

Critical Appreciation and Evaluation of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

6

Introduction

Elizabeth Drew's remarks on the introduction of *A Portrait* is quite praiseworthy. She writes: "At the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce dated the book: Dublin 1904; Trieste 1914. It was the result, therefore, of ten years' gestation and creation before it satisfied him that it was completed in final form. Richard Ellmann tells us in his biography of Joyce that he wrote the first sketch for it when he was twenty-one, then extended it under the title *Stephen Hero* to over a thousand pages. This was completed in 1907 and immediately Joyce decided to scrap the whole thing and recast and concentrate it into a third of its length, with its present title. Joyce had his usual troubles over publication, and when it finally appeared in America in 1916 and in England the following year, its reception was very mixed. One reviewer called it "a study in garbage" and another, "a brilliant and nasty variety of pseudo-realism." But it was also hailed as "one of the most remarkable confessions outside Russian and French literature"; Ezra Pound said it contained the best prose of creative invention; while the English magazine *The Nation* called Joyce "a new writer with a new form."

A Portrait and Stephen Hero

Joyce himself had characterized this "new form" in his description of his original sketch. He pointed out that the past has no "iron memorial aspect" but implies "a fluid succession of presents". What we are to look for is not a fixed character but an "individuating rhythm." In its final design, however, he changed the whole focus of this rhythm. The change in title points to a change in perspective. From the fragment of *Stephen Hero* that survives we see that the development is centered in the individuality of the protagonist as a man. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* the accent falls on the artist. The material is similarly slanted. In the early version the treatment of Stephen in his unhappy relations with family, church and society is much fuller and more direct, and illustrated with much more narrative action. In *A Portrait*, the Dublin environment is not attacked so much frontally as wrecking the individual; it is revealed as the deadly enemy that threatens the free development of the artist. The material is similarly slanted and undermines the primary need of the artist to be loyal to his calling.

The Title of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is a very strange and exotic title for a novel, and at first glance the articles in this title appear to be put rather irrationally, but a closer observation would reveal that the title is a very significant one and that the articles are indeed accurate. Joyce himself notified conspicuously that the last four words in the title were significant and should not be neglected. Actually, this was earlier done by few of the earlier critics of the book. Interpreting the appropriateness of the title, William M. Schutte stresses that the novel presents the portrait of the artist, and not just any artist. Next problem, however, emerges out of the words 'the artist'. Does it imply Joyce himself, and is the book to be estimated as the autobiography of Joyce, or is it that Joyce has built the particular artist the subject of his novel? One of Joyce's remarks to his friend reveals his intention of making the novel a self-portrait "I haven't let this young man off very lightly, have I? Many writers have written about themselves. I wonder if any of them has been as candid as I have."

Most of the previous readers, reviewers and critics of Joyce regarded the novel as a self-portraiture. "Many of its incidents closely parallel incidents in Joyce's life. What is more, Joyce's schoolfellows at Clongowes Wood school became Stephen's school fellows at Clongowes Wood under their real names; men still walking Dublin's streets also walked through the *Portrait* bearing their own names; and numerous well-known Dublin figures, including Joyce's mother and father and some of his university friends, were immediately recognisable beneath their pseudonyms. Small wonder that the early reviewers saw the book as a thinly disguised autobiography."

Plot and Structure

Joyce was very specific about providing a formal structure to his novels; this is the reason why his major novels have a compact and precise form. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is divided into five chapters and all of them end with a note of balance or 'stasis'. It has been said that each chapter starts with a series of thematic statements; but it does not appear justified to ratify this view, though it is convincing in the context of chapter one, where the themes of paternity, religion, apology, punishment and song are all encompassed in the first two pages.

Joyce defined this novel as "the curve of an emotion". All the five chapters present five versions of the same curve, proceeding from various different experiences, through conflicts to a state of ephemeral peace, when—to use Stephen's words—"the mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing." As an artist, Joyce feels satisfied in the organisation of his sensible and intelligible matter for an aesthetic end. And once one understands the pattern of the novel, our admiration for it is heightened.

