



A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

James Joyce

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Joyce wrote the first draft of a work he called *Stephen Hero* between 1901 and 1906, but was dissatisfied and later wrote and developed it. He partially destroyed this version in a fit of rage when it was turned down by a publisher, and again rewrote the work in the form in which it was finally published in 1916 as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man Details

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Author : James Joyce

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From Reader Review A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man for online ebook

Nathan says

Shut up James, you had me at 'moo-cow.'

Bookdragon Sean says

"His soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings. A world, a glimmer or a flower? Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless succession to itself, breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than the other."

Thus awareness is born, awareness of oneself as the shackles of society are thrown down. Stephen realises that he does not want to be what everyone else has deemed him to be; he wants to be his own man; he wants to embrace his own desires and live the life he wants: he wants to be free.

And who can blame him? It's his life so he may as well live it a way that will cause him some degree of satisfaction. Please note, I deliberately avoided the word "happy" because Stephen isn't happy; he realises that such a state is fickle: it will always fade with time. So in this process he assesses his own individuality and slowly begins to define his emerging sense of self. To invoke a cliché, Stephen goes on a journey of self-discovery; however, the extent of which goes far beyond the typical discourse: this is about the soul of his art.

"What is that beauty which the artist struggles to express....."

Is this not the entire crux of the work? Stephen struggles, and overcomes, the fight to be his true self in the confines of Irish society, and, by extension, Joyce struggles to produce his art in the confines of traditional narrative expectation: he cannot write his masterpiece by following the rules. The beauty he wishes to express will have to take a new form.

So, this becomes a natural precursor to *Ulysses*. I view this novel as an experiment; it is Joyce dipping his toe into the pool of experimental realism before he dives in head first with his next work. He plays with his writing; he tests it all for the purpose of exploring how far he can push the limits of storytelling: he prepares himself and his reader for his next work. To call this book autobiographical is to invoke the understatement of the year. As Stephen loses his virginity and the binds of social constraints, Joyce breaks free of all sense of artistic conformity. As Stephen explores his growing sexual appetite without any care for the conventional modes of Catholic morality that imbedded Irish culture, Joyce begins to stand up on his own two feet, erect and proud; he is ready to throw his writing into the world.

The artist is born.

promising light. But he was just getting into darker caves of fear, where guilt there always was: the Minotaur of sin lurking on each of those barren and sordid alleyways. The Order, the militant Order. Fleeing and escaping, not yet flying, but led by the force of hope, a dizzy hope.

He met other ghosts in those alleys but they were not more real than the icons.

Some white shone. Pearl white. A feather as small as a word. The fascination led him to other feathers that seemed to mark the way out of the trapping Labyrinth of stilted ideas. But one has to be careful with words. They can embody banality. Or emptiness. He knew the words of prayer, the words of nationalism. Words had also brought sorrow to that first martyr, Stephanos, the saint from the classical lands of ancient Greece. He was punished for his speech, his utterances. Words exchanged for stones: evil stones, words of evil and stones of god. Words of god.

But those feathers, did the sweet Guardian Angel drop them? Or was it the heroic Attican figure with Apollonian wings?

For those feathers of beauty grouped into systems of calming order. They formed an ordered and powerful structure - the syntax of thought. They led the way, clustering into meshes that winged the thoughts. Inventions could now fly. The wings of text, wings of writing, wings of beauty could help the soul glide away.

Diving upward dropping the weight of morality into eternal *Stasis*.

In free pursuit of liberating aesthetics, in all its splendour: with *Integritas*, *Consonantia* and *Claritas* – Wholeness, Harmony and Radiance.

Added 5th August, 2014.

I am now rereading the Odyssey in preparation for Ulysses... and the expression "winged words" springs up in Homer's text... so suitable for Daedalus and the young Joyce.... Words are also compared to arrows in Homer's

Anthony Vacca says

Forget *The Perks of Being an Insufferable Wimp*; forget the hollow, hipster-plasticity of Holden Cauliflower and his *phony* attempts at wry observations on adolescence; forget that clumsy excuse of an experimental storyteller that is Jonathan Safran Foer, aka "Meat is Murder" Johnny, with his nauseating, gee-I-guess-our-hearts-really-are-just-too-big-to-fit-into-one-sentence-after-all mentality; forget all that useless bullshit, if, like me, you can pick up James Joyce's *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* and completely relate with a childhood defined by shyness and subservient silence that, with time and guidance, is fashioned into an all-encompassing fear of divine punishment for being a lowly, flesh-bound mongrel unworthy of its own

creator's love, which, in turn, precipitates a young adulthood embittered with resentment and characterized by self-loathing and drastic, vain attempts at appearing creatively intelligent as you hobnob with your college peers, those equally fucked-in-the-head fakes that use their given academic setting as a way of feeling validated and important, which is a bafflingly absurd denial of the eventual doldrums of disappointment and depression that is living a long life paired with the ability to actually form coherent, analytical thoughts that have no real value since they can't be expressed in any meaningful way since you've wisely given up your ivory-tower dreams of being the famous musician, the beloved artist, the acclaimed novelist, the sensational poet, one of those people whom more than a hundred people will ever know or actually care about and remember once he or she finally dies and discovers firsthand if their deepest, guilt-ridden fear of a snarling, reptilian DevilGod orbiting their every thought and action was always true.

