

WOLFNOTE SUMMARY OF...

JAMES JOYCE'S A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN



CONTEXT

This novel deals with the early life of Stephen Dedalus and it can be considered as an autobiographical portrait of the novelist.

It starts with Stephen as a very young child around 3 years old and we are given details of his first memories. As one might expect, Joyce cleverly depicts the low attention span of a child by providing the reader with fragmented pieces of information. We are given snippets of nursery rhymes and details of his early bonding with his immediate family. It is clear that Stephen has even at this early age, an artistic perspective of the world around him.

The next significant incident in Stephen's life is the abrupt departure from his secure home to the strict environment of Clongowes Wood College, a Jesuit Boarding School. Stephen does not readily mix with his peers and he is singled out for intimidation by some of the school bullies. He is pushed into an open cesspool and develops a fever, which forces him to be admitted to the school infirmary. He soon comes to realize that he is different from the other schoolboys and that he will always be a loner.

At approximately aged 6, Stephen returns home for the Christmas holidays and for the first time, is included with the adults at the dinner table. A political argument rages at the table concerning the Irish Nationalist leader, Parnell, who has died. Parnell was a leading Nationalist and Member of Parliament whose political career ended due to scandal in that he was involved with a married woman. He alienated himself from the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland who took the high moral ground on this issue. The Church enjoyed a strong influence over the Irish people at this time and Parnell's fall from grace severely damaged the Nationalist movement.

Two adults at the Christmas dinner took their opposing views of the death of Parnell to the extreme. Stephen's strict nurse supported the Church's view whilst Stephen's father's friend supported Parnell.

When Stephen returns to school, he is again involved with another pupil and his glasses are broken, and he is unable to take part in some of the lessons. A sadistic teacher thinks the worst of Stephen and administers physical punishment on the "lazy idle little loafer". Stephen is so upset at this clear injustice that he summons up enough courage to take his complaint to the Rector. He supports Stephen and suddenly Stephen becomes the hero of his class. As a result of this episode, Stephen's confidence is given a boost.

When Stephen returns home for the summer holidays he learns that his father is experiencing financial hardship and cannot meet the Boarding School fees. Stephen's education will now be the responsibility of Belvedere College, a Jesuit Day School, much less famous than Clongowes Wood. The less austere Belvedere College suits Stephen and he soon flourishes and becomes an award-winning essay writer and fine thespian in the school plays. Although his scholastic achievements are exceptional, he still has difficulty in mixing with his schoolmates.

He is also having a conflict in faith concerning his relationship with the Roman Catholic Church.

We also learn details regarding Stephen's father, who although a good-natured man, is an ineffectual father to Stephen and cannot be relied upon.

As time passes, Stephen totally loses his faith and starts to lead a sinful life frequenting the red-light district of Dublin even though he is only 14 years old. He gets comfort from his dilemma over faith with a prostitute and this marks his first sexual experience. He continues this sinful way of life, but obtains no lasting satisfaction and is soon overwhelmed by guilt and regret. He decides to renew his faith and lead a life of chastity and devotion. He takes part in numerous religious services and devotes all his spare time to prayer. Stephen's transformation does not go unnoticed and he is encouraged by the Director of the School to enter into Priesthood. At first Stephen is tempted by this avenue, but on careful consideration he realizes that he would be at odds with a clerical life due to his active sexual desires, therefore, he rejects following a religious vocation.

Having gone through this self-analysis he realizes that his future lies along an artistic road and so he enrolls at Trinity College, Dublin. Throughout his developing years we see the world through Stephen's artistic eyes and he wishes to pursue a life that is free from the constraints of religion and politics. He is regarded by the other students at University as being anti-social because he is preoccupied with his own pursuits and

interests. Stephen admits to himself that he is insular and introspective. He now strikes a happy medium between the two extremes he experimented with earlier. He is neither totally sinful, nor is he a religious fanatic.