Elizabeth Drew says that the "structure of the novel, as critics have pointed out, is in the form of a series of trial flights. At the end of each chapter, Stephen makes some assertion of his own identity which frees him for a time from the particular outer and inner pressures of confusion and despair which constrict him. The diary form at the end of the book, in spite of much of its "flip" tone of cynicism, hints of doubts and wavering distrust."

Chapter one deals with the childhood of Stephen in Bray and Clongowes. It closes with the proud victory of Stephen over Father Dolan's wrong cruel punishment. Chapter two interprets the events in Blackrock, Dublin, Belvedere College and Cork. It deals with Stephen's slow detachment from his family and his surroundings. His romantic imagination reaches its climax ironically when he visits a prostitute. The truth that Stephen really feels the need of being 'held firmly in her arms' suggests that he is still a child who needs comfort and ease. But the chapter ends with another kind of stasis— the 'swoon of sin.'

Chapter third opens with references to all the seven deadly sins and concentrates on the sermons depicting the horrible picture of hell. Stephen's repentance and communion gives another moment, this time of pious calm as the concluding note of equilibrium.

At the opening of chapter four, Stephen is leading a pure life but he rejects the offer given by the rector to become a priest. His homely life has become wretched, but his father makes arrangements for him to join the university. His quest for beauty finds its objective when he sees the bird-girl on the sea-shore; and his swoon of pleasure provides another end of the chapter in stasis.

In the opening scene of the last chapter, emphasis is laid on the wretchedness of Stephen's home as he looks at the louse-marked lid of the box of pawn-tickets. Then follows the discussion on patriotism with Davin. He discusses art or aesthetic theory with the Dean of Studies. Thereafter, he talks about international politics with Cranly, patriotism with Davin, with Lynch he discusses art and with Cranly, religion.

Throughout these discussions and conversations Stephen tries to justify his own point; and intimately he concludes that in order to do so, he must accept the state of exile. The novel finally closes with another note of stasis as Stephen gets ready to quit his family and country.

Theme and Content of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

The most conspicuous theme of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* lies in its title—the portraiture of the development of a young man as an artist. Besides, there are various secondary themes in the novel that are dealt with through recurrent symbols and motifs. For instance, the theme of the quest for a father-substitute, the theme of flight and fall, the theme

concerning the severance of cramping ties and the theme of the sacred nature of artistic creativity.

The main content of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is the development of a young Stephen from 'creature' to 'creator'. The novel begins with the babyhood of Stephen to his decision to quit family, religion and country in pursuit of his true vocation of an artist. It essentially depicts the plight of an artist, his sensibility, his passion, his arrogance, his essential irresponsibility, his fights to raise himself above his mates.

"*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is built on the proposition that art is a main artery in the body of life. All that nourishes art is living; all that stifles art is dead. Joyce works outwards from the conviction that the artist, as artist, must have no loyalties, must make no judgements except in distinguishing between what is relevant or irrelevant to his art. It is with art, not with him or his environment, that Joyce is pre-occupied in this book."

The theme of the novel is that an artist is necessarily an individual who can develop only after being free of all assimilative predicaments and commitments in the external world. It is not relevant here to discuss whether Stephen can, on the basis of the villanelle be called a promising artist. Joyce is simply depicting the minimum conditions required for the nourishment of the will to create art. Stephen regards family, church and nationality as nets preventing the flight of the artistic soul. Stephen seeks unshaken and perfect freedom that is an essential requirement for the expression of his spirit. He is not ready to serve that in which he no longer believes, even if it is his family, religion or country; he would attempt to discover himself in some mode of life or art as liberally and as perfectly as he could, applying silence, exile and cunning as his weapons to defend himself.

Stephen's consciousness and mind are interesting not only in themselves but also because they possess a symbolic significance. "Our knowledge of Stephen is now going to come to us mediated through his own developing consciousness. That consciousness is to be the theatre of whatever drama the book attempts to present, and at the same time a territory sufficiently broad for the exercise of the vigorous naturalism which Joyce has been learning from continental masters." Yet with a quite transparent naturalism he is no longer content and on the second page we find him putting inconspicuously into operation a different kind of machinery :

"The Vances lived in number seven.

They had a different father and mother. They were Eileen's father and mother.

When they were grown up he was going to marry Eileen.

He hid under the table. His mother said :

O, Stephen will apologise.

