reshape how he sees the world. The sense of great purpose he has recently begun to feel stirring hopefully in his soul seems now stunted or stifled, leaving Stephen restless, and suffering under a growing awareness of being different from others.

Time elapses, and the family is uprooted once more, leaving Blackrock for less comfortable accommodations in Dublin. Uncle Charles has grown too senile for their trips to the shops, leaving Stephen free to explore Dublin on his own. His unrest and his search for his Mercedes continue. Stephen sees a vision, or a hallucination, at his aunt's house beneath a doorway to the room of a sick woman who is likely a relation of his. His watchfulness and isolation grows, but he is beginning to enjoy it. At a children's party, there is a girl there. Stephen and she both ride on the evening's last tram: several times she comes up to his step, stands near him and speaks to him. He feels as though he understands her on some rarified, eternal level. He hears a voice speak within him "above the noise of his dancing heart, asking him would he take her gift to which he had

only to stretch out his hand." He thinks how he could easily catch hold of her and kiss her, but he does not. Later, on the empty tram, he is gloomy and shreds his tram ticket.

At his desk the next morning, Stephen models the titles he has seen in the collected poems of Lord Byron in his own exercise book. While doodling and daydreaming, he imagines himself writing a poem about Parnell on one of his father's bills, but unable to actually write such a poem, Stephen turns his mind first to some of his classmates at Clongowes and then to the girl on the tram. He wrote some verses in which all the "elements which he deemed common and insignificant fell out of the scene." In the end, the verses "told only of the night and the balmy breeze and the maiden luster of the moon," but whereas in real life the kiss had been withheld, in the poem it was given.

Time elapses, and Stephen is at Belvedere. His impatience and restlessness grows. In his interactions with his school fellows, Stephen stands apart and aloof. A schoolmate, Vincent Heron, mentions seeing Stephen's father in the audience of the play they are presently performing and it unsettles Stephen. The fellows tease him about the girl from the tram, whom Stephen expects also to be in the audience.

Through one of Stephen's reminisces, the reader learns how he has been publicly chided by a teacher, after which he perceives a certain sense of satisfaction emanating from his classmates. A few days later, three boys meet him on a road and provoke him into declaring his favorite poet, Byron. Heron claims Byron to be an immoral heretic. They tease him and then attack him, striking him with a cane and a cabbage stump, and push him against a barbed wire fence. He finally frees himself and stumbles after them.

Stephen remains true to his habit of obedience while pondering the hollow message of his father and that of his masters, urging him to be a gentleman and a good Catholic. He feels happy only when he is alone.

When Stephen goes onstage to deliver his lines, he sees the girl from the tram in the audience and for a rare moment, "the infection of the excitement and youth about him entered into and transformed his moody mistrustfulness. For one rare moment he seemed to be clothed in the real apparel of boyhood…." After the play, he rushes off, walking briskly through the city as if trying to overtake some prey. When he suddenly stops and breathes in an odor of horse urine and rotted straw, he feels calm again.

Stephen takes a trip with his father to Cork by the night mail. The purpose of their trip causes his father to periodically drink from his flask: the auction of his property. Stephen says a prayer, though it is addressed to neither God nor saint. Stephen's father takes him to Queen's College where he himself was a student, and they look for his father's initials cut into a desk in the anatomy theatre. Stephen reads the word 'Foetus' cut into a desk before him, conjuring for him another vision of a day, long-ago, when a young, broad-shouldered man cut the word into the wood with his jackknife. They walked on, Stephen listening to stories his father has already told him and advice which Stephen doubts will ever be helpful to him. Stephen again feels isolated and beyond the limits of reality. After the auction, Stephen endures more embarrassment due to his father's drunken conversations.

Stephen withdraws money from the bank for an exhibition and essay prize. For a short time, he increases the comforts of his family's home life, but the money is soon exhausted. The household returns to its usual way, and Stephen feels very little kinship with his family members. He feels he is in mortal sin, but cares little of it. He remembers the "holy encounter he had then imagined at which weakness and timidity and inexperience were to fall from him," but such moments are quickly replaced by "the wasting fires of lust." Such thoughts soon take hold in him, and finally, one night, he finds himself in a room with a prostitute to whom he surrenders.

Chapter 2 Analysis

During Stephen's vacation at Blackrock, he knows many of leisurely pleasures of home and summer: reading, playing with a neighbor boy, accompanying his father and uncle on long walks. However, his father's changing finances and the resulting changes at home seem to drive his once-hopeful soul inward. More and more, Stephen's dissatisfaction with the common plane of existence grows. What has the power to enthrall him is not found in this world, but rather in the world of his imagination, but begins to invest great stores of his energy and faith into readying himself for the day when what he longs for will meet him and transfigure him.

When the family moves again, this time into Dublin, a darkening light also falls on Stephen's inner world: oftentimes one reads how the appearances and smells of the natural world around him around him seem to reflect his own thoughts and moods. During the incident with the girl on the tram, one sees that Stephen is often unable to act, at least on the physical plane of reality, and that he suffers from his powerlessness. Through the conversation Stephen's father has with the provincial, one learns that Stephen's brave victory at Clongowes has merely become a source of jest and mockery among the priests. His father delivers the reenactment, and this does little to redeem him to his son. These incidents show Stephen's growing skepticism in the people and institutions he once looked to for guidance and modeling, particularly his father and his church. One senses the return of a certain powerlessness in Stephen, though mentally, he is clearly gifted, though perhaps to the point of being disturbed.

Stephen's growing isolation makes him more dependent on his visions, fancies, and imaginings for they become for him the companions he most ardently pursues. He stands aloof from the world in many respects, watching, and although he yearns for a loving embrace and the transfiguration he expects to occur within that embrace, he seems to have never been able to sense or accept love as it has already been offered him. It is as though he seeks perfection, both from the lover who gives and from the love that is given, to the extent that he has spurned the imperfect love and the imperfect lovers he might have known. His life is sorely out of balance and, succumbing to lust, he soils whatever was left of both his physical and spiritual purity. The personal development one senses in the first section of the story is derailed in the second.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

While sitting in class, Stephen thinks of his custom of walking around and around in smaller circles through the city until he is brought to the brothel quarter. Even while he purposely seeks to satisfy his lust, he is still wounded and shamed by much of what he perceives there. He works equations and, like the stars and stardust he relates them to, his soul has become cold and indifferent. Stephen tells himself that false homage to God cannot atone for sin as grievous as his. He knows he is a hypocrite who plays the role of a believer though he does not believe. His deception does not trouble him. What keeps him from confessing his unworthiness and walking out of the chapel is the Virgin Mary; the wish to "be her knight" is the only thing he can think of that could be a strong enough impetus to repent. He feels that Mary does not humiliates the sinner who approaches her.

Stephen follows the rigid lines of doctrine to the end and enjoys silence in order to hear and feel the more deeply his own condemnation. Because of his many forays to the brothels, he feels his whole being is sunk into a "swamp of spiritual and bodily sloth."

The rector enters the classroom. The boy behind Stephen kicks him, urging him to ask the rector a difficult question, but instead of beginning a lesson, the rector makes a special announcement: there is to be a retreat over the next few days, in honor of saint Francis Xavier, patron of the college. On Friday, confession will be heard. Hearing this, Stephen's heart withers with fear.

The retreat, Father Arnall says, signifies a withdrawal from the worldly cares in order to examine our conscience, reflect upon religion, and to better understand our purpose on this earth, though this purpose also inevitably includes doing God's holy will and saving our immortal souls. Death, judgment, hell, and heaven, the "four last things," are the topics of the retreat. As Stephen looks upon Father Arnall, his mind is brought back to his early days at Clongowes—the playgrounds, the square ditch, the infirmary—and he feels his soul become childlike. Father Arnall prays that this retreat may serve as a turning point in the life of any boy who has fallen into grievous sin.

Stephen walks home feeling as though a thick fog has encircled his mind. In a stupor, he waits for it to lift and reveal what it has been hiding. After dinner, he licks grease from his lips and feels he has sunk to the level of the beasts. The next day of the retreat arrives, and the topics of death and judgment help his soul to awaken slightly. The preacher helps him to envision death in acute detail and suggests that while friends are still shedding tears over the coffin, the soul of the sinner is judged, the time for repentance now passed. Though death strikes fear into the sinner, it is a blessed moment for the believer.

The sermons successfully pierce Stephen's clouded mind and sin-numbed soul and make him aware of the degraded state of his soul before God. He likens the sermons to the blasts of an angel's trumpet which drive him from his former filthy lair into the bright light of day.

Walking home, his sins scurry through his mind. He remembers with shame a girl named Emma and her innocence which he trampled; his sordid dreams; the foul letters he had written; and other memories painful to behold. He wonders if he were insane when he did these things. He feels God and the Virgin Mary are too far from him. He imagines himself, in tears beside Emma, being united to her by an understanding and forgiving Virgin Mary who places their hands together, assures them of her love for them, and blesses their union.

The retreat continues with the story of Adam and Eve who ate of the forbidden fruit and of Jesus Christ who was sent down to earth from heaven to redeem them and all mankind. The preacher recounts Jesus' crucifixion. For those who do not make use of the atonement of Christ to right their relationship with God, hell awaits. Stephen hears hell described in great detail: the cramped conditions; the darkness; the stench; the fires; the enraged howls and suffering screams of the damned; the mocking devils: all of which torment hell's inhabitants for ever. The preacher defines sin as a rebellion of the intellect, incompatible with our true nature, and reminds his listeners that repentance is available to the living to spare them from this everlasting torment.

Upon leaving the lecture, Stephen is so sick he fears he may have already died. His soul is contrite, and he determines to repent and make up for his sinful past with every hour of his yet-remaining life. He knows he must confess and even desires forgiveness from his school fellows, though he prays that God will forgive him for not confessing in the college chapel. The following sermon centers on the spiritual pains of hell, which are more severe than the physical ones. On and on, searing Stephen's conscience, the preacher expounds. Finally, the sermon ends, and Father Arnall beseeches his hearers to come to God, to repent.

Stephen goes to his room after dinner to be alone. He fears the darkened room. His body and soul ache with understanding and weariness. Though he closes his eyes, he sees his sins replayed before him. Then he dreams or envisions beasts in a field; he starts awake and thinks that is the hell awaiting him: bestial and foul. He opens a window, and in the rain-freshened air he makes a covenant with his heart and prays. He weeps for his own lost innocence. When evening falls, he leaves the house to find a chapel in which to confess his crimes against God and his own soul. As determined as he once strode to the brothels, he now walks in search of a chapel. He finds one, enters, and eventually it is his turn to enter the confessional. He wishes his sin had been any but the one it is. He is very sorry.

He begins his confession with his minor sins before murmuring. Then his larger sins come out, slowly at first, then more quickly, until there is nothing left to tell. One reads that Stephen is only 16. The priest offers him kind words of advice, beseeches him to give up that awful sin, and raises his hand about Stephen in token of forgiveness.

Stephen kneels and says his penance from a purified heart. When he walks home, he feels an invisible grace pervading his body. His soul is made holy and happy once more. When he gets home, he sits by the fire in silence, as if speaking might break the spell of his new joy. The next morning Stephen waits, sinless, for his turn to take the Eucharistic wafer whereupon God shall enter his body.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Stephen's "cold and indifferent soul" points to a dissociation with his own sensibility that separates him from life and the lives around him: his only companions now are his sins. The "spiritual sloth" in which he finds himself becomes a crisis of the soul. His adoration of the Virgin Mary reveals again the great romanticism that yet pervades Stephen's mind. Even though he has been raised a Christian, it takes a forceful appeal during the retreat for Stephen's conscience to be pricked, for his soul to be convicted, for him to revolt against instead of enjoy his condemnation, and for him to gather the moral fortitude required to repent and confess.

Father Arnall prays that the retreat will be a turning point in the life of some sinner, and indeed it becomes just that for Stephen. Stephen's seeing the muddy streets as gay and feeling awash in the beauty of the world upon confessing suggest a healing of the chasm between himself and life. While under condemnation, he sensed only nature's decay and foul odors, but now that he is suffused with grace, the natural world is beautiful again. He thinks death itself would be beautiful, now, and so too would living be.

One senses a new beginning for Stephen due to the reinstallation of faith in his life: perhaps this is the first time he has ever really had faith. While Stephen's conversion takes on every appearance of being sincere, one still senses that it has taken place in Stephen's head alone and not in his heart. The peace and love he feels sitting in the kitchen is still merely felt when he is alone. It remains to be seen, at this point, whether he will be able to sense the same beauty and peace in the everyday world while among everyday people.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Stephen exerts enormous energy in filling his days with penitent devotion, zealous prayers, rosary recitations, and elaborate attempts to mortify his senses. Each day of the week is devoted to a different religious facet or figure. The raw morning air only increases his piety. He saw his acts of devotion as pressing keys of a divine cash register, though he also fears that no degree of devotion shall ever be enough. Though he ponders what must be God's love for all of his children, Stephen himself admits to having long been unable to feel love or hate, only brief anger and lust. However, he does believe that God loves him and even comes to see all of creation as an expression of God's love and power. So filled with this perception, and fulfilled by it, is Stephen that he wonders why he should continue to live. He begins to feel newly born and as having a virtuous soul.