Stephen does not wish to copy the other icons of the classical artistic world, or the contemporary heroes of modern art. He wishes to develop his own philosophy in order to satisfy his artistic soul. In order to find his true self it is necessary for him to leave his family, divorce himself from his faith, and cut his geographic ties with Ireland. He decides that his future lies in a more cosmopolitan atmosphere, and so he must leave Ireland behind.

THE AUTHOR

CHRONOLOGY AND LITERARY WORK

'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man' was published in 1916 and is considered to be a fictionalized autobiography of Stephen Daedalus. The name Stephen represents the first Christian martyr who was stoned to death and Daedalus is taken from Greek mythology. Daedalus was an architect commissioned by King Minos to design an elaborate labyrinth in which to confine the monstrous Minotaur. He also invented wings made out of wax for his son Icarus who flew too close to the sun causing the wings to disintegrate and for him to fall into the sea. The symbolism of this will be explored later and here we will look at the author's life in depth, as it relates directly to the story of Stephen.

Joyce was born on February 2nd 1882 in Rathgar, Dublin. He was the eldest of 10 children whose family collapsed into poverty, but despite this he was well educated in the best Jesuit schools and then at University College, Dublin. His education started at Clongowes Wood College. In 1893, Joyce then went to the Belvedere College and his education was concluded at the University.

Some of his early works were published in the Fortnightly Review, including 'Ibsen's New Drama'. In 1902 Joyce went on his first trip to Paris experiencing the liberated European scene for the first time, which was in stark contrast to the strict Dublin society.

In 1903 his mother, Mary Jane Joyce, died.

In 1904 Joyce eloped with Nora Barnacle and the pair traveled across Europe to live finally in Trieste near the Italian/Yugoslav border. His son, Giorgio, was born on 27th July 1905.

He then moved to Rome for a brief period during which time he composed his work 'Stephen Hero'. His travels took him back to Trieste where his daughter Lucia was born on 26th April 1907. He wrote several essays on Irish politics, which were published in the local papers. During this time he journeyed to and from Dublin and he fulfilled several lecturing engagements where he gave talks on the works of Shakespeare.

In 1914 he started his work on 'A Portrait' and it was serialized in the Egoist.

The Joyce family then moved to Zurich where he commenced work on 'Ulysses', once 'A Portrait' had been completed. 'A Portrait' was published in its complete form in America initially in 1916, closely followed by publication in Great Britain.

In 1920 Joyce moved to Paris and he halted his work on 'Ulysses', but instead had another literary work 'Exiles' published. The Joyce family seemed to enjoy a happy life in Paris, which became a cultural centre for the Arts after the First World War.

In 1932 his daughter Lucia was diagnosed as suffering from a mental illness, and needed much care.

Although 'Ulysses' had been completed in 1922, it was not published in Great Britain until 1936. It caused a great deal of controversy at the time, but it is now regarded as a groundbreaking work of modernism. This is an enormous literary work and many scholars link its structure to Homer's 'Odyssey'. It is concerned with a single day in the life of Leopold Bloom who is a Jewish advertising canvasser who also represents a mature Stephen Dedalus. 'Ulysses' was groundbreaking because it was unique in the fact that no writer previously had challenged the reader to appreciate Joyce's versatile use of the English language. Some quarters of the literary world regarded specific episodes as being obscene, and this was one of the factors that delayed its publication. Attempts to censor this epic only heightened the public's desire to read it. Although it was published in serial form in Paris, copies were smuggled back to mainland Britain and Ireland.

Joyce's latter years were taken up with work on 'Finnegan's Wake', which again showed Joyce's literary skills portraying a dreamlike vision of life's cycles. This work was published in 1939 and during this year Joyce was on the road again, leaving Paris for Zurich.

Joyce died at the age of 59 in Zurich in 1941.

FAMILY LIFE

Joyce was brought up in a God-fearing Roman Catholic family.