Dante said :

O, if not, the eagles will come and pull out his eyes—

Pull out his eyes,

Apologise,

Apologise,

Pull out his eyes."

"The whole *Portrait* is an apologia: at the same time its cardinal assertion is that Stephen will not apologize; rather he awaits the eagles. Joyce's eyes, moreover, were in actual fact threatened from the first; presently in the *Portrait* Stephen as a school boy is going to be unjustly punished as a consequence of defective vision; the master who beats him makes an observation suggesting that his guilt is to be seen in his eye; the complex of ideas thus established remains with Stephen and is several times resumed in *Ulysses* in a manner fully intelligible only to a reader equipped with the relevant memories of the *Portrait*. This technique of weaving elusive symbolic themes through the strongly realistic fabric of his writing is something that Joyce is to exploit more and more. His prose at length becomes a vast hall of echoes—and one fatally adapted (the toiling inquirer must feel) to the conflicting voices of scholiasts. Eventually, Joyce appears to have enjoyed playing up to his commentators.

Style and Technique

J.I.M. Stewart, the critic, catches our attention to the fact that the different styles used in the *Portrait* are worthy to be called a museum of old and new styles, next only to *Ulysses*. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce does away with that aggressively economical and monotonous prose, pervading *Stephen Hero*, out of that he had developed the excessively expressive, 'scrupulous meanness' of *Dubliners*. Syntax, vocabulary and rhythm are now frankly diversified to accentuate the contours of the hidden emotion, and Joyce is thus starting to deploy his resources as an expert of imitative form: "*Ulysses*, considered in point of prose style, is to reveal itself quite frankly as a museum displaying as in a series of show-cases all the old ways of using English and a great many new ones as well. The *Portrait* although in some degree looking forward to this renders an overriding impression of unity, since each of the styles reflects one fact of Stephen, who is a highly unified creation." 'He chronicled with patience what he saw,' we are told, 'detaching himself from it and tasting its mortifying flavour in secret.' This Stephen is best represented in some of the conversations—which, as in *Dubliners*, are based upon an ear and intellect so alert as to combine a maximum of significant statement with a minimum of apparent selection. The early scene in which Stephen's father and Mrs. Riordan quarrel over Irish politics during dinner on

Christmas day is Joyce's early masterpiece of this kind. When Stephen ceases to be merely a recording intelligence, and responds actively to the challenge of a world he finds so largely inimical, the style reaches out at once for weapons and armour, its whole tone becoming an extension of Stephens' most caustic and arrogant condemnations; of Dublin which has 'shrunk with time to a faint mortal odour, of Ireland 'the old sow that eats her farrow,' of her church which is 'the scullery-maid of Christendom.' Stephen himself is 'a priest of the eternal imagination,' and he speaks in cold exalted phrases constant with the role."

As far as the technique is concerned, it is interior monologue. Joyce's subtlety of insight into the complex and intricate mind of the adolescent Stephen is astonishingly remarkable. For instance, in Chapter 2, section IV, we meet the application of this technique: "Stephen walked on at his father's side, listening to stories he heard before, hearing again the names of the scattered and dead revellers who had been the companions of his father's youth. And a faint sickness sighed in his heart. He recalled his own equivocal position in Belvedere, a free boy, a leader afraid of his own authority, proud and sensitive and suspicious, battling against the squalor of his life and against the riot of his mind...." The key feature of this technique is the mental flux created on account of the association of ideas rather than the inexistence of formal sentence structure. The impact of Father Arnall's sermons on Stephen is represented to us through a technique that successfully grips every movement—rise and fall, turn and twist of Stephen's long persisting spiritual toil. First the crudeness of the unrepentant heart is presented: "A cold lucid indifference reigned in his soul...what did it avail to pray when he knew that his soul lusted after its own destruction?" (Chapter 3, section I). But every moment, an happening has begun to inform him and even a mathematical exercise at school makes him feel that the fundamental cause of his trouble is not very much lust but pride. "The equation on the page of his scribbler began to spread out of widening tail, eyed and starred like a peacocks'..." (Chapter 3, section I)