Though Stephen succeeds in thwarting the old temptations which led him to the brothels, he finds other imperfections in himself which needle him such as minor disruptions to his devotions. He still finds it difficult to feel a part of the lives around him, and eventually, even the sacraments do not nourish them as they did at first. Giving in to temptation begins to take on an attractive appearance, and he feels power in allowing sin to creep near to him before resisting it at the last moment. The multitude of temptations which plague him verifies the stories he has heard and read about saints being tried again and again by sin.

Since the only sins Stephen has to confess these days are minor, his confessor asks him to name some of the old sins, more daunting and humiliating to confess: he feels that the feeling of guilt will always be with him, and that he will confess, repent, and be absolved interminably. He wonders at times if he has been truly absolved and thinks upon his amended life as proof that indeed he has, though the question still lingers in his mind.

The director calls Stephen in to speak with him. The priest's face is darkened by the room's shadows. Stephen recalls times past when priests had chosen faithfulness to their religion over intellectual honesty in forming their judgments, evoking in Stephen regret and pity. Yet, he admits to never having heard a flippant word from them, and it was they who led him back to grace through the sermons of the retreat. When the director embarks on the real purpose of their interview, he asks Stephen if he has ever considered joining the order. He portrays the life of a priest as a knower of secrets and as one of authority and great power. He says he will pray that God will show Stephen the answer to this important question.

As he descends the steps leading down from the director's office, a shadow passes over Stephen's consciousness. He views the life suggested to him as being grave, ordered, passionless, and without material cares. As he walks on, he feels a stifling

unrest, a hostility which demands that he reject the offer made to him. He sees scenes of his life as it could be, if he joined the community, and they repel him. He passes the Jesuit house on Gardiner Street and wonders, were he to join, which window would be his. He recalls the appeals to his pride made by the director, and so immediate and resolute is his refusal that the conversation already resembles an idle tale. He becomes suddenly aware that his destiny is "to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world."

He returns to his home where, from one of his siblings, he learns the family is to be put out of their house again and must move. The children sing together, as they do sometimes for hours, and Stephen hears an overtone of weariness already in their young voices.

Stephen's father meets a man to find out information about Stephen attending the university. His mother does not like the idea, and her mistrust bothers him more than his father's pride. Stephen is losing his hard-won faith and sees his mother's faith "aging and strengthening" in her own eyes, which Stephen translates into disloyalty against him. He answers this with antagonism towards her. When this gathered force passes and his mind is once again peaceful, Stephen is made dimly aware of this as the first noiseless sundering, or severing, of their lives.

He feels he has gotten passed the guardians of his boyhood who sought to retain him that he might serve their ends. He does not yet see what end he is truly meant to serve, but he is proud to have escaped one path to now embark upon a new one. He seems to hear strains of a music he describes as an elfin prelude filled with sounds of nature: wild creatures racing under the boughs and grasses, the pattering of rain or rabbits' feet, flames leaping out of a midnight wood. He recalls that his whole life he figured his destiny to be that of a priest, but when the call was offered him, he refused. He wonders to himself why.

Stephen does not believe that a priest's humility and contrition pay a greater gift of devotion than his own had been. He argues against his own certitude and re-interprets God's commandment to love our neighbor with the same amount and intensity of love as we love ourselves as actually meaning we are to love God with the same kind of love as we love ourselves.

He sees schoolmates splashing and playing in the water. He thinks they look characterless and pitiable in their nakedness; taking comfort in number against what he feels must be a dread in their souls. As the boys call his name, he thinks of the Greek myth of Daedalus and his son Icarus, and feels his name to be a prophecy. So impersonal is he in his present mood, that all ages seem as one to him. The prophecy is one of an "artist, forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being." He feels as though his soul is soaring in an ecstasy of fear.

The fire in his soul, the song in his throat, causes Stephen to wander on. He takes off his stockings, walking along the river. Seeing himself no longer a boy, he feels happy

and near "the wild heart of life." Standing before him in the river is a lone girl, gazing out to sea, her face touched with the "wonder of mortal beauty." His cheeks reddened, his limbs trembling from the beauty of the sight of her, he walks on, singing wildly and crying to greet the advent of the life that has cried to him.

Chapter 4 Analysis

When Stephen had fallen out of favor with God, he saw no beauty around him. When he was re-instilled by grace, all was beautiful once more. Stephen's conception of religious piety causes him to attempt to mortify his senses, and though he does achieve a state wherein he feels drawn near to heaven, he describes the rosaries in his pockets as of a vague, unearthly texture, hueless, odorless, and nameless. In his efforts to mortify—or castigate or subdue--his senses, Stephen is simultaneously dismantling the internal mechanisms by which he perceives beauty. He also admits that he still cannot *feel* love, though he believes it exists.

The minor irritations which plague him and the way he toys with sin, allowing it to creep nearer and nearer, point to the difficulties Stephen faces on his personal path of piety. The priest's darkened face and his appeal to Stephen's pride, and the shadow on Stephen's face as he leaves the director's office after extending the invitation to join the order all symbolically point again to the darkening state of Stephen's soul and the clouds of doubt looming over his future.

He suddenly thinks he perceives his life's true calling: to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself, and he begins to feel himself falling toward sin once more. When he gets home, he hears weariness in the innocent voices of his younger brothers and sisters, but he does not interpret this weariness as being a result of his internal state. On a different day, were he suffused with grace, one wonders if their voices would not have sounded angelic to his ears.

This section brings into clearer focus the complexity of Stephen's feelings towards his mother. He interprets her disapproval of his plans to attend the university as "disloyal," and he is aware of a break occurring between them for the first time: arguably, this break could be seen as their further differentiating from one another, a cutting of the apron-strings, so to speak. Stephen has apparently still felt swayed by her influence, or at least in harmony with her desires until now: in following a course which she would rather he did not, Stephen feels for the first time a strong sense of being separate from her, an individual with his own will and his own destiny.

He is "proud" to have escaped from a life in the community, and once more feels himself at the threshold of another new beginning. Stephen claims that instead of loving our neighbor as ourselves, God's commandment says we are to love him as we love ourselves.

This re-interpretation illustrates the return of Stephen's pride, and also suggests that Stephen is no longer going attempt to climb toward the heavens with his prayers and his

devotions, but rather that he will wait for God to come down to him. The closest thing to love that Stephen seems able to feel is the pleasure he derives from the inner world of emotions mirrored perfectly in supple prose. One might wonder if the "confused music" he hears is emblematic of his own confusion at the start of his new path, or if it is a harbinger of something else more foreboding.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Stephen eats crusts of fried bread scattered near him on the table. The clock in his house is an hour and twenty-five minutes fast. He is now a university student who does not know the day of the week and cares too little for his lectures to be on time for them and, when he does arrive, does not have paper for class.

He has his mother wash him because he says it gives her pleasure. He begins walk to the school, and a mad nun screams in the nun's madhouse behind the wall very near Stephen's family home. Various noises threaten to humble the pride of his youth, but the daylight, the dripping trees and the smell of the wet leaves and bark help to free his soul from her miseries.

Many of the places he walks past in the city evoke passages by various writers. He often ponders the writings of Aristotle or Aquinas, but when he tires of them he finds pleasure in some of the songs of the Elizabethans.

Stephen's general state of doubt and mistrust is occasionally lit up by intuition: lightings so clear that the world perishes about him and he feels finally acquainted with nobility. In the classroom, he smells the dampness of cellars and decay. Stephen recalls telling one of his schoolmates, Cranly, about many of the longings in his soul. Cranly just listens. It hurts Stephen's feelings that what the esthetic philosophy he is working so hard upon is so little cared about in general society.

Walking again through the city, he comes across the statue of Ireland's national poet, whom he sees as a "Firbolg in the borrowed cloak of a Milesian." We learn of Davin, another schoolmate whom Stephen characterizes as a young peasant and who tends to cause Stephen to feel further cut off from Irish-ness and Irish life. Davin lives somewhere amid the "dark narrow streets of the poorer Jews." Davin tells Stephen about a woman who, when he merely asked for a drink of water, brought him out a jug of milk and essentially invited him to stay the night with her. He has no money to buy flowers, and he says it is not likely he will ever have any.

Stephen ponders how, as a youth listening to the stories of his elders, the city that once seemed so gallant to him has shrunk to a faint mortal odor. The Ireland of Tone and Parnell seem to have receded in space.

Stephen is too late to make it to his French class, so he goes instead to the theatre and sees the dean of studies bending low to light a fire in the grate. Stephen asks kindly if he can help. They embark on a conversation surrounding the art of lighting a fire. Stephen perceives that the dean has gotten old in the service of the Lord without growing toward light and beauty. Their conversation leads them into a discussion on esthetics. The dean asks if Stephen can answer the question of what is beautiful. In

answer, Stephen quotes Aquinas, and the dean tells him he has hit the nail on the head. In reference to an allusion—that of an oil lamp—in their conversation, the dean mentions the care one must take to avoid pouring more oil into the funnel than it can hold. Stephen then sees the dean as a courteous and vigilant foe and thinks how the language in which they are speaking is not even Stephen's own. For Stephen, English will always be an acquired speech causing his voice to hold words at bay and his soul to fret. Stephen is disheartened by the dean's firm dry tone and falls silent. The dean warns him of falling prey to inaction and advises Stephen to get his degree first and then, little by little, he will see his way in his life and in his thinking. Stephen pities him.

Stephen is bored by his classmates' rowdy jokes and his teacher's droning voice. Outside class, Stephen interacts with a number of his classmates. He views Cranly's speech as echoing the bleak quays of Dublin. There is pressure to sign a testimonial respecting universal peace, but Stephen, uninterested in the topic, is unfazed by the pressure. He is teased by one who suggests that minor poets must be above such trivial questions as this one. His friend Davin signs; Stephen does not.

Davin proclaims himself an Irish nationalist first and calls Stephen a born "sneerer." He asks Stephen if he is Irish at all. Stephen says he'll show him his family tree. Davin asks why he will not learn Irish. Stephen does not give a clear answer, but he leaves Davin to believe it is because the language teacher is the priest whom he saw talking to the girl from the tram. Davin urges Stephen to be "one of us" and tells Stephen, "in your heart you are an Irishman but your pride is too powerful."

Stephen converses with his schoolmate Lynch. Stephen defines for him pity and terror and how the tragic emotion looks toward both of them. Stephen looks at Lynch and sees a hooded reptile with eyes which served as the window of "a shriveled soul." He explains to him that beauty awakens or induces an esthetic stasis, prolonged and at last dissolved by what he calls "the rhythm of beauty." He defines this rhythm and then says that to express from the gross earth and from sound, shape, and color, which are the "prison gates of our soul," an image of the beauty they have come to understand: this is art.

He continues with a lengthy sermon, so to speak, on esthetic philosophy.

Rain starts to fall, and many students have gathered in front of the library entrance for shelter. Lynch whispers to Stephen that his beloved, the girl from the tram, is there. He feels a momentary bitterness lingering from the last time he saw her talking to the priest. She prepares to leave the shelter of the library as the rain is ceasing. He watches her but does not speak to her. He wonders if he has been too harsh with her; he wonders if her life is perhaps simple, gay, restless, and "willful as a bird's heart."

Time elapses, and Stephen awakens in a delightful state after dreaming or envisioning the life of an angel. He lies in bed, savoring the feelings of sweet music washing over him. Slowly poetry passes from his mind to his lips accompanied by the sounds of bells and birds coming through the window. Slowly more verses come to him and he writes them down so he will not forget them.

Though he is often scornful of her, he admits that his anger toward her is also a form of homage. He says she is a "figure of the womanhood of her country." He refers to the priest with whom he saw her conversing, thinking of how this mild lover of hers or she herself must then confess sins which he deems innocent to some other anonymous priest. Meanwhile he, a "priest of eternal imagination," transmutes the bread of daily experience into "the radiant body of ever living life."

More verses of his poem for her come to his mind; he copies them down. The incident on the last tram after the party is revealed to have happened 10 years ago. He considers sending her the verses, wonders if he sent them to her, would she show them to others. He begins to feel he may have judged her too harshly.

Stephen sees the girl from the tram leave the library porch and bow in reply to Cranly's greeting. Stephen suspects that Cranly, too, is in love with her. He wonders if he rightly saw Cranly blush, but the light was waning, and he cannot see.

Cranly's words about a mother's love touch Stephen briefly, causing him to feel the sufferings and weaknesses of the bodies and souls of women and determine to shield them and "bow his mind to them," but his very next thought is that of leaving his family and his country. He says he wishes to no longer strive against another and endeavors to "discover the mode of life or of art" whereby his spirit can "express itself in unfettered freedom" and using for his defense only silence, exile, and cunning.

The novel closes with some journal entries: among these Stephen reports discovering that "tundish" is actually an English word. He makes a number of entries regarding the girl from the tram: how he has not seen her since "that night," that she's not out yet; that he saw her drinking tea and eating cakes; that certainly she remembers the past because he has heard that all women do. He wonders if she would like what he wrote the previous night, and in one entry writes how he had met her that day: he talked about himself; she told him she hoped he would do what he said; and that he liked her this day.