Seemita says

APRIL 19 (Evening): Alright. This is insane. It has been almost eighteen, 18 (has more impact) hours since I sat down to scribble something about what is going on in my mind but the right words are still elusive. And this eluding is colluding my mind no bounds. No, I did not mean to create any sense of rhythmic rhyme here. Because life is no rhyme. And far from rhythmic. It is a battle – fierce, dark, compounded with many elements and munitions and machineries and what not. It is a forever raging battle where I always find myself fighting, well, ME. Yes, I am always up against myself. *A Present ME vs A Future ME, A Strong ME vs A Weak ME, A Hopeful ME vs A Dejected ME, A Sure ME vs A Doubtful ME.* The last one, seems, perennially raging, blazing like the eternal flame of a glorious soul. Ah, *Soul*. Why did I even write that word? While the whole world tells me it is the purest part of a body, the guardian of noble deeds and the first thing to leave a body that has rotten beyond repair, I have seen it the most corrupt. In my case at least. I mean what was the soul doing when I was bartering my innocence for shrewdness in school? What kept the soul busy when I bargained my mother's love for an empty vessel of ego? And where was the soul snoring when I engaged my skin in disgusting deflowering acts? I don't believe in soul.

Or...is it just *my* soul? Tarnished, contaminated, listless, condemned? Does the soul have two doors? That if I enter through one, I would see wistful smoke, pious fragrance and bright lights of goodness and if I enter through the other, the room would turn black, with nauseating stench and coarse rays of sin everywhere? Is it an eternal dilemma of which door shall I push open? The Ever and Never of Soul? Of Life? Oh I don't know. This is all so maddening.

Mother told me I will get answers in the home of God. And so, I have made a good number of visits to his house. Let me say I like him. Wherever he is, talking to him, makes me feel good. Basically, he always lends an ear, the luxury which none of my friends are willing to extend. So, I talk to him. I believe in him, like I do in a friend. I fight with him, I lie to him, I sing songs with him, I spend many hours of silent confessions with him. But when I am asked to treat him as a superior, rather the most Supreme, I raise my hand in hesitant protest and ask him questions – Why should I delegate you up there? Why should I pray to you? Why should I be religious? What good it is to be a member of your community? I had respect for you and even placed my faith in you. I believed in your assurance under which I dared to offer my loving heart to another beautiful creation of yours. But by letting seep the venomous stream of unrequited love into me, you killed a part of me. Should I not blame you for that? Weren't you supposed to safeguard my innocent emotions if I were under your refuge? In my hours of adolescent wretchedness, when foul smell of arrogance and vanity emanated from my unabashed openings, why did you not arrest it with a warm blanket of your wisdom? I started losing faith in you and you stood there, watching. Why did you not protect me when atheistic shower was pounding on my vulnerable heart?

Well, I can keep pointing fingers at you because it is easy and requires no preparation. You don't answer and I can throw my missiles at you. But whether it is likely that *I* went wrong somewhere? No clear answer.

May be I should search. May be I should read. Read more of Aquinas and Aristotle. And other great minds. I am learning anew to swim in their submersible waters. They talk about beauty and sin, glory and pity, truth and myth. Sometimes, I grab a bunch of answers and sometimes, I grapple in nothingness. But mostly, I get navigators. You ask navigate where to? Oh, I need to find answer for that one too! But by deploying the triple weapons of silence, exile and cunning, I have seen the answers are not that obscure. Really. Whether my filial duties and academic tenacities would contribute in this quest is something I don't know. But this questioning would. And I think I would continue doing that no matter how much worthy mass the process accumulates and how much filth it throws my way. Yeah, it sounds good.

Oh wait! I just wrote a whole page, didn't I? Not bad for someone who was swimming in a wordless sea just a few minutes back. Good Lord! Alright then. Time to go. I have a walk to take and a few more questions to ask for the day. See you at another junction. And don't ask me where.

- Anonymous Stephen Dedalus My Alter Ego

Agnieszka says

We can read *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man* as a prequel to Ulysses but if we reject for a while first associations then what's left? An intimate, inner portrait of a young man who attempts to define himself as a man and an artist. If we read it this way - then it is simply an universal story about the torments of adolescence and search for his own identity, his own voice.

Stephen Dedalus, overwhelmed by Irish God-and-Homeland tradition, is suffocating by provincialism of late 19th-century Ireland. Ireland, living in the shadow of England, faced with poverty, also and perhaps above all else, poverty and narrowness of mind.

Stephen, shown from an early age, in the family home, a Jesuit school, in college, is trying to get rid of all the historical baggage. All these precepts to be a good son, student, to love God and country.

But a man's country comes first. Ireland first, Stevie. You can be a poet or or a mystic after.

Stephen, layer by layer throws out inhibiting him bonds of family, religion and nation, aware that sometimes would fall, painstakingly forges his self. Chooses loneliness and voluntarily condemns himself to exile, to find that kind of life, knowledge or art, which would allow him to express himself most fully.

I do not fear to be alone or to be spurned for another or to leave whatever I have to leave. And I am not afraid to make a mistake, even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake, and perhaps as long as eternity too .