Being the eldest of 10 surviving children (5 other siblings had died in infancy); he was regarded as the favorite by his mother. His father was a Micawber-like character possessing much charm, but little business acumen, and his irresponsible behavior led his family into poverty. However, his father quickly recognised his son's abilities and ensured that he obtained a good education.

Before the financial slide, Joyce attended a Jesuit Boarding School, Clongowes Wood College. Even at this relatively young age, he was a sickly child and didn't respond well to the strict regime at the Boarding School. However, he impressed the teachers with his excellent memory and musical prowess.

Like many families at this time, the Joyce household supported the Nationalist Movement for Ireland, so at an early age Joyce was aware of the political situation in Ireland and the Church's role in these events.

The Joyce family's financial situation was such that they were unable to pay the fees for the Boarding School, and James finished his education at Belvedere College, which was a Jesuit day school. The environment was less harsh and this enabled Joyce to flourish, where he distinguished himself as a playwright and award-winning essayist. Many of these were published in the School Magazine.

At the age of 14 James came to a major crossroads in his life. He became a prefect of the school's Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary and he also started consorting with Dublin prostitutes. Mentally, he was trying to burn the candle at both ends, and his behavior caused much conflict inside the psyche of James.

At 16 he left Belvedere and continued his education at University College, Dublin, and although this was still a Jesuit Institution, much less emphasis was given to religious instruction. It was a time when Dublin was emerging from being on the extremes of Europe and trying to become a cultural centre. During his time at University, he became interested in the works of Wagner and the myths he used in his operas. He also studied the works of Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian playwright. He considered Ibsen to be more than a match for Shakespeare or the Greek classics and produced an essay supporting his viewpoint. He received much criticism regarding this work, but this did not prevent him having it published in the Fortnightly Review.

He clearly enjoyed literary debate and championed many a controversial topic.

Joyce did not think he would ever make a living through writing and he intended to embark on a medical career, and he traveled to Paris in order to finish his studies in medicine, but he lacked the desire for this subject and he soon halted his studies.

Just when his finances were in disarray, he obtained sponsorship from Lady Gregory and her friend William Yeats, who encouraged him to continue his literary work. He wrote several reviews for the Dublin Daily Express and this enabled him to avoid starvation.

Due to his mother's failing health he left Paris for Dublin in 1903. She died aged 44 on August 13th 1903. With the loss of Mrs. Joyce, the Joyce household was now in turmoil and James withdrew from the situation and engaged in a life of heavy drinking and carousing in Dublin.

The works that he produced at this time had a heavy sexual undertone, which hindered their publication. Joyce also composed many poems at this time and an anthology of these was published in 1907 entitled 'Chamber Music'. It was then, in 1904 that he met and fell in love with Nora Barnacle. The couple moved to Zurich because Joyce had been promised a teaching position at the Berlitz School. However, when they arrived the job was not forthcoming and they decided to move to Trieste, which was their base for the next 10 years. During this time 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man' was developed from an original work entitled 'Stephen Hero'.

Joyce had also been working on another project 'Dubliners', which was a collection of short stories. He was unsuccessful in getting this work published and through frustration it is reported that he threw the only manuscript of 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man' on the fire. Fortunately, the work was rescued.

James and Nora had 2 children, a boy and a girl.

Whilst Joyce had been away from Ireland, his homeland had suffered much turmoil and he felt drawn back to see for himself first-hand, what had happened to his country. He left Trieste for Ireland taking his son, but leaving his wife and daughter. During his absence he wrote many letters to Nora and these were kept, and are regarded as important literary works.

Joyce continued to be a prolific writer obtaining continued support from Yeats who was instrumental in the publication of 'A Portrait' in a serial form in The Egoist. The publication of 'A Portrait' as a single volume was not so easily accomplished, and with the help of two literary patronesses, it was finally published in New York in 1916.

Joyce had always suffered with poor eyesight, but in 1917 it was necessary for him to undergo eye surgery, but after numerous operations their effectiveness was limited.