Also in these entries, Stephen remembers it is Cranly's countrymen who had invented Catholicism. He writes that he desires to hold in his arms "the loveliness which has not yet come into the world." In addition, he writes of the roads and the arms of tall ships which beckon to him, claiming to be his kinsmen.

His mother helps him put his new secondhand clothes in order and tells him that she prays that he will learn in his own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels. He goes forward to forge the reality of experience into "the uncreated conscience" of his race.

Chapter 5 Analysis

In the story's final section, themes hinted at earlier combine into a powerful force, shaping Stephen, his course, and the novel's central idea.

Laughing with a priest about the word 'tundish,' Stephen says Lower Drumcondra is where *they* speak the best English, as if he himself is not Irish. In this way, he disowns his own Irishness and yet, seeing English itself is a symbol of the oppressor's chains, he chafes at it also. The dean who warns him of falling prey to inaction may represent all of the parental and religious counsel he has been given throughout his life which Stephen has either integrated into a new personal philosophy or has merely discarded.

The girl from the tram and the strange homage he pays to her begins to take on a double significance. Like her country, he sees her as a bat-like. Meanwhile he sees himself as a different, seemingly more powerful, kind of priest. He calls nationality, language, and religion "nets flung" at the souls of Irish-born men. He wants to fly and says he shall try to fly by them.

On one hand, the girl from the tram is simply Stephen's love interest, though he is never able to express his desire for her to her; on the other hand, he equates her and all women as representative of their race and their country. Seen by this light, his mother, who birthed him; Eileen, whom he loved as an unknowing child; Emma, whose innocence he trampled, and the girl from the tram, who remains throughout the story unnamed perhaps in order to help the reader identify her with Ireland more easily, all become representative of the different phases in his troubled relationship with his country.

The reader may suppose that Stephen loves Ireland so much that he feels he cannot be Irish and stay in Ireland. He cannot be true to his nationality because his own nation has been sold out from under it and can no longer be true. He wants to fly by those nets: get past them, be truly Irish: and this he feels he can only do in exile.

It seems as though now that Stephen is set to leave, he feels freer than he ever has to express his true feelings toward the girl from the tram who is certainly by now a young woman. By virtue of the many times he refers to her in his journal entries, one sees she is continually present in his thoughts, and though he is leaving, the reader might suppose that he will go on loving her just as steadfastly, from wherever he goes. Because he earlier proclaims her representative of her country, we can extrapolate that he will go on loving Ireland as well. He says the roads and the arms of tall ships which beckon to him, claim to be his kinsmen now. They call to him, "shaking the wings of their exultant and terrible youth."

On the verge of yet another new beginning, Stephen's mother helps him pack and tells him that she prays that he will learn in his own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels. Finally armed with a purpose he embraces, Stephen goes forward to forge the reality of experience into "the uncreated conscience" of his race.

Stephen's imagination, his visions and epiphanies, as well as the arms of the tall ships upon which he is set to sail are the wings he will use to escape from his prison. They are now his only kinsmen. Stephen's parting words sound like a prayer, making an

oblique reference to God, the father of all the world's kinsmen, to sustain Stephen in his flight.

Characters

Father Arnall

Father Arnall is a Jesuit priest who teaches at Clongowes Wood College, the first school that Stephen Dedalus attends.

Mr. John Casey

Mr. Casey is a friend of Stephen Dedalus's father, Simon Dedalus, in Chapter One. When Mr. Casey visits, young Stephen likes to sit near him and look at "his dark fierce face." Stephen notices that "his dark eyes were never fierce and his slow voice was good to listen to." He gets into the argument with Dante on Christmas, asserting that the Church should stay out of politics and leave Charles Stuart Parnell alone.

Uncle Charles

Charles is Stephen Dedalus's great-uncle. He is present at the family's Christmas dinner in Chapter One but does not take part in the argument. Indeed, he seems somewhat bewildered and only mutters a few vague comments to try to calm things down. Uncle Charles is kindly but slightly eccentric and ineffectual. Later in the chapter readers learn that he has died.

Father Conmee

A Jesuit priest who is the rector (principal) of Clongowes Wood College, the first school that Stephen Dedalus attends. In Chapter One, after Father Dolan pandies Stephen (punishes him by hitting his hands with a stick known as a pandybat), Stephen's friends urge him to go to Father Conmee and report Father Dolan. Although he is afraid to do so, Stephen works up the necessary courage and goes to Father Conmee's room. Although Stephen (and the reader) expects that Father Conmee will react angrily, he in fact receives Stephen in a kindly manner and listens to his complaint sympathetically. Stephen's visit to the rector is his first act of independence and self-determination. Stephen's fa- ther later reveals that Father Conmee has told him about this incident, and that the rector and Father Dolan had a good laugh over it.

Cranly

A friend of Stephen Dedalus at University College, Dublin, Cranly appears in Chapter Five and is one of the four friends who tries to tempt Stephen. The opposite of Davin in many respects, Cranly is sophisticated and irreverent. Stephen finds Cranly's accent and use of language dull; it reminds him of "an echo of the quays of Dublin given back

by a bleak decaying seaport" and its energy "an echo of the sacred eloquence of Dublin given back flatly by a Wicklow pulpit." He represents expedience, compromise, and hypocrisy. Beneath his bluster, Stephen also perceives a form of despair in him.

Davin

Davin is a friend of Stephen Dedalus and a student at University College, Dublin. Davin appears in Chapter Five and is one of the four friends who tries to tempt Stephen. He is from the Irish countryside and is described as a peasant. His speech has both "rare phrases of Elizabethan English" and "quaintly turned versions of Irish idioms." Strong and athletic, Davin is honest, straightforward, and without guile. He calls Stephen "Stevie." In the book, he represents Irish nationalism, a viewpoint that Stephen rejects. Davin is a member of the Gaelic League, an organization that advocates a return to the Irish language and traditional Irish sports.

Dean of Studies

Stephen Dedalus discusses his ideas of art and beauty with the unnamed Dean of Studies at University College, Dublin. The Dean, a Jesuit priest and an Englishman, is kindly and approachable. He also displays a dry sense of humor, remarking that "We have the liberal arts and we have the useful arts." The Dean acknowledges that Stephen is an artist. He tells Stephen that "the object of the artist is the creation of the beautiful. What the beautiful is is another question."

Mrs. Dedalus

Stephen's mother's first name is never given, and although she appears on several occasions she remains a more shadowy character than her husband, Simon Dedalus, Stephen's father. Like most of the other characters, she seems to exist only in relation to Stephen. The character is based largely on Joyce's mother, Mary Jane Murray.

Mr. Simon Dedalus

Simon is Stephen's father. Based on Joyce's own father, John, Mr. Dedalus appears in only a few scenes, but his presence is omnipresent. He is generally portrayed as an amiable man, but there is also a sense of failure about him. He is known as a storyteller. During the novel, Mr. Dedalus suffers some financial misfortune; to save money he has to take Stephen out of Clongowes Wood College and move the family to a smaller house. When he takes Stephen to visit his hometown, Cork, in southwest Ireland, he regales Stephen with tales that Stephen has heard before. In an attempt at a heart-to-heart talk, he advises Stephen to "mix with gentlemen."

As Stephen grows older, he regards his father with some embarrassment and distances himself from the older man. In Chapter Five, while talking to his friend Cranly, Stephen

"glibly" describes his father as "a medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a taxgatherer, a bankrupt, and at present a praiser of his own past." There is the implication that in rejecting Ireland and deciding to pursue a course of creative independence, Stephen is also rejecting his father and his father's failure.

Stephen Dedalus

Stephen Dedalus is the "artist" and "young man" of the title. It is impossible to consider him in the way that a reader would consider most characters in fiction, for his roles goes far beyond that merely of central character. He is the sole focus of the book, and the events of the novel are filtered through his consciousness. His presence is felt on every page.

The character is based largely on Joyce himself. The name "Stephen Dedalus" itself has symbolic significance. Saint Stephen was the first Christian martyr, put to death for professing his beliefs. In Greek mythology, Dedalus was an inventor who escaped from the island of Crete using wings that he had made; however, his son Icarus flew too near the sun, melting the waxen wings and crashing into the sea. From the novel's opening page, it is clear that Stephen is sensitive, perceptive, intelligent, and curious. He also proves to be aloof and at times arrogant and self-important. Moreover, despite his intelligence, he is often the victim of his own self-deception.

Joyce's narrative is not continuous, and there is no "plot" as such. Rather, the book is a series of "portraits" of Stephen at various important moments in his young life, from his introduction as an infant ("baby tuckoo") through selected schoolboy experiences to his declaration of artistic independence as a student at University College, Dublin. The process of Stephen's maturation is registered in his expanding awareness of the world and in the novel's increasingly sophisticated use of language. His relationship to his family, schoolmates, teachers, friends, religion, and country as well as to his own language form the essence of this novel.

In a series of epiphanies and corresponding anti-epiphanies, Stephen alternately affirms and rejects different aspects of his existence. In so doing, he makes difficult moral and aesthetic choices that help to define his character. Perhaps the most telling characterization of him occurs during the episode set in Cork. Here, Joyce describes Stephen as "proud and sensitive and suspicious, battling against the squalor of his life and against the riot of his mind." In the final chapter Stephen confides to his friend Cranly that he will henceforth rely on "the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning." Given the originality of James Joyce's conception of this character, it is significant to note that the book ends not with Stephen himself but with excerpts from his diary that indicate his intention to "go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."

Father Dolan

Father Dolan is a Jesuit priest who is the prefect of studies at Clongowes Wood College, the first school that Stephen Dedalus attends. He punishes Stephen. Believing he has been punished unfairly, Stephen later goes to see the rector, Father Conmee, and reports this injustice. Father Conmee listens sympathetically and promises that he will speak to Father Dolan. Stephen's defiance of Father Dolan earns him the acclaim of his schoolmates and is seen as his first assertion of his independence. Later in the book, Stephen's father reveals that Father Conmee and Father Dolan had a good laugh over this incident.

Vincent Heron

Heron is a boy who is a friend of Stephen Dedalus and a fellow student at Belvedere College.

The relationship between the boys is uneasy: as two of the top boys at the school, they are as much rivals as friends. There is a disturbing edge to Heron's mockery of Stephen. Heron criticizes Stephen for saying that Byron is the greatest poet of all. Heron and his friends verbally and physically abuse Stephen, but Stephen refuses to give in to Heron's insistence that Tennyson is the best poet. Heron also strikes Stephen twice on the leg with his cane to make him admit that he is interested in a particular girl. Stephen notices that Heron's face is "beaked like a bird's. He had often thought it strange that Vincent Heron had a bird's face as well as a bird's name."

Lynch

Lynch is a friend of Stephen Dedalus and a fellow student at University College, Dublin. Described by Joyce as appearing reptilian, he argues with Stephen about art and aesthetics. In this respect, he represents a foil for Stephen, allowing him (and, by extension, Joyce himself) to expound his own theory of art and beauty. Although he seems to be interested in Stephen's long intellectual talk, Lynch is really unable to appreciate Stephen's ideas or to contribute to the conversation on Stephen's level. Whereas Stephen has high artistic aspirations, Lynch's personal goals are much narrower. He will be satisfied with a job and a conventional life.

Mrs. Dante Riordan

Dante is introduced on the first page of the novel, when she and Uncle Charles applaud young Stephen's dancing. Dante introduces the theme of the Church and politics. Stephen is conscious of the fact that Dante has two brushes: "The brush with the maroon velvet back was for Michael Davitt and the brush with the green velvet back was for Parnell." (The two brushes have symbolic significance.)

Dante later appears at Christmas dinner at the Dedaluses, where she has a furious argument with Mr. Casey. The argument centers around the Church's denunciation of the Irish nationalist politician Charles Stuart Parnell, who had an affair with a married woman, Kitty O'Shea. Dante, a devout Catholic, argues that it was right for the Church to denounce the sinful Parnell, who she calls "a traitor, an adulterer!" She says that the Irish people should submit to the authority of the bishops and priests, even if this means losing a chance for independence. Mr. Casey, who is also a Catholic, bitterly resents the Church's actions in the Parnell case. He argues that the clergy should stay out of politics. The argument escalates, and the chapter ends as Dante flies out of the room in a rage, slamming the door behind her. Stephen does not understand why Dante is against Parnell, but he has heard his father say that she was "a spoiled nun."

Temple

Temple is a friend of Stephen Dedalus at University College, Dublin. Temple appears in Chapter Five and is one of the four friends who tries to tempt Stephen. Described by Joyce as a "gypsy student □ with olive skin and lank black hair," he professes to be a socialist and to believe in universal brotherhood, but he does not present a strong intellectual argument for his beliefs. Temple admits that he is "an emotional man□. And I'm proud that I'm an emotionalist."

Eileen Vance

Eileen is the first girl Stephen knows. In his early childhood, Stephen imagines that "when they were grown up he was going to marry Eileen." He particularly notices her "long white hands," which feel cool to his touch and which he likens to ivory. Dante does not want Stephen to play with Eileen because she is a Protestant.