Meredith Holley says

This book is a very dry, written version of the *Dead Poet's Society* without Robin Williams. I was already

grateful to Whoopi Goldberg this week for her reasonable comments about the most recent Sarah Palin ridiculousness, so I feel kind of bitter at having to be grateful for the other half of that daring duo. I had sworn them as my nemeses – minor nemeses, yes, of nowhere near the caliber of Charlie Kaufman, David Lynch, or Harold Bloom, but nemeses nonetheless. Now, I find myself thinking, “It’s a good thing Whoopi is on the View. Otherwise it might turn into some kind of evil vortex,” and “It’s a good thing that Robin Williams was in *Dead Poet’s Society*, otherwise those kids all would have been running around having conversations like I’m reading right now.” What type of conversations am I referring to, you ask? Here is an example from when Stephen is, I believe, supposed to be around 12 years old:

“-- *And who is the best poet, Heron? asked Boland.*

“-- *Lord Tennyson, of course, answered Heron.*

“-- *O, yes, Lord Tennyson, said Nash. We have all his poetry at home in a book.*

“*At this Stephen forgot the silent vows he had been making and burst out:*

“-- *Tennyson a poet! Why, he's only a rhymester!*

“-- *O, get out! said Heron. Everyone knows that Tennyson is the greatest poet.*

“-- *And who do you think is the greatest poet? asked Boland, nudging his neighbour.*

“-- *Byron, of course, answered Stephen.*

“*Heron gave the lead and all three joined in a scornful laugh.*

“-- *What are you laughing at? asked Stephen.*

“-- *You, said Heron. Byron the greatest poet! He's only a poet for uneducated people.*

“-- *He must be a fine poet! said Boland.*

“-- *You may keep your mouth shut, said Stephen, turning on him boldly. All you know about poetry is what you wrote up on the slates in the yard and were going to be sent to the loft for.*

“*Boland, in fact, was said to have written on the slates in the yard a couplet about a classmate of his who often rode home from the college on a pony:*

“*As Tyson was riding into Jerusalem
He fell and hurt his Alec Kafoozelum.*

“*This thrust put the two lieutenants to silence but Heron went on:*

“-- *In any case Byron was a heretic and immoral too.*

“-- *I don't care what he was, cried Stephen hotly.*

“-- *You don't care whether he was a heretic or not? said Nash.*

“-- *What do you know about it?* shouted Stephen. *You never read a line of anything in your life except a trans, or Boland either.*

“-- *I know that Byron was a bad man,* said Boland.

“-- *Here, catch hold of this heretic,* Heron called out. *In a moment Stephen was a prisoner.*

“-- *Tate made you buck up the other day,* Heron went on, *about the heresy in your essay.*

“-- *I'll tell him tomorrow,* said Boland.

“-- *Will you?* said Stephen. *You'd be afraid to open your lips.*

“-- *Afraid?*

“-- *Ay. Afraid of your life.*

“-- *Behave yourself!* cried Heron, cutting at Stephen's legs with his cane.

“It was the signal for their onset. Nash pinioned his arms behind while Boland seized a long cabbage stump which was lying in the gutter. Struggling and kicking under the cuts of the cane and the blows of the knotty stump Stephen was borne back against a barbed wire fence.

“-- *Admit that Byron was no good.*

“-- *No.*

“-- *Admit.*

“-- *No.*

“-- *Admit.*

“-- *No. No.*

“At last after a fury of plunges he wrenched himself free. His tormentors set off towards Jones's Road, laughing and jeering at him, while he, half blinded with tears, stumbled on, clenching his fists madly and sobbing.”

Who are these kids? The Grand Inquisitor? I don't know, maybe the boys in the Dead Poets Society were having conversations like that, even with their fun-lovin' teacher. It's been years since I saw it. I really wish Robin Williams had come and slapped Stephen Dedalus around for a little while somewhere in this book, though. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a perfect example of how I instinctively dislike people who aren't funny. And if you tell me that he actually is funny, I say to you that if it takes you longer than 1 minute to explain the joke and at the end of explanation it leaves me with only a vague uneasy feeling, it doesn't count. The following passage comes closest to being funny of any passage in the book (but still, yawn! Also, note to Joyce, “tundish” is not *that* interesting a word – Wikipedia, usually so long-winded, barely gives it a page: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tundish>):

“-- One difficulty, said Stephen, in esthetic discussion is to know whether words are being used according to the literary tradition or according to the tradition of the marketplace. I remember a sentence of Newman's in which he says of the Blessed Virgin that she was detained in the full company of the saints. The use of the word in the marketplace is quite different. I hope I am not detaining you.

“-- Not in the least, said the dean politely.

“-- No, no, said Stephen, smiling, I mean --

“-- Yes, yes; I see, said the dean quickly, I quite catch the point: detain.

“He thrust forward his under jaw and uttered a dry short cough.

“-- To return to the lamp, he said, the feeding of it is also a nice problem. You must choose the pure oil and you must be careful when you pour it in not to overflow it, not to pour in more than the funnel can hold.

“-- What funnel? asked Stephen.

“-- The funnel through which you pour the oil into your lamp.

“-- That? said Stephen. Is that called a funnel? Is it not a tundish?

“-- What is a tundish?

“-- That. The funnel.

“-- Is that called a tundish in Ireland? asked the dean. I never heard the word in my life.

“-- It is called a tundish in Lower Drumcondra, said Stephen, laughing, where they speak the best English.

“-- A tundish, said the dean reflectively. That is a most interesting word. I must look that word up. Upon my word I must.”

I kind of want to see Holden Caulfield and Stephen Dedalus cage fight, or at least hear Holden talk for a little while about what a phony good ol' Dedalus is.