Stephen's plight on listening to Father Arnall's sermon is also explained by a method akin to interior monologue: "Every word of it was for him. Against his sin, foul and secret, the whole wrath of God was aimed. The preacher's knife had probed deeply into his diseased conscience and he felt now that his soul was festering in sin...the sordid details of his orgies stand under his very nostrils: the soot coated packet of pictures which he had hidden in the flue of the fire-place and in the presence of whose shameless or bashful wantonness he lay for hours sinning in thought and deed..." (Chapter 3, section II)

The technique of 'stream-of-consciousness' is a formal feature of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This technique of 'stream of consciousness' sensitively projects the intense spiritual isolation of the

boy. This technique is an alteration of the subjective point of view. It is not a deviation from traditional convention, for even Fielding used this concept when he intended to show the working of a character's mind. But not in the application of the subjective point of view throughout the novel, instead of occasionally as in the traditional English novel. Joyce has paid attention to the associative patterns emerging in the mind of Stephen from babyhood to youth. Joyce has also applied few 'filmic' devices in the novel. It is presented through 'cutting', narrating the story by separate 'shots', 'flash-back', 'fade-out' and 'double-take'. Joyce's use of focus is more cinematographic.

Use of Epiphany

An eminent critic, Elizabeth Drew has very well remarked upon Joyce's use of epiphanies. She says, "Joyce's critics usually call this faculty the making of 'epiphanies', an epiphany being a showing forth, a revealing of the inner through the outer. It is another example of Joyce's use of religious vocabulary for his artistic concepts. But he does not use the word in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. He used it in *Stephen Hero*, but discarded it deliberately, and refers to it in *Ulysses* only to mock his early use. It seems unnecessary, therefore, to perpetuate the term as if it were a device peculiar to Joyce. For this quality he calls "radiance" is what we have met before in Henry James, in Conrad and in Lawrence, in scenes such as the deathbed of Ralph Touchett, the description of the *Patna* before the accident, or the rabbit episode in *Women in Love*, incidents where the external scene and its psychic content are perfectly fused. "Radiance" is an excellent word for it, since it suggests its artistic value in two ways. First, it lights up the external action or object so that its inner emotion is revealed; and then it extends the meaning so that it radiates from the words and images and rhythms. The concluding scenes of the first three chapters are good examples, but they are behind the intensity which Joyce injects throughout quite minor episodes, such as the child Stephen's discovery of the word 'Foetus' cut in the desk of some forgotten medical student at Cork, or the conversation with the Jesuit Dean of Studies as he is lighting the fire, or the flight of the birds outside the library, or the vision in which he sees all his teachers transformed into buffoons.

More complex than any other is the description of the figure of a girl on the beach after the vision of "the hawk like man flying sunward above the sea," and the suggestion of all the emotional associations which radiate from the glimpse of her. "A girl stood before him in midstream; alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of sea-weed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh....Her slate blue

skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face."

Stephen has just experienced the certitude of his vocation as artist, and this strange and beautiful figure is a symbol of this. She is Stephen's Muse, as it were. She is mysterious, for all such spiritual revelations rest on mystery. She is birdlike, for the message has come to him from the sky in the symbol of flight. She is a seabird standing in the flowing waters of life. She is also associated with the dove, bringing to mind the Christian stories of Annunciation, and the descent of the Holy Ghost—the gift of tongues. Her blue skirts are of Mary's colour: she is the mother of the Word. But Venus, goddess of beauty, had her doves too, and the pagan symbolism of Venus rising from the sea and being welcomed from the air is there too. (We think of Botticelli's famous painting). The seaweed, though, making its sign on her flesh, is emerald: she is also Ireland, the emerald isle. She is Stephen's own race, whose uncreated conscience he will forge. She is also Woman, "mortal beauty", for it is from the mortal matter of the earth that the artist creates the immortal word which shall not die. "Her image had passed into his soul forever 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 line, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!....On and on and on and on!"