Themes

Consciousness

In literary terms, one of the revolutionary aspects of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is the fact that there is no actual plot to the book. Instead, the progress of the novel is organized around the growing consciousness of the central character, Stephen Dedalus. His consciousness of the world around him is an ongoing theme and is developed differently in each of the book's five chapters. He experiences many types and levels of consciousness. Moreover, Joyce uses a highly original "stream-of-consciousness" technique to render Stephen's thoughts and experiences.

Stephen's initial consciousness comes through his five senses, a theme that is introduced on the first page. Here Joyce reports Stephen's awareness of how his father's face looks, how the wet bed feels, the "queer smell" of the oil sheet and the nice smell of his mother. He sings a song and listens to his mother's piano playing.

From the beginning, Stephen is conscious of words as things in themselves. When he goes to Clongowes Wood College, he becomes conscious of what words *mean* - and of the fact that a word can have more than one meaning. Stephen's consciousness of trouble is at first vague - he is not sure what Dante and Mr. Casey are arguing about at the Christmas dinner, but he knows that the situation is unpleasant. He is conscious of impending trouble when Father Dolan enters the classroom and threatens to "pandy" any "idle, lazy" boys. A little later he is also conscious that his father is in trouble of some sort, but he does not know the cause of this trouble.

Stephen develops a consciousness of the opposite sex early in his life, though that consciousness does not translate into conscious action until the end of Chapter Two, when he encounters a prostitute. Subsequently he is troubled by his consciousness of sin. Foremost, however, is his creative consciousness. As the novel progresses, Joyce's language becomes more sophisticated, matching Stephen's growing maturity and understanding. Simultaneously Stephen becomes increasingly conscious of his artistic vocation, until in the last chapter he decides to devote himself entirely to his art, regardless of the consequences to his life.

Artists and Society

As the title indicates, a central theme of the book is the development of the young artist and his relationship to the society in which he lives. The opening sentences of the book show baby Stephen's awareness of language and of the power of the senses. Because the novel is to a large degree autobiographical, it is not only about Stephen's development as a literary artist but also about Joyce's own development. Joyce believed in "art for art's sake," and *A Portrait* reflects this belief. That is, Joyce did not feel that art was supposed to have a practical purpose. It was not the function of the

artist to express a political or religious opinion in his or her work, or even to teach the reader about the society in which he or she lived. To the contrary, the artist was to remain aloof from society and devote himself to his art.

For Stephen, as for Joyce, the ability to use the language to create a work of art is its own reward. Stephen is especially sensitive to words and to sensuous phrases, such as "a day of dappled seaborne clouds" and "Madam, I never eat muscatel grapes." He is not so much concerned with what sentences mean as with how they sound and what they suggest. This musical, suggestive quality of his art comes through in the villanelle ("Are you not weary of ardent ways …") that Stephen writes near the end of the book. Because of his artistic temperament, Stephen feels increasingly estranged from society. He considers the vocation of the artist a sort of independent priesthood "of eternal imagination" that ultimately prevents him from serving the Catholic Church, from taking part in politics, and even from participating in ordinary Irish life.

Throughout the book, Stephen records his feelings of being different and distant from his classmates, his siblings, and even his friends. At the end of the novel, Stephen records his artistic manifesto in his diary: "I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."

Coming of Age

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is not generally considered a "coming of age" novel as such. Joyce intended the book to have a wider scope, and the novel encompasses more than the brief time-scale - often just a single school year or a summer - that usually marks the "coming of age" genre. In Joyce's novel, the chronology spans approximately twenty years, as we follow the central character, Stephen Dedalus, from his very early childhood to his college years. Nonetheless, there are a number of typical "coming of age" elements here. Among them are young Stephen's growing consciousness of self-identity and of family problems, his increasing understanding of the rules that govern the adult world, and, later, his keen awareness of and preoccupation with the mysteries of sex.

God and Religion

Religion - in the form of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church - forms a major theme of the novel. Indeed, religion was a pervasive force in late nineteenth-century Irish life, the time in which this novel is set. Stephen's first consideration of God occurs early in Chapter One. While looking at his name and address on his geography book, Stephen ponders his place in the world. This stream of consciousness leads him to wonder about the infinity of the universe and about God: "It was very big to think about everything and everywhere. Only God could do that…." He goes on to consider God's name in other languages and the fact that God can understand all languages: "But though there were different names for God in all the different languages in the world and

God understood what all the people who prayed said in their different languages, still God remained always the same God and God's real name was God."

The place of religion in Ireland, and the conflict between clerical and secular authority, is the subject of the argument between Dante Riordan and John Casey at Christmas dinner in Chapter One. The argument centers on the Church's treatment of the Irish nationalist politician Charles Stuart Parnell. Parnell, a member of the British Parliament, had led the fight for Home Rule, a form of limited independence for Ireland. However, just as he seemed on the verge of success, he had been named in a divorce case. (Parnell had been having an affair with a married woman, Kitty O'Shea.) Because of this, the Catholic Church in Ireland denounced Parnell, who was disgraced and who died shortly thereafter. Dante argues that it was right for the Church to denounce the sinful Parnell, saying that the Irish people should submit to the authority of the bishops and priests even if this means losing a chance for independence. Mr. Casey, who is also a Catholic, bitterly resents the Church's actions in the Parnell case. He argues that the clergy should stay out of politics, and says that "We have had too much God in Ireland." Simon Dedalus echoes this argument, calling the Irish "an unfortunate priest-ridden race…. A priest-ridden Godforsaken race!"

Stephen is a silent witness to this argument, but he soon becomes embroiled in questions of religion himself. Much of the novel concerns Stephen's relation to his religion, and his ultimate rejection of that religion. Although he finally rejects church authority, Stephen is nonetheless shaped by his Jesuit education and by a powerfully Roman Catholic outlook on life.

In Chapter Four, the unnamed dean asks Stephen to consider becoming a priest. Stephen is tempted by the invitation and imagines himself leading a religious life. He decides not to join the priesthood. He wishes to maintain his independence and does not feel that he can be a part of any organization. His power, he realizes, will come not from his initiation into the priesthood but from devoting himself to his solitary art, even at the cost of losing his family, friends, nation, and God.

SIN

Sin - particularly Stephen's sense of sin, as defined by the Catholic Church - is a major aspect of his awareness of God and religion. Deeply disturbed by the consciousness of his own sin (including masturbation and encounters with prostitutes), Stephen goes to confession. Afterward, absolved of his sins, he is "conscious of an invisible grace pervading and making light his limbs…. He had confessed and God had pardoned him. His soul was made fair and holy once more, holy and happy." He feels that life is simple and beautiful, and that life is spread out before him. For all his efforts, however, Stephen is unable to maintain this kind of life, and he lapses once again.

Style

Narrative

Like many of the novels that precede it, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is written in the third person point of view. However, this novel is anything but a traditional third-person narrative. Joyce's narrative voice is utterly unlike the omniscient (all-knowing) narrative voice found in traditional nineteenth-century novels. Earlier novelists such as Charles Dickens and George Eliot concentrated on exterior detail and attempted to give a broad overview both of the action that they were depicting and the society in which it took place. Joyce had no interest in writing this sort of novel. His narrative is narrow and tightly focused; he does not tell what is happening but rather tries to show what is happening without explaining the events that he is showing.

There is no plot as such in the novel; the narrative is not continuous but fragmented, with gaps in the chronology. The focus is exclusively on the central character, Stephen Dedalus, who is present on virtually every page. Every narrative detail is filtered through Stephen's consciousness. Joyce uses the experimental techniques stream-of-consciousness and interior monologue to let the reader see, hear, and feel what Stephen is experiencing as the action unfolds. One result of this focus on Stephen is that most of the other characters are seen only in relation to him.

In the earlier sections of the novel, Stephen is very young and is not fully aware of the significance of the situations in which he finds himself. Here the narrative mirrors the level of Stephen's intellectual development. For example, at the very beginning of the book, Stephen is a baby or, at the most, a toddler. Thus, Joyce begins the book using a simple vocabulary and imitates the style of a children's story: "Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road…." A little later in the novel, young Stephen witnesses a political argument during a Christmas dinner. The dialogue of the argument, between Mr. Casey (a friend of Stephen's father) and Stephen's Aunt Dante, is reported without comment. Stephen is not aware of what the argument is about, but he knows that it is disturbing and that it disrupts the harmony of the Christmas dinner. However, Joyce the author knows that readers of his day certainly would have recognized the significance of the argument, which concerns the late Irish nationalist leader Charles Stuart Parnell. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is full of this sort of narrative duality: Joyce the author knows what is happening, the reader might know what is happening, but the central character through whom the action unfolds is not always aware of its full significance.

The narrative becomes increasingly sophisticated as Stephen matures. By the last chapter, Chapter Five, Stephen is a student at University College, Dublin. Much of the chapter is taken up with philosophical discussions of art and aesthetics. In several conversations, Stephen explains his ideas, which are based on the ideas of Aristotle and of Thomas Aquinas. Critics have remarked that Stephen's dialogue in this section reads more like a nonfiction philosophy work than like fiction.

Setting

The action of the book takes place in Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century and at the turn of the twentieth century, a span of about twenty years. Although Joyce gives specific settings for the incidents in the book, he does not give dates for the events that he is reporting. However, critics know that the events of Stephen Dedalus's life mirror events in Joyce's own childhood and young adulthood.

Specific settings include various Dedalus homes (the first outside Dublin and later ones in the city), the schools that Stephen attends (Clongowes Wood College in County Kildare and Belvedere School in Dublin), the chapel where Father Arnall delivers his fiery sermon, and, later in the book, University College, Dublin. Stephen also visits the city of Cork in southwest Ireland with his father. Both indoor and outdoor settings are used.

Regardless of the specific setting of any scene in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* Joyce gives a minimum of external description. He is more concerned with the state of mind of his main character, Stephen Dedalus, than with the external circumstances of Stephen's situation. Yet without giving lengthy descriptions of a classroom, for example, Joyce is able to create the atmosphere of a school.

Joyce himself was a Dubliner by birth and upbringing. He does not evoke the city of Dublin in as much detail here as in his earlier short story collection *Dubliners* or in his later novels *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake.* Nonetheless, in *A Portrait,* Dublin is prominent both as a physical city and as a symbol of the center of Irish consciousness. In any case, whether he is writing about Stephen's life at school, at home, or at large in Dublin or in particular neighborhoods elsewhere in Ireland, Joyce's larger subject is always Ireland - a subject that he renders in an ambivalent stance.

Structure

A Portrait of the Artist is divided into five chapters. Each chapter deals with a different period in the first twenty years of the central character, Stephen Dedalus. Each also addresses a specific theme related to Stephen's development as an artist.

Chapter One takes Stephen from his infancy into his first years at school. In this chapter, Stephen becomes aware of the five senses and of language itself, and he takes the first steps to assert his independence. Chapter Two includes his awareness of his family's declining fortunes and his move from Clongowes Wood School to Belvedere School in Dublin. It ends with his sexual initiation in the arms of a prostitute. In the third chapter, Stephen is preoccupied with his sin and the possible consequences of his sin. The fourth chapter takes place at Belvedere School. Stephen attempts to understand the precepts of his religion and to lead a life in accordance with those precepts. However, he recognizes that his independent nature will not allow him to serve as a priest of the Church. Instead, he will become an artist, a "priest of eternal imagination." In Chapter Four, Stephen takes further steps to formulate his aesthetic theory. He also

makes a final declaration of independence from his friends, his family, his religion, and his country.

Within each chapter there are several distinct, self-contained scenes or episodes. These episodes are, in effect, "portraits." Each episode centers around or culminates in an epiphany - a moment of euphoric insight and understanding that significantly contributes to Stephen's personal education. The epiphany often occurs during an otherwise trivial incident, and is the central organizing feature in Joyce's work. However, these epiphanies are undercut by "anti-epiphanies" - moments of disillusion or disappointment that bring Stephen back to earth. Each shift between epiphany and anti-epiphany is accompanied by a shift in the tone of Joyce's language. The epiphany scenes are generally written in a poetic and lofty language. By contrast, the language in the anti-epiphany scenes emphasizes less noble aspects of life. Taken together, Joyce uses the give-and-take shift between epiphany and anti-epiphany to show the paradoxes of life.

Punctuation

The author's punctuation is not normally an issue in a discussion of a work of fiction. Up until Joyce, most English-language novelists used standard punctuation. As part of his effort to create an entirely new type of novel, however, Joyce employed unusual punctuation. Immediately noticeable in *Portrait* is the fact that there are no quotation marks. Instead, Joyce uses a long dash at the beginning of a paragraph where he wishes to indicate speech by a character. (One effect of this technique is that the reader is not immediately able to tell what portions of a paragraph might be part of the narrative apparatus rather than the speaking voice of a particular character.) Joyce is also sparing in his use of commas. Many of his longer sentences appear to be "run-on" sentences. He does this deliberately to show the "run-on" nature of a character's thoughts - a technique known as the "stream of consciousness."