I did not hate this book as much as I thought I would, to be quite honest. A lot of readers that I have great respect for have told me this book is completely unbearable, and Virginia Woolf is so persuasively critical of Joyce in her Writer's Diary. I don't know about unbearable. It has mostly unbearable parts, but a couple of bearable boogey-man Catholic Church parts. I can handle the dramatic conversion chapter, but mostly Stephen is such a pipsqueak!

This book fails to be transcendent in my opinion. By that I mean that I believe it does try to be timeless – and fails. I know the counterargument is that it is documenting a specific time and culture. I get that. So are The Iliad, Macbeth, and Pride and Prejudice, though, and they are still fun or tragic and reflective of some basic humanity. Things *happen* in them. A *Portrait of the Artist...*, if it is reflective of anything, is reflective of self-absorbed young men, and that is a culture I find it impossible to be patient with. Sorry guys! I want to “accidentally” spill things on your record collections and replace your hair gel with Nair. I think we should go our separate ways.

Goodreaders, I do not forbid you from reading this book, as it is unquestionably influential, but I do warn you that if you are bothered by the use of the word “moocow” in the first sentence, you may not like the rest. Also, don’t listen to the audio version. The reader is a slow-talking, simpery-voiced, Joycian. I’m sure he’s a very nice person, and I apologize if I have been scathing. So that you are not left with the impression that I “hate everything”, which I have been criticized for in the past, and to end on a positive note, I leave you with a summary of the things mentioned in this review that I love: Tennyson, Byron, lamp, Virginia Woolf, Holden Caulfield, The Iliad, Macbeth, and Pride and Prejudice. Things I love also include, but are not limited to, baby animals, ice cream, Dr. Seuss, and the Velvet Underground, if you want to know.

Agir(????) says

Non Serviam :????? ?????? ????

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Paul Bryant says

CELEBRITY DEATH MATCH : STEPHEN DEDALUS VS. HOLDEN CAULFIELD

(Note : this is not part of the current ongoing Celebrity Death Match series organised by Manny but I thought I would revive it as a companion piece)

BUCK MULLIGAN : Come on, kinch, you fearful jesuit. I've got a tenner on this so I have so get in that square ring and batter this lollybogger senseless.

STEPHEN : Pro quibus tibi offérimus, vel qui tibi ófferunt hoc sacrificium laudis.

BUCK MULLIGAN : Give us a rest of your gobshite and pannel the wee dodger.

STEPHEN : Not so wee, he's six foot if he's an inch.

BUCK shoves him in the ring. HOLDEN CAULFIELD eyes STEPHEN miserably. His psychiatrist has explained that contests of physical strength and agility will raise his spirits and shake him out of his depressive spiral. He can't say that he gives a rat's ass about the whole thing. In fact he'd rather be pretty much anywhere but here.

THE REF pockets a tenner secreted insouciantly to him by stately, plump BUCK MULLIGAN.

BUCK : And another where that came from.

REF : Seconds away, Round One.

STEPHEN closes his eyes and walks vaguely about the ring, ashplant dangling from limp left hand. You are walking through it howsoever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the nacheinander. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff that beetles o'er his base, fell through the nebeneinander ineluctably. I am getting on nicely in the dark. My ash sword hangs at my side. Tap with it: they do. WHAM !

HOLDEN has been thinking he may as well get this feeble thing over and done with as quickly as possible and he has strode up and flailed – there is really no other word - a long thin arm vaguely in STEPHEN'S direction. More by luck than judgement he connects with STEPHEN's bullockbefriending ear which then commences issuing gouts of redblooded blood.

STEPHEN (Throws up his hands.) O, this is too monotonous! His lips lipped and mouthed fleshless lips of

air: mouth to her womb. Oomb, allwombing tomb. His mouth moulded issuing breath, unspeched: ooeeehah: roar of cataractic planets, globed, blazing, roaring wayawayawayawayawayawayaway.

REF issues a standing count : A one. A two. A three.

HOLDEN sits down, scratches his private parts and produces a cigarette. lights it and sneers at the crowd.

REF : A four. A five.

HOLDEN : What a bunch of phonies.

CISSEY CAFFREY : Who are you callin a phoney and what kind of accent do you call that anyway? Is he an American? O Lor, he is as well. And aren't they all rich? So they are. Here what's your name darlin? You look awfy young to me.

HOLDEN : Well I act quite young for my age sometimes. It's really ironical, because I'm six foot two and a half and I have gray hair. I really do. The one side of my head--the right side--is full of millions of gray hairs. I've had them ever since I was a kid. And yet I still act sometimes like I was only about twelve. Everybody says that, especially my father. It's partly true, too, but it isn't all true. People always think something's all true. I don't give a damn, except that I get bored sometimes when people tell me to act my age. Sometimes I act a lot older than I am--I really do--but people never notice it. People never notice WHAMBLAM! Ooof! Shit!

STEPHEN has roused himself from his solipsistic torpor and delivered a mighty blow to HOLDEN'S temple with the ash plant.

ASHPLANT : Jaysus, I felt that!

REF : Hey, back in your corner you holy terror, this is Marquis of Queensbury rules! No ashplants! I'm going to have to disqualify you forthwith! So I am!

BUCK MULLIGAN waves another tenner in his purview.

REF : If you do it again!