At the end of each chapter in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, epiphany is skilfully used. These epiphanies are noteworthy in the resolution of some conflict and the harmonisation of the several elements that build up the chapter. The most remarkable epiphany in chapter one, is when Stephen goes to report against Father Dolan's tyranny to the Rector. Justice is assured and Stephen is hailed by his school-mates as a hero when he comes out from the office of the Rector. Thus Stephen's harmony with human environment is splendidly established. In chapter two, we meet with an epiphany when his dream of Mercedes is united with the embrace of a whore. It is sin here but is sublimated into a something gentle, beautiful and emotionally securing: "Tears of joy and relief shone in his delighted eyes. In her arms he felt that he had suddenly become strong and fearless and sure of himself. He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark presence of her softly parting lips." In chapter third, he goes to confess his sin to priest and enlighten his soul, thus the "ciborium had come to him". The epiphany in Chapter four is well discussed in Elizabeth Drew's remark given above. In chapter five, epiphany comes when Stephen declares his determination to go to encounter the reality of experience and invokes the old artificer Daedalus to help him.

Use of Motifs

Several symbolic motifs are used in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and darkness, light and fire are very significant among them: "The blindness motif includes all the images of light and darkness, of sight and lack of vision. The motif begins in the first pages of the story. Stephen recalls a childhood verse he learned from his Aunt Dante: 'Pull out his eyes/ Apologize....' This is a fearful vision for the young boy and he continues to be concerned about his weak vision throughout his childhood. The incident on the playing field when his glasses are knocked off and broken leads to the humiliating punishment he receives from Father Dolan in the Latin class at Clongowes. Stephen says of himself: 'He felt his body small and weak...and his eyes were weak and watery.' He has a child's terror and darkness; '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.' And even at the age of twenty, Stephen includes in the small list of things that he fears, 'country roads at night'. The reader will notice how frequently the descriptive words 'dark', 'fiery', or 'flaming' are repeated. Stephen's great-grandfather is called a 'fierce old fire eater.' Later on, it is made clear that darkness and blindness are not different but as synonymous as knowledge, light and fire. The blindness of Stephen is both real and figurative. Stephen is blinded by 'romantic illusions' that is 'especially evident in his unrealistic attitude towards various ideal females.' The second frequently used motif is that of Daedalus, a mythical hero. "Joyce used the ancient Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus as a background story from which to compare and contrast his modern story of Stephen Dedalus Stephen is compared sometimes to the hero Daedalus and at other times to his impetuous son, Icarus....Later in the novel Stephen identifies himself directly with his mythic prototypes. Sometimes he identifies with the crafty inventor Daedalus who devised an escape from the labyrinth. At other times he resembles closely in his attitudes, the rebellious ill-fated son Icarus who flies too high and is plunged to his death in the sea." The motif of flight is logically associated with that of a fall and drowning as after falling down Icarus was drowned. There are several motifs that are elaborated in several chapters.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the existence of motifs is not an exclusive characteristic of the novel because it is used in other novels also but in this novel its intrinsic relevance is unique. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is the first novel in which minor elements are given so much primary importance that theme and structure depend on them.

Use of Symbol and Imagery

Symbol and imagery are most significantly used in the novel. Major symbols are given in the first chapter of the book. The most remarkable

images among them are that of cow, rose, woman, bird and water. We find that at several moments, the images are blended in such a manner that any attempt to separate them or single out one from another seems impossible. The primary images are given in the first two pages of the novel and they contribute a lot in the construction of structure and form: "We are confronted here with a moocow coming down the road, with a rose (may be green), with wetting the bed, with a girl, and with an eagle that plucks out eyes, not to mention a number of other things such as dancing to another's tune. Without much context as yet, these images, acquiring fresh meanings from recurrence and relationship with others carry aspects of Stephen and his trouble."

Never was an opening so dense as this or more important. Diction, rhythm, and the opening phrase (the traditional start of an Irish "story") indicates the condition of childhood and its feebleness. Restricted to the road, the child cannot escape his confrontation with a creature traditionally linked with Irish myth and with everything material. Later Stephen feels delight in joining the milkman in his round of adjacent roads, though a little disheartened by the foul green puddles of the cow yard. There are several images and not one seems carelessly drawn.

W.Y. Tindall says that the images of rose, water, girl and bird are so subtly interwoven with one another that for the purpose of analysis it seems almost impossible to separate them. The symbols devised to express Stephen's aspiration are rose and woman: woman associated with rose, embodies Stephen's aspiration and, increasingly, his creative power. Eileen, the girl who appears at the beginning of the book, unattainable because protestant, is soon identified with sex and the Tower of Ivory, symbol of the Blessed Virgin. Mercedes, a woman of his dreams who inhabits a garden of roses along the milkman's road, suggests the Virgin by her name while adding overtones of remoteness, exile and revenge."