Symbolism

Critics have remarked on Joyce's unique combination of realism and naturalism on the one hand and symbolism on the other. Joyce's realistic and naturalistic approaches are evident in his pretense that he is presenting things as they are. At the same time, he uses symbolism extensively to suggest what things mean.

The five senses - sight, sound, taste, smell, touch - are recurrent symbols throughout *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* Stephen's reliance on the five senses is signaled in the book's first few pages. Here we are made aware of the way his father looks to Stephen (sight), the songs that are sung to him and the clapping of Uncle Charles and Dante (sound), the feeling when he wets the bed (touch), and the reward of a "cachou" (cashew-taste) from Dante. Joyce considered the five senses to be indispensable tools for the literary artist. Of these, the sense of sight is most prominent. The importance of sight - and its fragility - is a recurring motif throughout the novel. This reliance on, and

fear for, sight is embodied in the phrase "the eagles will come and pull out his eyes," which Dante says to Stephen after his mother tells him to apologize for something. Stephen makes a rhyme, "pull out his eyes / Apologise." (Significantly, Joyce suffered from eye problems later in his life, and was to undergo several eye operations.) At various points in the novel, Stephen refuses to apologize for his actions and decisions, even at the risk of perhaps losing his vision, metaphorically. For example, in Chapter One he listens to Mr. Casey's anecdote about spitting in a woman's eye. At Clongowes school, Father Dolan punishes Stephen for having broken his glasses. In Chapter Four, Stephen attempts a mortification of the senses to repent for his earlier sins.

Religious symbols abound. There are numerous references to various elements and rites of Roman Catholicism: the priest's soutane, the censor, and the sacraments of communion and confession. Bird symbolism is prominent too. In addition to the eagles mentioned above, there is Stephen's school friend and rival Heron, who is associated with the "birds of prey." Stephen later thinks of himself as a "hawklike man," a patient and solitary bird who can view society from a great height but who remains aloof from the world that he views.

Historical Context

Joyce's Ireland: The Historical and Political Context

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is set in Ireland in the late nineteenth century and at the very beginning of the twentieth century. Joyce does not give precise dates in the narrative, but there is a reference to at least one historical event (the fall of Parnell) that helps to date the action. Moreover, critics agree that the incidents in the life of Stephen Dedalus, the "young man" of the title, closely parallel incidents in the life of Joyce himself. (In 1904, Joyce wrote an autobiographical essay titled "A Portrait of the Artist.") Joyce was born in 1882 and graduated from University College, Dublin, in 1902. These years approximately form the parameters of the novel.

Joyce grew up in an Ireland that constitutionally was a part of a nation formally known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Located just to the west of the island of Great Britain, Ireland had its own distinctive customs and culture. Most significantly, while Protestantism was the predominant religion in Great Britain, most native Irish people were Roman Catholics. However, both politically and economically, Ireland had long been dominated by Britain.

This dominant British presence in Ireland went back to the middle ages, when Norman knights from England first arrived in Ireland at the invitation of local Irish chieftains. The British presence in Ireland grew over the next few hundred years, for a variety of reasons. During the reign in England of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603), British settlers (mainly from Scotland) went to Ireland and suppressed local Irish resistance. In the mid-1600s, British rule of Ireland was further consolidated by the English Parliamentary leader Oliver Cromwell, whose army scoured the Irish countryside. Cromwell drove many thousands of native Irish from their land and persecuted Irish Catholics. The Roman Catholic Church was outlawed in 1695, but Catholic priests continued to practice underground.

Periodically, Irish factions rebelled against British rule, but these rebellions (notably one in 1798) were easily put down. (Ironically, many of the leaders of these Irish nationalist movements were Irish Protestants who were descended from earlier British settlers.) In 1800 the Irish parliament in Dublin was dissolved, and the two countries were joined under a single government headquartered in London. Nonetheless, despite British persecution of the native Irish, a distinctive Irish identity remained strong. By the late nineteenth century many Irish people aspired to a form of limited Irish independence known as Home Rule.

The Great Famine of the 1840s saw the deaths or emigration of some several million Irish men, women, and children - more than half the total population of Ireland at the time. However, this period proved a turning point in the Irish struggle for self-determination. In 1879 a Catholic nationalist named Michael Davitt formed the Irish National Land League, which agitated for rights for the Irish Catholic tenants of

Protestant-owned land. Davitt is mentioned in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* along with Charles Stuart Parnell.

The action of *A Portrait* occurs some time after the activities of Davitt and the downfall of Parnell. However, in the novel the memory of Parnell is still strong. Joyce, an individualist, was disturbed both by Ireland's nationalist politics and the strict doctrine of the Catholic Church. He regarded himself as a cosmopolitan, a citizen of Europe if not of the world. This is made very clear in the final chapter of *A Portrait,* in which Stephen Dedalus declares his intention to fly past the nets of "nationality, religion, language." Nonetheless, like Stephen himself, Joyce was very much shaped by the history and religion of his country. Ironically, the Irish nationalist uprising that eventually led to Irish independence occurred in 1916, the very year in which A Portrait was published in England. By this time, Joyce was living in Zurich.

Joyce's Ireland: The Literary Context

By the time Joyce made his mark as a writer, Ireland already had a long and distinguished literary history. During the so-called Dark Ages, Irish monks helped preserve classical learning, copying classical texts in beautiful manuscripts. Poets were greatly esteemed and held high positions in the courts of Irish kings. During the long period of British domination, some of the finest writers in the English language were Anglo-Irish (that is, Irish of British descent). Among these were the poet and satirist Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), who served as dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin; the poet and prose writer Oliver Goldsmith (1730?-1774); the statesman and political philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797); the lyricist Thomas Moore (1779-1852); the novelist Maria Edgeworth (1768- 1849); and the comic writers Somerville and Ross (pen name of Edith Somerville, 1858-1949, and Violet Martin, 1862-1915), whose stories chronicled the chaotic lives of Anglo-Irish landlords and their servants and tenants in the "big houses" of rural Ireland.

By the mid-1800s, however, sentimental stories and ballads of no great literary merit were the norm. The late 1800s and early 1900s - the time frame during which *A Portrait* is set - saw a movement known as the Irish Literary Revival. Leading writers in this movement were Douglas Hyde (1860-1949, founder of the Gaelic League), Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-1932), and the playwright John Millington Synge (1871-1909). Unquestionably the central figure in this group was the poet and dramatist William Butler Yeats (1865-1939). Almost single-handedly Yeats created a new Irish literature. By the time Joyce was an undergraduate student at University College, Dublin, Yeats was the most famous living Irish writer. However, the work of Yeats and his associates made much use of Irish themes and subjects drawn from Irish folklore and mythology.

Joyce, on the other hand, had discovered the work of French writers and of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. Stephen Dedalus's statements in Chapter Five of *A Portrait* suggest that Joyce had already decided to reject the celebration of Irish nationalism as a literary theme. When the young Joyce was introduced to Yeats, he told Yeats that the poet was already too old to help him. Rather than write about ancient

heroes and legends, Joyce wanted to chronicle the lives of ordinary people in his early fiction.

There is another notable difference between Joyce and his best-known predecessors. At a time when Protestants dominated the cultural institutions of Ireland, Joyce was the first major Irish Catholic writer. Even though he himself rejected Roman Catholicism - a process that is detailed in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* - he made his religious background an integral aspect of this novel. And although he wrote brilliantly in the English language, Joyce was keenly aware that he wrote in the language of Ireland's conquerors.

Critical Overview

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man attracted much attention when it was published, and also caused controversy. The book was widely reviewed in Europe and the United States. The most enthusiastic reactions came from other leading novelists and intellectuals of the period, who acclaimed it as a work of genius. However, not all early critics agreed on the book's merits. Rather than praising its originality, some critics denounced the work as formless or as blasphemous and obscene.

The English novelist H. G. Wells reviewed the book in 1917, the year after its publication. Writing in the *New Republic,* Wells called it "by far the most living and convincing picture that exists of an Irish Catholic upbringing. It is a mosaic of jagged fragments that [renders] with extreme completeness the growth of a rather secretive, imaginative boy in Dublin." Wells went on to remark that "one believes in Stephen Dedalus as one believes in few characters in literature." However, Wells was also disturbed by Joyce's references to sex and bodily functions. Like many critics of the time, Wells felt that these subjects were best left out of a serious work of literature. Joyce, he said, "would bring back into the general picture of life aspects which modern drainage and modern decorum have taken out of ordinary intercourse and conversation."

Other critics were more blunt and more scathing in their attacks on the novel. An anonymous reviewer in *Everyman* called the book "garbage" and said that "we feel that Mr. Joyce would be at his best in a treatise on drains." Some of the reviews in Ireland were particularly harsh. A reviewer for the *Irish Book Lover* warned that "no clean-minded person could possibly allow it to remain within reach of his wife, his sons or daughters." The reviewer for the British newspaper the *Manchester Guardian* was more receptive, saying that "When one recognizes genius in a book one had perhaps best leave criticism alone."

The distinguished British novelist Ford Madox Ford admired the book for its stylistic excellence. In a 1922 review of Joyce's next novel, *Ulysses,* he paid tribute to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* He called it "a book of such beauty of writing, such clarity of perception, such a serene love of and interest in life, and such charity."

The book's impact continued to be felt in Ireland long after Joyce's death. Although the Catholic Church disapproved, important Irish writers saw it as the first great Irish novel of the twentieth century. In 1955, the short-story writer Sean O'Faolain remarked that "this autobiographical-imaginative record [is] so mesmeric, so hypnotic a book that I can never speak of it to young readers without murmuring, *Enter these enchanted woods ye who dare ."*

In the decades since its publication, *A Portrait of a Artist as a Young Man* has continued to receive the attention of many scholars and critics. It has perhaps suffered in comparison with Ulysses, which critics generally regard as a much richer, more ambitious, and more complex novel. For example, Joyce's biographer Richard Ellmann

devoted an entire book (*Ulysses on the Liffey*) to *Ulysses* but had noticeably less to say about *A Portrait.*

The Oxford don J. I. M. Stewart (better known as the author of detective novels under the pseudonym Michael Innes) appreciated Joyce's command of language and imaginative brilliance in *A Portrait,* but felt that the result was uneven. According to Stewart, "Stephen Dedalus is presented to us with a hitherto unexampled intimacy and immediacy." However, Stewart found that this was "achieved at some cost to the vitality of the book as a whole." Because the narrative focuses exclusively on Stephen's thoughts, the reader is "locked up firmly inside Stephen's head." As a result, Stewart says, "There are times when when we feel like shouting to be let out." Also, because the central character "is aware of other people only as they affect his own interior chemistry, there is often something rather shadowy about the remaining personages in the book."

Hugh Kenner has pointed out that the opening pages of the novel attempt to do something that has never been done before. The author does not guide the reader in understanding the narrative, but leaves the reader to work things out for himself or herself. Kenner sums up the book's impact on literary history, saying that after this novel, "Fiction in English would never be the same."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Hochman, who teaches at Portland Community College, analyzes whether Joyce's hero should be viewed as either serious or absurd, and he discusses references to Greek mythology in the book.

James Joyce's first published novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), recounts Stephen Dedalus's struggle to understand and then break free of family, church, and country. The journey of this representative young artist is a growing apart or wrenching away from increasingly imprisoning influences, in Stephen's case, from an economically impoverished home, a theologically impoverished Catholic Church, and the politically impoverished nationalism of Irish independence. Crucial here is that familial, religious, and national "railings" that first fascinate and guide the child increasingly become "bars" that imprison the adult. The task of the artist, then, is to break free of these constraints and from their bars forge new and better formations. The artist will create not only the guideposts and protective railings of the future, but in the process will likely have to sacrifice his well-being and perhaps a bit of his sanity as well. For Joyce, the image of the artist apart conjures up ambivalence, specifically, excitement alternating with dread.

At the beginning of *A Portrait of the Artist,* Stephen is not only a very young child, an "object" protected and guided, but an object in a story, a character (baby tuckoo) "written" in by his father's narration. Stephen is the near-opposite of a man apart - he is the very young child whose story is being created by another. Stephen is at once both a child shaped by his parents and a character embedded in a story he didn't create, a combination producing an object who is anything but apart. Later, at home and in Catholic school, Stephen is either speechless (at Christmas dinner) or victimized (knocked down by schoolmates and beaten on the palms by a prefect). Stephen's only independence revolves around his sensitivities to words ("belt," "iss," "suck") and stimuli, especially temperature, moisture, and smell.

By the end of Chapter One, however, Stephen commits his first real act of independence: he protests his palm-whipping. At the end of Chapter Two, the increasing apartness Stephen feels as the result of his family's sudden poverty and his sensibilities - which separate him from his father and his surroundings - culminates in his "French kiss" with a prostitute, the prelude to a period of whoring that would seem to break his ties to Catholicism. The social apartness created by Stephen's whoring is less a creative, artistic separation than a destructive, uncreative separation, a mere rebellion. Therefore, in Chapter Three, Stephen gradually regrets his falling away from the Church until, at the end, he not only confesses but readies himself for the Host. In this chapter, Joyce creates, after a gradual slope toward the heights of separation, a fall: this physically central chapter of the book is a loss of Stephen's momentum toward apartness, a reversal, a device to create audience conflict and make final victory more sweet: the reader, cheering Stephen on toward separation, wonders, "Can he do it, can he really break free?"