STEPHEN, disgusted with his actions, throws his ashplant out of the ring. It is deftly caught by LEOPOLD BLOOM , an all round decent fellow with a really plumpacious sexy milf of a wife with tremendous bazooms. Let me tell you. In fact did I ever mention that one time me and her were DING DING!

End of round one.

STEPHEN limps over to the prone form of his lanky young opponent. He rouses him, pats him down, hauls him to his feet, and apologises. By the time HOLDEN's vision clears he finds he's been propped in his seat and a beer is in his hand, proffered by the gay crowd whose relish of the contest appears to know no bounds.

LEOPOLD BLOOM pokes his head into the proceedings.

BLOOM : You know, lads, this isn't the way. life doesn't have to be all about biff bang pow and the best man wins and all. let's go down the pub.

Exeunt BLOOM, HOLDEN AND STEPHEN in the direction of the Butcher's Arms Public House.

BUCK MULLIGAN : Dedalus wins on a TKO!

CROWD : Did he bollocks!

General melee ensues.

Issa Deerbany says

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Nikos Tsentemeidis says

«-Μου ζητ?ει να νηστ?ψω για να κοινων?σω το Π?σχα.

- Και σν;
- Δεν πρ?κειται, ε?πε ο Στ?βεν.
- Γιατ?;
- Non serviam, απ?ντησε.»

Δυσκολε?τηκα αρκετ? για να ε?μαι ειλικριν?ς. ?κουγα πολλ? για τον James Joyce. Περ?μενα με αγων?α να δω γιατ? ?χει δημιουργηθε? αυτ? η φ?μη. ?τσι λοιπ?ν μπ?κα στον μαγικ? κ?σμο του ξακουστο? Ιρλανδο? συγγραφ?α.

Γρ?φει με β?θος, τ?σο ?στε δεν κατ?φερα να κερδ?σω ?λα ?σα ?να τ?τοιο κε?μενο μπορε? να δ?σει στον αναγ?στη. Νομ?ζω με μια δε?τερη αν?γνωση, θα το ευχαριστηθ? περισσ?τερο. Αμφιταλαντε?τηκα αρκετ?ς φορ?ς για την τελικ? βαθμολογ?α, υπ?ρξαν ?μως πολλ? σημε?α, που ?χουν να κ?νουν με τις αξ?ες και τα πιστε?ω του Joyce, τα οπο?α κ?νουν σπουδα?ο αυτ? το βιβλ?ο.

Ταντ?στηκα με τον ?ρωα αρκετ?ς φορ?ς. ?νας ?νθρωπος, απ? παιδ? ακ?μα, αντιδραστικ?ς, ο οπο?ος δε?χνει να μην αν?κει ολ?τελα στην κοινων?α που ζει.

«-Π?στενες ?ταν ?σουν στο σχολε?ο; Στοιχηματ?ζω ?τι π?στενες.
-Ναι, απ?ντησε ο Στ?βεν.
- Και δεν ?σουν πιο ευτυχ?ς τ?τε;»

?να μεγ?λο δ?λημμα της ανθρωπ?τητας αν?καθεν: τι ?χει μεγαλ?τερη αξ?α; οι ιδεολογ?ες, τα πιστε?ω ?η απ? ευτυχ?α; Ο Στ?βεν αν?κει με σιγουρι? στην πρ?τη κατηγορ?α και φα?νεται να μην ?χει μετανι?σει ποτ?, ακ?μα κι αν τα πιθαν? του λ?θη τα πληρ?νει σε ?λη του τη ζω?.

Απ? τα πιο διδακτικ? βιβλ?α που ?χω διαβ?σει.

Ted says

First off, I have too many shelves, so Joyce must sit on the "lit-british" shelf, spinning him in his grave no doubt. (*No longer! now an Irish shelf!*)

I read the book first in college (not for a course), then a second time a couple years ago. The 40+ year gap provided an interesting test as to what would seem familiar and what wouldn't. I barely recognized the earlier parts of the novel, more recollection (not very detailed) as I progressed. Finally I reached the end, and was shocked as I read the last two paragraphs, which I recognized almost word for word, forty years after first reading them! The mind is a strange thing.

(view spoiler)

(hide spoiler)]

Incidentally, chapter three, relating Stephen's retreat and the hell-and-brimstone sermon to which the boys are subjected, provides a wonderful example of the way in which organized religion (in this case the Irish Catholic version) can so wonderfully scare the crap out of a young adult. The following describes Stephen returning to his room after the sermon.

He could not grip the floor with his feet and sat heavily at his desk, opening one of his books at random ... Every word for him! It was true ... God could call him now ... God had called him. Yes? What? Yes? His flesh shrank together as it felt the approach of the ravenous tongues of flames, dried up as it felt about it the swirl of stifling air. He had died. Yes. He was judged. A wave of fire swept through his body: the first. Again a wave. His brain began to glow. Another. His brain was simmering and bubbling within the cracking tenement of the skull. Flames burst forth from his skull like a corolla, shrieking like voices: - Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell!

Luckily, it passes. And eventually Joyce passed out of the Church. There's an interesting little section in the Wiki article on Joyce titled **Joyce and Religion**. Some scholars believe that Joyce was reconciled, or never really left, the Catholic Church. This section concludes by relating that, when his burial was being arranged, a Catholic priest tried to convince Joyce's wife that there should be a funeral Mass for him. She is quoted as saying "I couldn't do that to him."