During the 1920's Joyce attracted much publicity through his epic work 'Ulysses'. Although copies of this work were available on the Continent, it had not been published in Great Britain due to its sexual explicitness. The book had certain notoriety, similar to that of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'.

Joyce's final major work was 'Finnegan's Wake'.

We sense that throughout his life, James Joyce needed to live in an environment that would allow him to express himself freely. Initially he wished to cut the ties with Ireland and the strict upbringing he experienced. His subsequent moves in Europe were mainly governed by the outbreak of two World Wars. No doubt he felt that he could distance himself from war-torn Europe by living in Switzerland, which is where he died on January 13th 1941. He was buried in the Fluntern Cemetery in Zurich and his headstone is decorated simply with a green wreath woven in the shape of a lyre, the emblem of Ireland. He was a devoted father and it was a constant source of frustration to him that he was never able to alleviate his daughter's mental instability.

LIST OF MAIN CHARACTERS

STEPHEN DEDALUS

A sickly child who suffers from poor eyesight, he is a loner who has difficulty mixing with his contemporaries. What he lacks in physical prowess he makes up for in his artistic outlook. He excels at school in writing and acting and decides that a career in this area will provide him with contentment. He experiments with both the seamy and religious sides of life and his road to fulfillment is a hard one. He decides that in order to find his own artistic soul he must cut all ties with the past. He feels that he and Ireland have been let down by the ineffectual Roman Catholic Church and the Irish Nationalist movement.

SIMON DEDALUS

Stephen's good-natured but weak father does not provide Stephen with a good role model. His irresponsibility leads to his family facing a financial crisis that forces Stephen to leave Boarding School and attend a Day School.

MARY DEDALUS

Mary follows strictly the Roman Catholic doctrines and her life is one of continual pregnancy, poverty and the responsibility of holding her family together. She regards Stephen's departure from Ireland at the end of the novel as her failure.

MRS. RIORDAN

Stephen calls his nurse Aunt Dante, although there is no relation by blood. She is a strict governess for all the Dedalus children and she is not shy in spouting her religious convictions, notably at Stephen's first Christmas dinner with the adults.

MAURICE DEDALUS

Stephen's younger brother who is unlike Stephen in that he is far less intelligent and somewhat coarse. He too attends Belvedere College. Stephen also has 3 younger sisters, Katy, Maggie and Boody.

UNCLE CHARLES

He is Stephen's ageing great-uncle who lives in the Dedalus household. He seems able to relate better to Stephen than his own father. He is a relic from Ireland's distant past and a staunch Nationalist.

JOHN CASEY

He is a close friend of Simon Dedalus and it is he who champions Parnell in the face of criticism from Mrs. Riordan. He has been imprisoned on several occasions for making public speeches supporting Parnell.

EILEEN VANCE

She is perhaps the first woman that Stephen desired, being the daughter of Stephen's Protestant neighbors. As a child the naïve Stephen suggested that he would marry Eileen and this was instantly nipped in the bud by Mrs. Riordan as out of the question - Catholics don't marry Protestants. Eileen was the first in a succession of women desired by Stephen, but who were criticized by others for varying reasons. Stephen particularly remembers Eileen's "long white hands" and through this image he obtains an understanding of the term "Tower of Ivory" which concerns the Blessed Virgin Mary. Ivory is also used in the description of the young girl on the beach in Chapter 4.

Emma Clery has similar characteristics to Eileen, also being an object of Stephen's suppressed desire.

BROTHER MICHAEL

One of the more caring teachers at Clongowes who looks after Stephen during his visit to the school infirmary. It is through him that Stephen learns about Parnell's death.

FATHER DOLAN

He is the sadistic Prefect of Studies who punishes Stephen using a pandybat as he suspects unjustly that Stephen is avoiding class work. Through this incident Stephen starts to doubt the integrity of some clerics.