Few images used for women are sinister. For example, woman is not only rose but bird and sometimes bat also.

Water is a very frequent and significant image in the novel. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, at the beginning water seems an image of creation that includes the artist's two realities. At school Stephen is thrown into a "square ditch" but the concluding image of chapter one embodies his infantile career; "Pick, Pack, Pock, Puck," go the cricket bats, "like drops of water in a fountain falling softly in the brimming bowl." When he goes rolling up "his trousers like J. Alfred Prufrock, he himself goes wading. From that moment of baptism and rebirth, inaudible music and the sound of waters attend his creative ecstasies."

Few characters are also symbolic. The two dwarfish eccentrics that Stephen encounters—one on the street and other in the library seem caricatures of Stephen's possible future and the soul of Ireland.

Element of Realism

Several critics considered the novel "a brilliant and nasty variety of pseudo-realism." There is no question that realism is there in the novel. It lies in the famous Christmas dinner scene and in the University College scenes. But the elaborate discussion of episodes from the life of Stephen is only one of the several methods used by Joyce in hinting the development of his artist. Joyce has not made his novel on the basis of pre-recognized pattern. He is not among any known categories thus it would be unjust to call him a realist, or symbolist, or impressionist or psychological novelist or an associationist.

Like Keats in *Hyperion*, he uses a fragment and symbol from classical mythology but like Wordsworth in *The Prelude* he depends on autobiographical incidents for the novel's plot, filling his canvas with elements from his own early life, from Ireland and the Church, from family relations, his love affair, University Colleges and his companions. Nobody would question the realism of the complete work, the crude liveliness of the student scenes, the material presentation of fog, dirt and Dublin's noise.

Autobiographical Element

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is a subjective novel possessing the theme of Stephen's spiritual development. Stephen is a portrait of Joyce. The novel deals with the story of Joyce's childhood and adolescence and it informs us how Joyce came to be the artist. Though any elaborate picture of his development from creature to creator is not given in the novel, yet as a child, as a boy and as a young man, his life is skilfully traced. But to study the novel wholly as an autobiography would not be justified. Few critics are of the view that Stephen is not the embodiment of James Joyce but this is an extreme opinion. Undoubtedly, Joyce has used the elements of his own life in writing this novel but he has selected, arranged, changed, dramatised and fictionized those ingredients to assist the pivotal theme of the novel. Those substances are all true and genuine to the spirit of the development of Joyce but not essentially true to the facts. The consequence is an evocation of the developing conscience and recognition of a devoted writer and of the warping and disharmonious environment that envelops him. The novel is the story of how a gifted, imaginative and brilliant misfit liberates himself from the chains of family, church and country, and starts as an exile to achieve his vocation.

In spite of several similarities Stephen Dedalus is grave, serious but Joyce was witty and often cheerful. On the other hand, like Stephen, Joyce appears to be self-centred and an introvert.

In fact Stephen sometimes seems Joyce and sometimes not. It seems that Joyce has shared the following opinion revealed by Stephen in his conversation on the art-forms: "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 aesthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and re-projected from the human imagination" of the developed artist who must, in the words of Stephen, "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." This is what Joyce attempted to do with the single solid matter he found appropriate for the purpose. The gross ingredient was his own life as a strong artist. The erroneous 'impure' young Joyce is the raw matter from which Stephen Dedalus is produced. His experience is the raw matter for the life of Stephen. But both life and experience must be purged before they can take their proper place in artistic work. Thus Joyce uses his personal life as a frame work for this novel but freely revises his biography for artistic purposes introducing some incidents or happenings which can assist to describe the growth of an artist as a young man.

Conclusion

The book received a mixed response when it was published. One critic called it "a study in garbage" while another found in it "a brilliant and nasty variety of pseudo-realism." But it was also welcomed as one of the most striking confessions outside Russian and French Literature. Ezra Pound remarked that the novel contained the best prose of the decade and was one of the few works that presented creative invention; while the English magazine, *The Nation* hailed Joyce as a new writer with a new form.