Shine Sebastian says

Words, art, life...

Life, art, words...

BEAUTIFUL!

James Joyce,... what a masterful writer!!

This book is insightful, poetic, artistic and profound.

It is , if I may say so, a tour de force of wisdom and language.

I will try to make this review not ridiculously long, but as you can imagine, when a book is this good, there is no way you can write a short review and be satisfied. So let's take a look at Joyce's brilliance,

1. Language - Joyce's language is fresh and unique, his techniques and style a touch of sheer genius.

The sentences, especially descriptive ones, are so expressive and vivid, so that the images and scenes are felt so strongly and clearly, oozing out of the pages.

"The rain had drawn off; and amid the moving vapours from point to point of light the city was spinning about herself a soft cocoon of yellowish haze. Heaven was still and faintly luminous and the air sweet to breathe, as in a thicket drenched with showers; and amid peace and shimmering lights and quiet fragrance he made a covenant with his heart."

"The music passed in an instant, as the first bars of sudden music always did, over the fantastic fabrics of his mind, dissolving them painlessly and noiselessly as a sudden wave dissolves the sand-built turrets of children."

these are a few examples of the sweet poetic beauty of the writing. So colourful and soothing...!!

2. Profoundness, Wisdom and Knowledge -

"The phrase and the day and the scene harmonised in a chord. Words. Was it their colours? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the grey fringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself. Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language many coloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?"

"To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!"

"The soul is born, he said vaguely, first in those moments I told you of. It has a slow and dark birth, more mysterious than the birth of body."

"Pity is the feeling which arrests the mind in the presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human sufferings and unites it with the human sufferer. Terror is the feeling which arrests the mind in the presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human sufferings and unites it with the secret cause."

"The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination. The mystery of esthetic, like that of material creation, is accomplished. The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails."

"I imagine , Stephen said, that there is a malevolent reality behind those things I say I fear."

"The past is consumed in the present and the present is living only because it brings forth the future."

Makes me think of this quote, - "Word after a word after a word is power." !

"These questions are very profound, Mr. Dedalus, said the dean. It is like looking down from the cliffs of Moher into the depths. Many go down into the depths and never come up. Only the trained diver can go down into those depths and explore them and come to the surface again."

This is, the birth, growth, and rebirth of a fascinating soul. An artist's soul, desperately in want of freedom to express itself wholly and freely, its journey, its waking.

Stephen Dedalus, goes down into the dark, bottomless depths of his soul's secrets, his hidden and silent consciousness in repose, his true being, and like his ancient father, the old brilliant artificer, Daedalus, he uses the mighty wings of language and imagination and reason, to emerge anew, a surging new life, an ARTIST !!

"To speak of these things and to try to understand their nature and , having understood it , to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are
the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand - that is art."

Man!!!

Michael Finocchiaro says

I read this back in high school (and a few times since) and it blew my mind. The textual maturity grows as Stephen Daedalus grows and it is absolutely captivating. The scene where his knuckles are beaten in class (thank goodness we have moved beyond corporal punishment in schools for the most part!) was so real that my hands ached. You of course see Stephen Daedalus again in Stephen Hero as well as Ulysses.
A must read.

Steve says

Joyce is brilliant. And he knows it. And he loathes it.

Forget the complexity of his prose (see Ulysses and Finnegan's Wake for the really outlandish bits). Forget his literary stature. Forget his Ireland and his guilt and his Christ. *Portrait* provides the reader with a character with such depth and realism that I almost can't stop crapping my pants thinking about it. His approach in crafting Stephen Dedalus (and, thus, himself) is profound, and Joyce would be legend by this invention alone. The best bildungsroman I know of. Read thrice.

God job, Jim.

Samadrita says

He longed to let life stream in through the windows of his mind in all its sordid and colorful glory so that he could sift through the layers of feeling, impulse and meaning and find what his restless soul craved for - that shred of truth too primevally pristine for anyone to begrime. But the world intruded rudely upon his solemn preoccupations, planted seeds of insidious doubt wherever it could find the soft, yielding ground of inchoate perceptions. His oppressors were many and unapprehended - the cruel compulsions of academic discipline, the acts of adolescent savagery of compeers who were abysmally ill-equipped to deal with a difference of opinion, the steadily visible socioeconomic squalor of the milieu which threatened to blunt his senses and the omnipresent fear of every thought or deed of his being tantamount to execrable heresy.

"He had tried to build a break-water of order and elegance against the sordid tide of life without him and to dam up, by rules of conduct and active interest and new filial relations, the powerful recurrence of the tides within him. Useless. From without as from within the waters had flowed over his barriers: their tides began once more to jostle fiercely above the crumbled mole."

But he rebelled and won victories against the accompanying inebriety of religious indoctrination and those who demanded from him an obligatory patriotic fervor for the sake of a suffering fatherland. The relentless barrage of catechisms so forcefully dismissive of humanly considerations failed to induce him to self-loathing and guilt; he found a holiness in carnal love and an enduring beauty in the quiet surrender to mortal desire instead. The labyrinth of diverse lures could no longer throttle his ambition of escaping its narrow confines. Thus, even as friends, enemies and competitors in the arena of life busied themselves with the pursuit of social relevance and prestige, young Stephen Dedalus remained unperturbed.