Joyce keeps reader conflict alive as Stephen decides to mortify his flesh and devote himself to prayer. But Stephen's movement toward separateness cannot, of course, be stopped: interior apartness is manifested when Stephen declines an offer to join the Jesuits; exterior apartness is forced on him when his family must move because they cannot pay the rent. Later, Stephen wanders alone on the beach meditating on his apartness from immature peers and staring at multiple figurings of his solitude: little islands of sand amidst the sea; the moon as a body detached from earth, solitary in the evening sky; a hawk-like man confused for a god.

Chapter Five cuts once and for all Stephen's ties to family, religion, and nation. Leaving the house, Stephen figuratively leaves behind the economic and spiritual poverty that make him feel apart. Then he asserts his interior solitude. Arriving at the Catholic university, he scorns a dean for his cloistered lifelessness, attends a boring physics class with cobwebbed windows and a droning professor, and denounces a political gathering for its unthinking worship of hero and nation. In conversations with friends, and in a poem he writes to the shawled girl, E. C., or Emma Clery (fully named in Stephen Hero, Joyce's first and only unpublished novel from which *A Portrait of the Artist* was taken), Stephen asserts aesthetic independence. Finally, Stephen asserts his independence from nation when he tells Cranly he will leave Ireland. Here then, is a heroic odyssey into apartness, one ending far from its beginning: from a character (baby tuckoo) in someone else's story and real life drama (his family's) to, at the end of the book, Stephen's diary entries, those solitary, mini-narratives, where others become, for Stephen, characters in *his* story. Stephen traverses the distance from a character inextricably interconnected to a creator apart.

A recurring debate in Joyce criticism concerns this issue of Stephen's heroism. The question is whether Stephen's journey from character in a story to the creator of stories is heroic. Joyce's brother, Stanislaus, regarded the title he invented, *Stephen Hero,* as deliberately ridiculous. Wayne Booth states and asks, "The young man takes himself and his flight with deadly solemnity. Should we?" F. Parvin Sharpless answers, "Joyce's classicism sees all aspects of human life as meaningful and absurd at the same time. This is true even of things which he might be expected to value most: the creative process of the literary artist." While Sharpless's answer is a good one, it might be better if Booth's question were broken into two more specific questions. First, Is Stephen an exciting victor or a tragic loser? Second, Is Stephen a serious or absurd figure?

Searching for an answer to the winner/loser question, readers can look back to the last name Stanislaus Joyce invented for Stephen, "Dedalus."

Daedulus, "Old father, old artificer" as Stephen calls him in the last line of the book, was a mythical Greek figure whose name means "cunning craftsman." Recall here Stephen's declaration: "I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use - silence, exile, and *cunning."* Daedulus is an ambivalent figure. A renowned sculptor and engineer, he apprenticed his nephew, Talos, but pushed him off a cliff when Talos proved a greater genius than Daedulus and when it was discovered Talos was having incestuous relations with his own mother, Daedulus's sister. Daedulus also built several

ambivalent devices. First, a hollow wooden cow so King Minos's wife Pasiphae could have sex with a magnificent white bull. Second, the labyrinth, which kept in the half-man/half-bull minotaur (the monstrous product of the coupling mentioned above) but also kept his food - humans - from getting out. Finally, Daedulus created the famous wax wings that melted and caused Icarus's fall.

In summary, Daedulus, the mythic character on which Joyce builds his novel's character, is not just skillful but deceitful or *cunning.* Further his devices are ambivalent, both good and bad. The depiction of Daedulus, and other artificers in mythology, points to the idea that human creation and creations have their price, their *down* side, just as valued knowledge of good and evil produced its price: the Fall from the Garden of Eden.

The reader should also recall the Latin epigraph (opening quotation) from *Portrait of the Artist* that Joyce borrowed from Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* Here is a translation: "And [Daedulus] altered/ improved the laws of nature," written in the context of constructing the waxy wings. The figure of the great artist and grand artificer are myths still having purchase on the present, on the role of the artist, but especially for our own times, on the ambivalent state of technology: that all creations are ambivalent, not only in their effects upon their creators, but upon nature and humanity. The artist, then, is both hero and, like Daedulus, Icarus and Talos, victims who when approaching too close to the gods or the "laws" of nature, must either be punished or sacrificed. This is key to understanding Stephen's friends calling him "Bous Stephanomenos" and "Bous Stephanoforos." As Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch explains, *Bous* is Greek for bull. *Foros* is the bull as powerful victor and menos is the bull as sacrificed animal. Stephen, as artist, is this bull, an ambivalent symbol of powerful victor and tragic victim.

While the bull symbol still has application to the pagan bullfight, it has largely been replaced by the Christian symbol of a meek sacrificial lamb. The lamb may have less magical ambivalence because it is not both strong and weak, but it does have greater application to the more common defeat of the weaker by the stronger. Armed with all of this classical mythology, it should be clearer why Stephen has been represented as a bull rather than a lamb: he is strong, or resolved, and un-Christian; further he is becoming a pagan, a lover of nature, the senses, and experience.

Now to the question of whether Stephen is absurd or serious, which may, in turn, be broken down into multiple specific questions. Here are just three of many that could have been asked. Is the recently self-excommunicated Stephen absurdly selfish or uncompromisingly principled when he refuses to do his "Easter duty" for his mother? Is Stephen's villanelle to be taken by readers as an adolescent poem or a serious work of art? Is Stephen's own association with Daedulus, including the line, "I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race," to be looked on as the product of foolish youth, or as an inspiring declaration. There is little doubt that Stephen views his principles, artistic output, and philosophy as serious. But, echoing Booth, should we? This is a far more difficult question than whether Stephen is a winner or loser for this answer depends far more on taste. While Joyce, as I hope I have shown, furnishes ample and hard hints

that Stephen is both winner and loser, Joyce does not tell the reader what his - Joyce's - tastes are.

Some might sympathize with Stephen's principled rejection of his "Easter duty" feeling that his mother will get over it. And some of us might like Stephen's anti-love poem which combines images of mother, Virgin, and Emma Clery; womb and mind; gestation and artistic creation; the child, the poem, the art object; religious devotion, sexual attraction, and self-sacrifice. But others might view the poem and its creation as elementary. But there is still the question of whether we readers should regard Stephen's most famous declaration above as absurd or serious. In other words, should we understand this line as an example of childish megalomania, hubris, and youthful pride bound for an adult fall? Or is this serious stuff, the artist as smith of a new conscience, new ethics, a new way of seeing and understanding the world?

Perhaps this question can have no answer, since we cannot know what Joyce meant here (unless it is stated somewhere clearly in his letters). Without evidence we must decide for ourselves. Perhaps it is just as well. Even if we interpret Stephen as a selfish and foolish youth, it is less the rightness or wrongness of his struggle that is at issue than depicting the struggle itself. And, after all, if Stephen is selfish and foolish, this is, after all, a portrait of a *young* man, not a mature one. Had Stephen's principles, poems, and aesthetic philosophy been mature and fully formed, these would not have belonged to the realist portrait of a *young* man.

Whether or not one likes the way Stephen handles his struggle, it does show the effects of the battle fought by anyone refusing to act on certain received ideas or act out particular received practices: ostracism, loneliness, self-doubt, and conversely, intolerance, selfishness, hubris. In many ways, Joyce knew these problems as his own. Should readers fault either Joyce or Stephen - or both - if they deem Stephen's principles selfish, his poem adolescent, and his declaration overblown? Or should they credit Joyce for a realistic portrait of youth? As answering involves knowing the thoughts of Joyce, perhaps it is better to shift focus from mere evaluation of talent toward his work's effect on the world. Perhaps we might say the following: If Stephen and Joyce can be faulted for anything, it is far less for what they said and did than what they didn't say or do. That is, in *Portrait of the Artist* both concentrated almost exclusively on how the artist, him or herself, must suffer and be sacrificed for freedom. On the other hand, precious little in *Portrait of the Artist* indicated how the artist's "alteration or improvement of nature," as Ovid put it in Joyce's epigraph, impacts upon the world.

Source: Jhan Hochman, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 1999.

Critical Essay #2

In the excerpt below, O'Neill illustrates how Joyce's understanding, appreciation, and use of myth in forming one's identity is revealed in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

The Literary Revival of turn-of-the-century Dublin was much concerned with expressing Irish aspirations through heroes. Finn and Cuchullain supplied imaginatively what Ireland had not been able to achieve in reality: an Irish hero who vanquished all foes. Joyce's contempt for this form of self-consolation is well documented. In his broadside "The Holy Office" he parodies Yeats as he declares that he, Joyce, "must not accounted be / One of that mumming company." Stephen of *Stephen Hero* devotes much energy to debunking the Revival. What is perhaps less well known is that Joyce's initial contempt gave way to a profound understanding of the psychology of the Revival and of the uses of myth in the creation of identity.

The English, having been their own masters for centuries, have created many models of the successful life; the Irish, being colonials, have been unable to do so. As with American blacks and Indians, subjection to a foreign culture has destroyed all authority figures in the society.

This latter point is, I think, the theme of the first episode of *A Portrait.* The novel begins with the beginning of a children's story, a moocow coming down along the road and meeting a "nicens little boy", Stephen. The little boy, who will grow up to become the "bullock befriending bard," learns as he grows older to associate cows with mothers and with mother Ireland. And what comes down along the road and meets Stephen in the early part of the novel is his nationality. He goes off to Clongowes to find that his father is not as important as the other fathers.

- What is your father?
Stephen had answered:
- A gentleman.
Then Nasty Roche had asked:
- Is he a magistrate?

Lesson: the civil officers of the English government are the important people in Ireland. He learns the Story of Hamilton Rowan, who used the only strategy available to him, silence, exile, and cunning, to escape English captivity. Lesson: Irish heroes are not conquerors, but people who cope cleverly with being conquered. He gets shouldered into the square ditch. Lesson: the small and the weak must develop cunning or must suffer.

He summarizes the lessons he has learned on the flyleaf of his geography book:

Stephen Dedalus
Class of Elements

Clongowes Wood College
Sallins
County Kildare
Ireland
Europe
The World
The Universe

For now, at least, he is defined by his place. His mind will be formed by the experience of this place. And the process of formation is what we are reading: the narrative style of this section is that of a young boy's internal voice explaining the salient features to himself:

That was the way a rat felt, slimy and damp and cold. Every rat had two eyes to look out of. Sleek slimy coats, little little feet tucked up to jump, black shiny eyes to look out of. They could understand how to jump. But the minds of rats could not understand trigonometry. When they were dead they lay on their sides. Their coats dried then. They were only dead things.

Unlike the internal voice of Maria in the story "Clay," which helps her exclude anything which might endanger her rather fragile idea of who she is, Stephen's voice, like Leopold Bloom's, actively explores his world and comes to conclusions about world and self that are scrupulously tentative. It is this scientific approach which will eventually enable him to see his personal myths and those of his culture for what they are: an imaginative accommodation of subject status to the creation of a significant self.

Stephen's education in the effects of colonial status is also the theme of the Christmas dinner episode which follows. The real tragedy of the fight between Dante and the two men, Mr. Casey and Simon Dedalus, is not that the family does not get along, but that their ideas of themselves have been formed entirely by the institutions that govern them. Their powerless rage succeeds only in spoiling the dinner, and is capped by Mr. Casey's tale of spitting in a woman's eye, and Dante's boast of the church's role in killing Parnell. Injustice of the conqueror begets the meaner injustice of the conquered. This Christmas dinner is Stephen's first with the adults; the children eat in a separate room. It is his initiation into the adult world, and what he learns is that, in Ireland at least, there is no adult world. Stephen writes his complete address as citizen of the universe, but Simon, Mr. Casey, Dante show him that Ireland will be his farthest boundary if he stays there.

Stephen encounters his nationality just as David Copperfield encounters Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse or as Pip gets temporarily lost in the feckless Finches of the Grove men's club, but his is the greater hurdle. The nationality dilemma is particularly insidious because one's identity is derived from the very thing that is the impediment to one's development.

Young Stephen comes to awareness of his situation only gradually, by intuiting from small signs. There is something about the adult males around him that affects his

feeling about himself. For example, he thinks how pleasurable it would be to deliver milk for a living

if he had warm gloves and a fat bag of gingernuts in his pocket to eat from. But the same foreknowledge which had sickened his heart and made his legs sag suddenly as he raced round the park, the same intuition which had made him glance with mistrust at his trainer's flabby stubble-covered face as it bent heavily over his long stained fingers, dissipated any vision of the future. In a vague way he understood that his father was in trouble and that this was the reason why he himself had not been sent back to Clongowes.