FATHER CONMEE

He is the Rector of Clongowes Wood College and gives Stephen a just hearing when he complains about the treatment he received from Father Dolan. However, later we learn that he considers the pandying incident as a joke, which he enjoys with Stephen's father. Stephen learns about his betrayal and it not only greatly affects his view on the clerics at Clongowes, but also his father.

FATHER ARNALL

An austere Latin teacher at Clongowes who humiliates Stephen's friend by making him kneel in the middle of the classroom floor. He delivers the sermons at the Three Day Retreat that Stephen attends later on in Chapter 3. He successfully puts the fear of God into Stephen that causes him to confess his serious sins and engage in a spell of piety.

AUBREY MILLS

He is Stephen's friend during the summer holidays and they pursue many adventures together. Stephen has fond memories of the carefree holidays he spent with Aubrey, particularly the summer at Blackrock before he enters Belvedere College.

VINCENT HERON

Stephen describes Vincent as looking like the bird of his name. Vincent is an exuberant boy and often ridicules Stephen for his subdued manner. Vincent's close friend is a boy called Wallace.

BOLAND and NASH

This pair bully and taunt Stephen and make him agree with them that Tennyson is a better poet than Byron, Stephen's favorite.

DEAN of STUDIES

He is an English Jesuit Priest at University College, Dublin. In a discussion with Stephen he soon demonstrates his blinkered perspective and poor philosophical perception.

CRANLY

Cranly is a loner, like Stephen, but he would welcome a closer contact with his fellow students as opposed to Stephen who somewhat welcomes his solitude. He tries to warn Stephen about the dangers of leaving Ireland.

LYNCH

A crude student and one wonders why Stephen spent time in discussion with this superficial 'friend'. Stephen provides Lynch with his own personal viewpoint on aesthetics.

DAVIN

A rustic student from the country who becomes Stephen's friend at the University. He is patriotic and longs to see Ireland get home rule.

CHAPTER 1**Summary**

The book starts with Stephen Dedalus as a very young child.

The storyline is fragmented and this passage is merely an exercise in viewing the world through the eyes of a 3-year old, the emphasis being on the senses - seeing, smelling, hearing and touch. Naturally Stephen's introduction to the physical world is centered around the members of his family, in particular his mother. We learn from Stephen about his father's hairy face, his mother's homely sweet smell, and the discomfort of wetting the bed. His favorite nursery song concerns wild roses as opposed to cultivated varieties. We already sense that this child is different in that he appreciates the beauty of the world around him and yearns for freedom.

Three years elapse and we find Stephen attending a Jesuit Boarding School, Clongowes Wood College. The uprooting of Stephen from his comfortable home world to the strict Jesuit school is traumatic for him, and he feels particularly vulnerable as he is small in stature and has poor eyesight. He does not mix easily with his peers and all that keeps him going is the thought of his home and the long-awaited holidays.

He derives some comfort from his evening prayers and this makes him feel closer to home and his mother.

Not surprisingly, Stephen becomes the target of the school bullies and one in particular, a boy called Wells, pushes him into a cesspool. The sickly Stephen soon comes down with a fever and he is taken to the school infirmary. There he meets another loner, a boy called Athy, and they have much in common including unusual names. Athy's father is a racehorse owner.

In the infirmary he is cared for by Brother Michael who seems to be more compassionate than the Priests who form the bulk of the staff at Clongowes. What interests Stephen about his stay in the infirmary is that Brother Michael reads to the patients daily from the newspapers. During one of these sessions they learn of the death of Charles Stewart Parnell, a famous Irish political leader.

Stephen's poor health concerns him and using his vivid imagination he constructs in his head a drama depicting his own funeral.

It is now Christmas and Stephen returns home to be with his family - his parents Mary and Simon and Simon's friend John Casey. Also celebrating Christmas dinner is Stephen's great uncle Charles and his old

nurse Riordan. The Christmas dinner represents Stephen's inclusion with the adults, for he is invited to sit at the table with them. The happy occasion soon turns sour however, as the discussion over dinner turns to Charles Stewart Parnell. Some of the family defends Parnell's position and others, the Catholic Church's condemnation of the Nationalist leader. In particular Riordan and Casey engage in a heated debate that leads to the breaking up of the Christmas gathering. Riordan is delighted that the Church crushed Parnell and she storms out of the room.