"This was the call of life to his soul not the dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair, not the inhuman voice that had called him to the pale service of the altar. An instant of wild flight had delivered him and the cry of triumph which his lips withheld cleft his brain."

He now aspired to the fulfillment of a greater goal, having found his one true faith in the legitimacy of art and in its power to bestow sense on the perpetual chaos of existence.

P.S.: This is a Künstlerroman whose author presupposes his own greatness and the conspiratorial insensitivity - villainy, even - of those who surround him. The author's ideas on women are also quite overtly simplistic and even somewhat patronizing. Thus I choose to save my 5 stars for the artist's heftier and more celebrated tomes.

Renato Magalhães Rocha says

*"Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressinggown, ungirdled, was sustained gently behind him on the mild morning air. He held the bowl aloft and intoned:
—Introibo ad altare Dei."*

Scratch that.

At the last minute, before witnessing Buck Mulligan mocking one of church's most important celebratory traditions and embarking on my odyssey with Ulysses, I decided to take the time to get acquainted with Stephen Dedalus. I figured going to a party where I at least knew one person would be better than facing a whole crowd of strangers.

"Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo."

I ended up reading Joyce's autobiographical novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in only three days, and in a way I feel sorry about it because I think I should've given it more time. On certain occasions it felt too dense and it was my own fault for not letting it sink in properly before starting each chapter. It was like watching a film in fast-forward mode.

Even so, it was fascinating accompanying the whole process and conditions in life that turned Stephen Dedalus into an artist. It is said that, at the age of twenty one, Joyce noticed he could become an artist himself by writing about how one becomes an artist. And that he did.

This coming of age story covers Stephen's formation since his early childhood and is divided in five episodes - or epiphanies - and, each one of those, distinctively, had a big impact on his personality - his consciousness and identity - and the artist he eventually became. As the title suggests (...as a young man), Stephen still has a long way to go. And the prospect of watching Stephen's continued development in *Ulysses* is very exciting.

What made this novel so interesting for me wasn't the fact that Stephen became an artist, it was to watch his gestation as a person. To see and to understand how the surroundings impacted him and how he responded to each and every situation that was sent his way made me try to create a parallel to my own history: I wanted to identify some of the epiphanies I went through to form the person I am today.

Joyce chose a very interesting period to depict in his novel as when we're younger, there's no denying we're more receptive to all kinds of stimuli and in the case of Stephen, his psychological response to them were heightened as he already possessed a sharp sensitivity - something that was key to his final decision of choosing art over his family, the church and his nation.

Also covered here is one of the subjects that usually spark my interest the most: one's devotion to religious life. As I am not a religious person myself, it was very enticing to understand the entire process that built Stephen's decision to follow the religious path, from his encounters with prostitutes, to how impressed he

was by Father Arnall's sermons to his sore confession of guilt. I feel books appeal more to me when the characters are as different from me as possible, because I get to study and try to comprehend points of view that I would never have myself. This episode alone encompasses the whole novel's proposition: how the events that happen to you mold you as a person.

"His throat ached with a desire to cry aloud, the cry of a hawk or eagle on high, to cry piercingly of his deliverance to the winds. This was the call of life to his soul not the dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair, not the inhuman voice that had called him to the pale service of the altar. An instant of wild flight had delivered him and the cry of triumph which his lips withheld cleft his brain."

However, to put the whole argument that we're products of our environment in perspective and show us that there are other factors in play here, we witness how Stephen's vocation as an artist was stronger than the events that had molded him to that point. When it seemed he would indeed go through the religious route, our young man struggled and freed himself from his early decisions to finally follow his true calling, whether he was exercising his free will or following his fate: to be an artist. And to be able to clearly show this through masterful writing is where Joyce excelled in becoming an artist himself.

Rating: Joyce continues to impress me with his writing qualities and how he develops his stories with originality and precision: 4 stars.

Now, back to *Ulysses*:

*"Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressinggown, ungirdled, was sustained gently behind him on the mild morning air. He held the bowl aloft and intoned:
- Introibo ad altare Dei."*

Rakhi Dalal says

"Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes" (And he sets his mind to unknown arts.)

- Ovid

Metamorphoses

The above mentioned quote from Ovid, which appears at the start of the work, best describes the conclusion of a journey of an artist through his self, trying to come up with things that matter most, while still trying to discern his place in this world.

I still remember the day, when as a teenager, ready to explore the world around me, I, once looked up in the sky, which was sunny and inspiring, and said "I wish I could fly so high in the sky that it could take me in its arms!!" That was a wishful fancy. My class group laughed at me, one even expressing her contempt at such a childish sham. That was a moment of revelation for me, a moment when I realized how important it was to set one's mind free. I was disheartened, because it became apparent that they were not receptive, not receptive to life itself.

The reading of “A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man” made me remember that instant; that instant, which I recall as one of the most memorable moments of my life. This work by Joyce has taken me down a memory lane, like Proust did :), but unlike Proust, it has made me remember and define those moments which have considerably influenced my thoughts and ideas. Those moments which have, over a time, asked me to break away from the well accepted conventions, if not to live the life of an artist, but then, to be a being that is conscious and hence, living.

This work, which is considered to be semi-autobiographical, captures the mind of Stephen Dedalus effectively and renders the “Portrait” strikingly, without any transition. As Langdon Hammer, in the introduction, said, “Over its decade long composition, the creator of Portrait refined almost out of existence, a key device of novelistic convention: the narrator.” This comes from the theory; Joyce gives at the end of the work:

“The personality of the Artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalises itself, so to speak. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination. The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.”