The father's descent has apparently been precipitated, as John Joyce's was, by the demise of Parnell and the victory of anti-Parnell forces within the Irish Party. Stephen's fantasies of himself as the Count of Monte Cristo indicate that something of this has come through to his youthful consciousness. The Monte Cristo fantasy is formed on the same pattern as the Celtic Revival fantasy. Edmond Dantès (read heroic Ireland) languishes in prison while Mercedes (read Kathleen ni Houlihan) is forced to marry the rich enemy; Dantès escapes, becomes rich Count, gets revenge. It is, of course, the usual fantasy of the powerless. Later Stephen will figure himself as artist spurned by a materialist woman, and, in *Ulysses,* as Hamlet: characters wrongfully cast out by philistines. The mythic formula of his life has been determined by the story of Parnell and its aftermath in his own family. The Celtic Revivalists had resurrected Parnell as Cuchullain, but Stephen, as he did under the table, chiasmically changes the form of the story. Parnell rises from obscurity to heroic status, then falls; Dantes falls from heroic status to obscurity, then rises. In progressing from the Count to Hamlet, one essential change has taken place: his youthful belief in ultimate victory has been defeated.

This habit of savoring one's position as victim of injustice is a species of mental sin discussed by Aquinas under the name "morose delectation." "He chronicled with patience what he saw, detaching himself from it and testing its mortifying flavour in secret." It is a solitary sin, dependent for its continuance upon continued mortification. This helps to explain why Stephen is not interested in joining societies for the improvement of things in general:

[W]hen the movement towards national revival had begun to be felt in the college yet another voice had bidden him be true to his country and help to raise up her fallen language and tradition.… [But] he was happy only when he was far from [such voices], beyond their call, alone or in the company of phantasmal comrades.

As an alternative to his private myths the Celtic Revival is emotionally unsatisfactory: the spring-dayish optimism of the civic improver lacks the kind of interesting complexity he seeks.

In choosing Edmond Dantès over Cuchullain, Stephen has chosen, with Gabriel Conroy, the Continent in preference to Ireland. He has also chosen a literary form: he has chosen to be a novelistic hero in preference to an epic hero. As M. M. Bakhtin has pointed out, epic heroes do not develop and they have no secrets:

The individual in the high distanced genres is an individual of the absolute past and of the distanced image as such, he is a fully finished and completed being. This has been accomplished on a lofty heroic level, but what is complete is also something hopelessly ready-made.… He is, furthermore, completely externalized. There is not the slightest gap between his authentic essence and his external manifestation. All his potential, all his possibilities are realized utterly in his external social position.… Everything in him is exposed and loudly expressed.

Clearly, Stephen Dedalus, he who hides under the table and composes the chiasmic word-charm, he who will understand trigonometry and politics, cannot be a never-changing Cuchullain. Similarly, the world that he inhabits cannot be the easily interpreted good-or-bad world of the epic and of the Celtic Revival; it must be the difficult to interpret world of the novel. Cuchullain always knows who his enemies are. Even if they are his son or his foster brother, there is no doubt about their enmity, and his course of action is clear. Edmond Dantes, on the other hand, does not know who his enemies are, is not aware of all the machinations and secret self-interests that determine his fate.

The peasant theme in *A Portrait* offers an example of the shifting and tentative, the novelistic nature of Stephen's personal mythopoeia. Stephen's thoughts on the subject begin with a struggle between the romantic view of peasants as picturesque and the view that associates them with darkness and bats, and, unlike the peasant theme in *Stephen Hero,* undergoes a progression. Stephen, going to sleep at Clongowes, thinks,

It would be lovely to sleep for one night in that cottage before the fire of smoking turf, in the dark lit by the fire, in the warm dark, breathing the smell of the peasants, air and rain and turf and corduroy. But, O, the road there between the trees was dark! You would be lost in the dark. It made him afraid to think of how it was.

Romantic notions based on the repetition of the word *fire* give way as the word *dark* repeats in his mind. Living with peasants would destroy his boundary line, the embryonic identity he has been constructing; the "you" he has created, a person who, in contrast with rats, will someday understand trigonometry and politics, would disappear in the darkness.

But his attitude is not one of simple revulsion. He likes the way peasants smell, and from the beginning he has associated the sense of smell with his mother, who put the queer-smelling oil sheet on his bed. Mothers are frightening too because they embody the dark womb that precedes the "once upon a time" of consciousness. He sees the peasant seductress of Davin's story as "a type of her race and his own, a bat-like soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness and, through the eyes and voice and gesture of a woman without guile, calling the stranger to her bed." The guileless Kathleen calls the stranger, a common Irish term for the English, to her bed. The political joining of Ireland with England which took place in 1800 was called the Act of Union. Out of this union is born the "disorder, the misrule and confusion of his father's house and the stagnation of vegetable life, which was to win the day in his soul."

Later the girl he is in love with flirts with a priest who is of the Celtic Revival persuasion. The priest, Father Moran, has a brother who is a potboy in Moycullen, so Stephen imagines her as giving herself to the peasantry and associates her with Davin's seductress. Again: femininity - peasantry - pre-consciousness. Stephen contrasts himself to this peasant priest: he himself is the "priest of eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life." In the logic of this metaphor the Celtic Revival is journeying into dark chaos looking for the "radiant image of the eucharist." And the priest is perfectly willing to encourage the journey toward the Celtic past and toward the peasant life, knowing that it leads to Catholic Ireland.

The peasant theme of the novel concludes with the diary entry - a condensation of a section of *Stephen Hero* - about John Alphonsus Mulrennan, a Celtic Revival folklorist who has just returned with a new hoard of material he got from an old man with red eyes; material about terrible queer creatures at the latter end of the world. Stephen, as he did at Clongowes, expresses fear:

I fear him. I fear his red-rimmed horny eyes. It is with him I must struggle all through this night till day come, till he or I lie dead, gripping him by the sinewy throat till … Till what? Till he yield to me? No. I mean him no harm.

It is here that the peasant theme reveals itself for what it has been from the start: a personal myth which has changed gradually in its meaning. At Clongowes Stephen longed for some ideal life away from home and school, a Lake Isle of Innisfree, and the peasant cottage appeared briefly in this form. Then he needed a creation myth to explain his condition, and Davin's Kathleen ni Houlihan seductress filled the part. Later, as he began to see his life as a struggle for intellectual survival the peasant became the force of primordial darkness. In Mulrennan's account, however, he is too much the real peasant, with pipe and comic carryings on, to sustain any of these myths. The peasant myth collapses. And with the collapse Stephen takes a step toward achieving the classical temper he has been striving for.

The first step in the direction of truth is to understand the frame and scope of the intellect itself, to comprehend the act itself of intellection. Aristotle's entire system of philosophy rests upon his book of psychology and that, I think, rests on his statement that the same attribute cannot at the same time and in the same connection belong to and not belong to the same subject.

Stephen's peasant, like the Celtic Revival peasant, has been formed by the fears and desires of the beholder. In this final passage, before he catches himself at it, he has nearly turned the peasant into the jailer of Edmond Dantes. Stephen, like his countrymen, has been actively repairing the damage of colonial status with elaborate mental constructions. Having begun to realize this, he rejects the Yeatsian reconstruction of the Celtic past as the proper goal of his art: "Michael Robartes remembers forgotten beauty … Not this. Not this at all." According to his own esthetic doctrine he will have to learn to see through his own mental nimbus and discover a consistent view of his subject based upon its perceivable attributes.

And *A Portrait* itself, when compared to *Stephen Hero,* illustrates this point. In *Stephen Hero* Stephen's objection to the Celtic Revival is the subject; in A Portrait the mythopoeic process itself - the human need which results in Celtic Revivals - is the subject. "Once upon a time" signals the beginning of Stephen's conscious life as the beginning of a made-up story. "He was baby tuckoo." All human identity is myth-created. We know ourselves by a story we tell, or are told. Joyce has "disentangle[d] the subtle soul of the image from its nest of defining circumstances." "The image," that which will be his artistic subject in all of his major work, is identity and mythopoeia.

The theme is a treacherous one; to deal with it the writer must first undergo a stripping of his own self-myth. The high-flying images of the final diary entry show that Stephen, although he has taken the first steps, is not yet ready. In *Ulysses,* under the tutelage of the clear-eyed Leopold Bloom, he will complete the lesson begun here.

Source: William O'Neill, "Myth and Identity in Joyce's Fiction: Disentangling the Image," in *Twentieth Century Literature,* Vol. 40, No. 3, Fall, 1994, pp. 379-91.

Critical Essay #3

Noon is an American educator and literary scholar who has written frequently on Joyce's work. He is the author of Joyce and Aquinas. In the following excerpt, he offers a general study of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, *focusing upon it as a novel of personal rebellion.*

James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was first published forty-seven years ago, not in Ireland but in New York, 1916. This was a year in the First World War; in Dublin the year of the Easter Week rebellion. Joyce, then at Zurich in neutral Switzerland, was thirty-three, fifteen years younger than [Samuel] Butler had been when he gave up his rewriting of *The Way of All Flesh.* The haze was not so dense for Joyce, and he had not so far to look backward. The Portrait is also a most carefully rewritten or restyled novel, in fact an entirely recast one. He had begun it in its original form as *Stephen Hero* even before he went away from Ireland in 1904. He had carried this first form of the book forward to double the final, present length of the Portrait, and then gave it up still incomplete so as to start his story all over. Looking back, he himself called *Stephen Hero* "rubbish." But even as it stands, the *Portrait* might be justly styled in part an autobiographical revenge, for like Butler Joyce voices through his story the grievances that he still held against his home, his mother country and most of her people. His recollections of the System, if that is the right word here, are rather bitter ones, though the bitter tone is notably muted by comparison of the Portrait with what survives of the earlier *Stephen Hero* draft. The real life prototypes are at times so thinly veiled that any reader with even the most casual knowledge of James Joyce and his city is obliged to recognize some of them and to sense that the *Portrait* as a whole is the actual life story of a gifted young man's Catholic upbringing in Ireland at the turn of the century. The great danger is to read it as straight third person, the entire story comes filtered to us through the consciousness of a persona, here the young man whose artistic dilemmas and moral strictures it re-presents. Stylistically it is the most subtle of the three novels in the interaction of its own images and the verbal miming of its own thought. It is a literary classic of our times. Already it shows us Joyce busy as a beaver working hard to re-channel the tradition of the novel and to dam up the deep and dark waters of the subconscious, or unconscious. Quite explicitly he proclaims a revolution of the word.

Rebellion, revolt, and resistance have for centuries found in Ireland a fertile soil in which to flourish. "The Croppy Boy," "Kelly the Boy from Killanne," "The Rising of the Moon," "Seaghan O'Duibhir an Gleanna," are a few only of the defiant rebel songs, set to traditional airs, that Joyce, a gifted singer as a young man, heard in the air all about him in his own Irish days:

And though we part in sorrow
Still Seaghan O'Duibhir a cara
Our prayer is "God, save Ireland"
And pour blessings on her name.
May her sons be true when needed,

May they never fail as we did,
For Seaghan O'Duibhir an Gleanna
We're worsted in the game.

Most of these are political rallying songs. James Joyce's disenchantment with Ireland extended so far as to make him despair of the turn taken by most of Ireland's revolutionary politics, of her better-left-unspoken Gaelic speech, and, as he saw it, of the fatal paralysis that left her prostrate at the portals to the realm of the spirit, "the realms of gold" that he himself most of all respected: art, the way of the artist, and in particular the power that the word of the artist, or literature, has to help a people know itself, judge itself truthfully, and face the chaos and possibilities that the contemplation of its own image might disclose. Thus the *Portrait* becomes an artist's, not a social reformer's story as is Butler's *Way.* Stephen Dedalus leaves Ireland at the end of the story, but he is defiantly hopeful: "I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race." "Silence, exile, and cunning" are the "only arms" that he now finds at hand to defend himself in the unjust warfare that has been provoked, as he sees it, by his home, his fatherland, and his church. No one would dream from this ending that Dublin was then a city of classical song and the center of the Irish Renascence, Lady Gregory, the Abbey Theater, W. B. Yeats; nor might one infer readily, nor indeed at all that some few years earlier, 1886, Dom Columba Marmion, the distinguished Benedictine, a curate in Dundrum on the outskirts of Dublin, also left Ireland to enter a European cloister at Maredsous. Still one wonders sometimes: If those whose job it was to educate James Joyce had been themselves more creative spirits, would his Catholic faith have become so much unhinged? They might have opened their minds and hearts perhaps wider to what was going on in his.

Stephen Dedalus is as deeply convinced that the Church is to blame for the paralysis he finds all around him as had been Butler's Ernest Pontifex. Whereas Ernest blames mostly the Church of England, Stephen blames instead the Church of Rome. For the English Establishment, for Crown and Castle, for the Anglican Ascendancy in Ireland, Stephen has as much contempt as Ernest has for Victorian piety, but Stephen's own spiritual reaction has been conditioned by the Catholicism that as he sees it had made Ireland a land neither of scholars, artists, nor of saints.