The next scene deals with Stephen's life at Clongowes and there is much rumor concerning the theft of altar wine from the Sacristy.

Stephen again has an unfortunate episode with a fellow student and his glasses are broken. He has been warned by his doctor not to read without the glasses, and so he is excused from taking part in some lessons. In his Latin class, which is conducted by Father Arnall, Stephen is unable to take part. Father Dolan enters the class and mistakes Stephen for a 'lazy idle little loafer'. Dolan delights in inflicting punishment on the schoolboys and he carries a 'pandybat'. Although Stephen nervously explains that his glasses have been broken, Dolan thinks he has contrived the story in order to avoid participating in the lessons. Dolan administers corporal punishment, humiliating Stephen in front of the whole class. Stephen is unnerved by this injustice and his classmates are in agreement that he should go and see the Rector about his treatment. Stephen decides to take this bold action and he follows the winding corridors that lead to the Rector's office. The Rector, Father Conmee is sympathetic and promises Stephen that he will resolve the matter with Father Dolan. This gives Stephen newfound confidence and although he crept through the maze of gloomy corridors to the Rector's office, he makes the return journey speedily, exhilarated by the support given to him by the Rector. Instantly Stephen becomes a hero of his classmates and he relishes in this brief notoriety.

Interpretation

'A Portrait' is a look at Stephen's experiences initially as a small child, then schoolboy, and finally student.

The first Chapter deals with Stephen as a small child and his first year at Boarding School.

The reader is somewhat shocked at the childish language he faces in the first section of the book. The purpose is to lay some important foundation stones of Stephen's character. Joyce portrays the innocent small boy whose only experiences are within his close-knit family. We immediately note, "his mother had a nicer smell than his father". Although Stephen is shown to be special, he still has a close bond with his mother.

At this stage in his young life the whole world seemingly revolves around him. He calls himself "baby tuckoo". It is a world of black and white, good and bad, hot and cold, and Joyce tries to rekindle in the reader what life was like for us all at this age. There is no compromise; there are no grey areas.

The other character responsible for Stephen's early upbringing is his nurse, Riordan, and even at this early age, Stephen is aware of his nurse's strong religious beliefs. She feels duty bound to instill a strict Catholic discipline in Stephen.

Stephen's safe cozy world is dramatically replaced by Clongowes Wood Boarding School, and he immediately takes a dislike to this establishment. Joyce provides us with a good description of this place as his first day at this school is etched on his memory. We read:

"The wide playgrounds were swarming with boys. All were shouting and the prefects urged them on with strong cries. The evening air was pale and chilly and after every charge and thud of the footballers the greasy leather orb flew like a heavy bird through the grey light..... He felt his body small and weak amid the throng of players and his eyes were weak and watery."

This is the opening passage of Stephen's time at the Jesuit Boarding School. Note the use of the words 'swarming', 'pale and chilly', 'grey light', and 'weak and watery'. All these provide the atmosphere of this place in stark contrast to Stephen's home. The description of the football using a simile likening it to a heavy bird is the first 'bird' imagery of the book, which imagery is repeated time and again.

Bullies have a knack of spotting misfits and loners, and it is not long before they focus on Stephen. With Stephen's innocence still fresh in the reader's mind, we now see his baptism into the real world with his submersion in the cesspit. His subsequent fever leads him to the infirmary where he enjoys some degree of safety from the harsh environment of the school. There he meets another patient who, like himself, shares an unusual name. Joyce deliberately invented the name Stephen Dedalus – the forename signifies Stephen the first Christian martyr who like our hero suffers at the hands of others, whilst the surname is taken from Greek mythology and was the man who devised the labyrinth that held the Minotaur. Towards the end of this Chapter the symbolism of Stephen's surname comes to light as we journey with young Stephen as he negotiates the maze of dark corridors that leads to the Rector's office.