So, what we get, as a result is the revelation of characters’ inner stream of thoughts, without us going through the narrative translation. This style of stream of consciousness, as employed by the author, has made me a Joyce fan. I was astonished to behold the expressions of Stephen, his thoughts, his anxiety, his moment of epiphany. It wasn’t as he experienced them; it was like I myself was going through those moments of reflection. Specifically, where he questioned his faith and religion, his duties and responsibilities as a Christian, more so when offered an entrance into the service of altar.

Starting from his childhood, there were many beautiful expressions which reflected the development of his consciousness; the expressions, which held you captive for their simple representation. But the most enrapturing ones came toward the end of the work, when Stephen attained a more rational approach. I am only going to quote a couple of my favorites:

“His throat ached with a desire to cry aloud, the cry of a hawk or eagle on high, to cry piercingly of his deliverance to the winds. This was the call of life to his soul not the dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair, not the inhuman voice that had called him to the pale service of the altar. An instant of wild flight had delivered him and the cry of triumph which his lips withheld cleft his brain.”

His moment of epiphany:

“Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on.”

It is here that Stephan comes to acknowledge that it is not a sin to appreciate beauty. That it is beautiful to live, to err, to triumph and to fall even. **That it is beautiful indeed to be a human being, to live in consciousness and to acknowledge yourself for who you are.**

Fernando says

Con el correr del tiempo y de las lecturas de sus libros, James Joyce se ha transformado en un escritor realmente interesante para mí. Su maestría literaria y su genialidad narrativa lo transforman en un artista todo terreno. Además de "Dublineses", libro que pienso releer pronto, de "Ulises" que mi gran desafío literario cumplido el año pasado y del que leeré este año, me refiero al "Finnegan's Wake" y este libro que pasa a formar parte de aquellas novelas que leo con tranquilidad, dejándome llevar por su forma tan poética y amena al relatar y que me dejan un recuerdo agradable cuando las termino. En ella relata la etapa inicial en la vida de Stephen Dedalus, desde sus tres años hasta sus años universitarios sin dejar inconcluso el paso por la niñez, la pubertad y la adolescencia. Es de destacar la forma en que acompaña transcurso de los años del personaje y este proceso es identificado claramente en los diálogos y en la forma de pensar de Dedalus. Este es uno de los libros más "entendibles" del gran autor irlandés junto con "Dublineses" puesto que todavía no utiliza en forma desenfrenada su famosa invención del "stream of consciousness" o "monólogo interior" como tampoco esa parafernalia lingüística que enloquece o desorienta al lector en "Ulises", sino un tratamiento del "estilo indirecto libre", diálogos perfectamente construidos, narración clásica en tercera persona y un final con unas cuantas fechas anotadas en un diario (primera persona) escrito por Dedalus. Stephen, quien será uno de los protagonistas principales junto con Leopold Bloom en "Ulises" se nos presenta aquí como una persona sensible, de nobles sentimientos y genuinos ideales que son puestos a prueba a partir de su férrea educación religiosa en distintas escuelas jesuitas especialmente las de Clongowes y Belvedere. Y es en este aspecto en donde nos encontramos a Joyce tratando el tema de la religión en todos sus aspectos. Los personajes vuelcan sus ideas y definen sus pensamientos defendiendo la doctrina católica como condenándola desde distintos puntos de vista y todos son válidos.

Dedalus marca claramente la diferencia como el alumno distinto, altamente dotado de los mejores atributos intelectuales, una innata predisposición para la poesía y de una marcada sensibilidad artística que se complementa con su personalidad tan especial y noble.

Es que en un momento de su vida, Stephen se siente agobiado al auto inculparse por su vida promiscua, pecadora y desenfrenada. Se siente acorralado y piensa que Dios lo castigará sin compasión, se pierde en sufrimientos y elucubraciones que lo atormentan y todo ello eclosiona luego de asistir en la Iglesia al sermón que da el padre Arnall. Y aquí hago un párrafo aparte para destacar algo:

pocas veces en la literatura he leído una porción de texto que me absorbiera y me shockeara tanto como la descripción tan aterrizable y detallada que utiliza Joyce para contarnos cómo es, según él, el infierno. La manera tan vívida, asfixiante y atormentadora con la describe los tormentos que sufren los condenados haría quedar realmente helado al mismísimo Dante Alighieri.

En muy pocas páginas, no sólo nos clarifica perfectamente cómo es el juicio final sino que estas pocas páginas alcanzan para equiparar la descripción del infierno que Dante le lleva todo el primer libro de la Divina Comedia. Realmente escalofriante.

Finalmente, resalto y reconozco nuevamente algo que ya había hecho luego de leer el "Ulises" y es ese dominio total que James Joyce tenía del mapa de Irlanda en su cabeza y creo que funciona como un complemento del recorrido que Dedalus y Bloom realizan en "Ulises". Si uno quiere visitar algún día Irlanda tan sólo necesita identificar cada una de las calles, pueblos y ciudades que marca Joyce en sus novelas para tener solucionado como debería ser un auténtico circuito turístico de Irlanda.

Excelente libro, recomendable, con dosis poéticas de alto calibre y con el sello inconfundible de este genio que se llamó James Joyce.