The Stephen Dedalus story, at least as we have it in the *Portrait,* is that of a young man's growing up in Holy Ireland, his discovery of himself and of his vocation, his loss of innocence and his growth in experience, his flight to the continent of Europe. "You talk to me," he says, "of nationality, language, and religion. I shall try to fly by those nets." *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* another subversive book, is the American novel with which the *Portrait* has been persistently compared. Huck's territory and Stephen's, the wilderness and the urban diaspora, are, however, different kinds of solitude for retreat. Hemingway's Nick Adams, "the town's full of bright boys," and Scott Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway, in *The Great Gatsby,* are American cousins of Stephen Dedalus as well as is Huck Finn. This quest is age-old, as old as Homer. It sent the son of Odysseus on his travels. Joyce calls the three opening Stephen Dedalus chapters of Ulysses his Telemachia.

The *Portrait* tells the Stephen story mainly in terms of the three Jesuit schools that Stephen, and Joyce himself, attended in Ireland: Clongowes Wood, an exclusive elementary boarding-school; Belvedere College, or high school, as we might say, Dublin; and, finally, University College, Dublin, the Catholic University that John Henry Newman founded for Ireland in the early 1850s, which had been rescued by the Jesuits from extinction in 1883 and carried on under their administration for the next troubled quarter-century until 1909. Although it might look at first sight as though Stephen is as hard on his Irish Jesuits as Ernest Pontifex is on his Anglican schoolteacher divines, this judgment would go beyond the evidence of the *Portrait* itself. Father Dolan, "Baldyhead Dolan," the prefect of studies, a priest of the Dr. Skinner type, beats Stephen at Clongowes for having broken his glasses, but Father Arnall, Stephen's own class teacher, is remembered as "very gentle," and Father Conmee, the Clongowes Rector, as a "kindlooking" man, who treats Stephen's protest decently. Long after this, in *Finnegans Wake,* Joyce alludes to *The Way of All Flesh* as "a butler's life...strabismal [or, wall-eyed, cross-eyed, and abysmal] apologia." Jesuit readers of the *Portrait,* more likely than others, are apt to take note of Stephen's appraisal of those Irish Jesuits who in the fiction at least show themselves eager at Belvedere to welcome the sixteen-year-old Stephen as a novice into their own priestly ranks: "Whatever he had heard or read of the craft of Jesuits," writes Joyce, "he [Stephen] had put aside as not borne out by his own experience. His masters, even when they had not attracted him, had seemed to him always intelligent and serious priests."

The central conflict that the *Portrait* dramatizes is that of Stephen's vocation: Shall he be an artist or shall he be a priest? This conflict is actually resolved in the fourth, or Belvedere, section of the novel, after the crisis of Stephen's high school retreat. Stephen is intellectually tempted by the prospect of a priestly vocation. His imagination, however, is powerless to view this otherwise than as "the pale service of the altar," "cerements shaken from the body of death," and in the half-vision, half-actuality of seeing the bird-like girl "in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea," he makes up his mind not to be a priest but an artist, and to follow this vision of "mortal beauty," "profane joy," wherever it might lead him, even unto "the gates of all the ways of error and glory." Unlike Ernest Pontifex, Stephen never commits himself to a priestly service in which he has no heart: "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church." Still the *Portrait* nowhere inveighs against the family system that brings down in retrospect Ernest's strictures. In fact, tried as it is, Stephen's sense of solidarity with his family is very strong. Stephen's father, Simon Dedalus, is a drunkard, but on the whole he is shown as an amiable drunkard, who flirts with the barmaids and knows how to sing. Stephen's mother is a rather ineffectual lady, but always a lady, a gentle lady, even when she and her impoverished brood of children are obliged, after many auctions and house-movings, to live on the wrong side of the tracks as the novel comes to a close.

For the most part its tone is serene; at times it is very comic. It would not be easy to find in modern fiction a more amusing and still realistic scene than the famous Christmas-dinner in the first section, when Stephen comes home from Clongowes Wood during his family's affluent days to celebrate with them the birthday of the Prince of Peace. The Dedalus family and their invited guests quarrel violently about the rights and wrongs of

Kitty O'Shea's divorce and the consequent repudiation of Charles Stewart Parnell, "uncrowned king of Ireland": the dinner breaks up with door-slammings, shouts, curses, clenched fists and crashes, upturned chairs and rolling napkin-rings - a first-class Irish brawl. The much frightened little boy Stephen "sobbed loudly and bitterly." As Joyce closes the incident, "Stephen, raising his terror stricken face saw that his father's eyes were full of tears." Whereas the wealthy, leisured aristocrat Towneley is Ernest's hero in *The Way of All Flesh,* so an idealized Parnell, blameless and broken, is Stephen's hero in the Portrait. Neither Stephen nor James Joyce ever forgave Ireland for throwing Parnell to the wolves. Stephen cannot follow Parnell in person, and he cannot serve God as priest at the altar. He has no call to the drawing-room. What can he do? He can be, he thinks, an artist. In this way he will be saving Parnell and all his people, "race of clodhoppers" that he calls them, for the world of art: "I tried to love God, he [Stephen] said at length. It seems now that I failed."

Fortunately it is not any man's business to judge of Stephen's, or Joyce's, failure before God. Joyce himself succeeded admirably as artist; as he grew older, he edged far away from his symbolic identification with Stephen Dedalus. In *Ulysses,* the good man is Leopold Bloom: as Joyce told his friend Frank Budgen while *Ulysses* was still in the making, "As the day wears on Bloom should overshadow them all." And in *Finnegans Wake,* he is Everyman, Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, H.C.E., "Here Comes Everybody," in a story where Everybody is Somebody Else. Stephen Dedalus did not become a priest at the altar, and neither did Joyce. When Stephen says in the *Portrait* that he will become instead "a priest of the eternal imagination," his metaphor is meaningful, but he is talking about something else than the rite of priestly consecration. This metaphor should not be pushed too far in Stephen's case, and in Joyce's own it is one that has tended to obscure the two vocations between which he made an election; he himself chose not altar but art. It is a choice that haunted him most of his life.

Source: William T. Noon, "Three Young Men in Rebellion," in *Thought,* Vol. XXXVIII, No. 151, Winter, 1963, pp. 559-77.

Topics for Further Study

The Order of Catholic priests that figures in Joyce's novel, the Society of Jesus, is known historically for its schools and colleges. Research the order and its educational philosophy. What is the approach of the Jesuits to teaching and study? In what ways would the Jesuit education that Stephen Dedalus received have differed from a public school education in America today?

Research the Irish Literary Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Who were some of the writers in this movement and how did their ideas differ from the literary ideas that Stephen Dedalus expresses?

Research the Irish Home Rule movement and the role that Charles Stuart Parnell played in that movement. How do Dante's and Mr. Casey's differing attitudes toward Parnell reflect Irish public opinion of the time?

James Joyce once said that if Dublin was destroyed, people could reconstruct the city from his books. Research the city of Dublin. What are some its famous buildings, sights, and landmarks, and how does Joyce use these places as settings in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man?*

Compare and Contrast

1880s-1910s: The entire island of Ireland is part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Ireland does not have its own government, but Irish representatives are elected to the British Parliament in London.

Today: The independent Republic Ireland, comprised of 26 Irish counties, has its own government in Dublin. The six counties of Northern Ireland remain affiliated with the United Kingdom and send representatives to the Parliament in London.

1880s-1910s: The majority of Irish people belong to the Roman Catholic Church, which has a strong influence on most of the population. However, most of the leading writers, landowners, and political figures in Ireland belong to the Church of Ireland, a Protestant denomination related to the Church of England.

Today: Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion in the Republic of Ireland, with ninety-five percent of the population considered Catholic. Virtually all Irish political leaders are Catholics. However, the Church's influence on Irish society is less strong than in the past.

1880s-1910s: A large number of educated people, including James Joyce himself, emigrate abroad in search of greater economic and cultural opportunities.

Today: Irish emigration rates remained high for most of the twentieth century. However, by the 1990s, authorities report that many young educated Irish who had moved abroad are returning to Ireland, attracted by a vibrant economy and an interesting cultural life.

1916: A small group of Irish nationalists seizes the main post office in Dublin and proclaims Ireland an independent republic. British troops quickly crush the revolt and fifteen revolutionary leaders are executed. However, support for independence grows; in 1922 the twenty-six southern counties of Ireland gain self-government as the Irish Free State. The majority of voters in the six northern counties - Northern Ireland - vote to remain part of the United Kingdom.

Today: Members of the outlawed IRA (Irish Republican Army) carry out intermittent attacks against British troops and pro-British Protestant citizens in Northern Ireland, as well as terrorist bombings in England. However, the majority of Irish people, both Catholics and Protestants, favor a peaceful solution to the problems in Northern Ireland.

What Do I Read Next?

Dubliners is James Joyce's first published book of fiction. It is a collection of fifteen short stories about ordinary characters in Dublin in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The themes are childhood, adolescence, maturity, and old age. Some of the stories first appeared in an Irish magazine in 1904, under the pseudonym "Stephen Dedalus." The last and most famous story, "The Dead," was finished in 1907, but publication of the book was delayed until 1914.

The character Stephen Dedalus also appears in Joyce's 1922 novel, *Ulysses,* a classic of literary modernism. The action is set in a single day, June 16, 1904 (the date on which Joyce met his future wife, Nora Barnacle). The story follows Stephen, a newspaper advertising salesman named Leopold Bloom, and Bloom's wife Molly as they go about their business in Dublin. This elaborately structured novel parallels Homer's classic epic *The Odyssey.* Each chapter is written in a different prose style, and Joyce makes much use of the stream-of-consciousness technique.

The Country Girls, published in 1960, is the first novel by Edna O'Brien, Ireland's most famous female writer. Two girls leave their homes in the Irish countryside and go to Dublin to escape their strict Catholic upbringing and seek excitement. Because of its feminist viewpoint and frank treatment of adolescent female sexuality, this book caused much controversy when it was published.

Fools of Fortune (1983), by William Trevor, is about a doomed love affair during the Irish civil war as seen through the eyes of a young boy. Born in Ireland in 1928, Trevor is considered one of the finest Irish writers of his time and is particularly known for his poignant short stories.

Christopher Nolan's *Under the Eye of the Clock* (1987) is a remarkable autobiography by a young Dubliner who is severely physically disabled and unable to speak. Nolan overcame great obstacles to write a book that critics have compared to the work of Joyce.

Richard Ellmann's James Joyce (1959, revised 1982) is the definitive biography of this author.

For a different view of Joyce's life in Europe, read *Nora: The Real Life of Molly Bloom,* by Brenda Maddox. Published in 1988, this book shows how Nora Barnacle helped Joyce as he struggled to create great literature in the face of economic and personal hardship.

The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland, edited by R. F. Foster and published in 1989, is a good introduction to Irish history. Chapter Six, "Irish Literature and Irish History," by Declan Kiberd, provides a useful survey of Irish writers and their relationship to the culture from which they sprung. Among the many interesting pictures is a photograph of James Joyce at the piano.

Further Study

Chester G. Anderson, editor, *James Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man; Text, Criticism, and Notes,* Viking Press, 1968.

Considered the definitive critical edition of Joyce's novel, the work includes excerpts from a number of early reviews.

Bernard Benstock, "James Joyce," *in Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 36: British Novelists, 1890-1929: Modernists,* edited by Thomas F. Staley, Gale, 1985, pp. 80-104.

An essay by a leading Joyce scholar. Benstock surveys Joyce's literary accomplishment and discusses the narrative technique and symbolism of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch, "View Points," *in Twentieth Century Interpretations of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* edited by William M. Schutte, Prentice Hall, 1968, pp. 114-15.

A discussion of "Bous Stephanomenos" and "Bous Stephanoforos."

Wayne Booth, "The Problem of Distance in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,"* in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* edited by William M. Schutte, Prentice Hall, 1968, pp. 85-95.

Booth discusses irony in *Portrait.*

Joseph A. Buttigieg, *A Portrait of the Artist in Different Perspective,* Ohio University Press, 1987.

This work attempts to come to terms with the effect of Joyce's modernism in a postmodern age.

Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce,* Oxford University Press, 1959; second edition, 1982.

The definitive biography of James Joyce by one of the leading scholars of modern Irish literature.

A Nicholas Fargnoli and Michael Patrick Gillespie, *James Joyce A to Z,* Facts on File/Oxford University Press, 1995.

A handy reference source to the life and work of James Joyce.

William E. Morris and Clifford A. Nault, Jr., editors, *Portraits of an Artist,* Odyssey, 1962.

This anthology collects publisher's comments, essays, reviews, and pedagogical questions.

W. M. Schutte, editor, *Twentieth Century Interpretations of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* Prentice-Hall, 1968.

Includes useful essays by a number of scholars including Wayne Booth and Hugh Kenner.

David Seed, *James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* St. Martin's, 1992.

This is a study of many aspects—language, women, diary, etc.—of Joyce's novel.

Weldon Thornton, *The Antimodernism of Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* Syracuse University Press, 1994.

Thornton discusses Joyce's novel alongside the question of whether Western society can live with the modernism it has long wished for.

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Ford Madox Ford, "A Haughty and Proud Generation," in YR, No. 9, 1922, p. 717.

Hugh Kenner, *A Colder Eye: The Modern Irish Writers,* Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.

J. I. M. Stewart, "James Joyce," in *British Writers,* Vol. VII, edited by Ian Scott-Kilvert, The British Council/ Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984, pp. 41-58.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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