Stephen's cellmate in the infirmary is a boy called Athy, who is an agreeable boy whose father is a racehorse owner. Brother Michael cares for the 2 boys and he seems able to relate more to his charges because he is not a Priest like the other clerics in the school.

While Stephen resides in the infirmary he is more relaxed and whenever he becomes anxious about what awaits him outside the safety of the infirmary he uses his imagination as a means of escape. Although Stephen is physically weak, we sense that he has an inner resolve to face his adversities and survive.

On one occasion he imagines what his own funeral might be like. All would be dressed in black with sad faces. Even Wells would be there looking sorry for himself, but none of the other mourners would speak to him. Stephen imagines what the Chapel would look like with his coffin, and the tall yellow candles, and then the procession to the graveyard with Wells showing regret for his mistreatment of Stephen, and the bell would toll from the school. We read:

“Ding dong! The castle bell!
Farewell, my mother!
Bury me in the old churchyard
Beside my eldest brother.
My coffin shall be black,
Six angels at my back,
Two to sing and two to pray
And two to carry my soul away.”

During Stephen’s stay in the infirmary, Brother Michael would read to the boys from a newspaper. On one occasion Stephen learns of the death of Charles Stewart Parnell. He was an Irish political leader who was elected to the British Parliament in 1875. He vigorously supported Home Rule for Ireland and soon became Leader of the Irish M.P.’s in the House of Commons in London. His outspoken views so far as the British Government was concerned led to him being imprisoned in 1881. He was at his most influential in 1886 when at last the Government introduced a Home Rule Bill, which was subsequently defeated. He was then hit with scandal as he was cited as co-respondent in the divorce of William O’Shea and his wife Kitty. Parnell was to subsequently marry Kitty O’Shea, but his political career was irrevocably damaged. The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland came out against Parnell regarding him as immoral. During these times, the Roman Catholic Church had far more influence over the common man in Ireland than did its politicians. Many consider that this stance by the Church eventually led to the Nationalist movement resorting to violent means in order to obtain independence for Ireland.

The news of Parnell’s death was of little significance to Stephen until he returned home for the Christmas celebrations. He was delighted at being invited to sit with the adults for Christmas dinner, but this occasion was marred by the political and religious debate conducted by the adults concerning the life and death of Parnell. Stephen’s strict nurse supported the Church’s view regarding Parnell, whilst Casey supported Parnell. It is evident that Casey was an activist in the Nationalist movement as Joyce hints that he too had served a prison sentence for his radical behavior. What should have been a celebration of the birth of the King of Peace, turned into a heated domestic argument concerning the death of a political leader.

Joyce uses symbolism in likening Stephen’s mother to mother Ireland, for although Stephen in his later life wishes to escape the restrictions imposed by the Irish society, when he is away he misses Ireland and his mother, and in his mind they represent the same symbol.

Stephen’s inclusion into the adult world forces him to face up to some clear truths concerning the adult members of his household. In his prayers, Stephen can relate to Jesus, but is this the same Jesus Christ that his strict old nurse worships? Her view on Parnell is unbending and cruel, and she almost relishes his death as the death of a sinner. We can draw parallels with Joyce’s own childhood and his governess Dante Conway and a friend of Joyce’s father, John Kelly who had been imprisoned for supporting Parnell. It is no doubt that this scene in Stephen’s home depicts a similar occurrence in the Joyce household.

The reader would not be wrong in drawing parallels between Stephen and Parnell. He has been wrongly punished by the sadistic Father Dolan and to some degree Parnell was wrongly punished by the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland at this time always strove for perfection and could not align them with the flawed Parnell. It will be shown later that Stephen also struggles to obtain perfection, spurred on by the influences at school and also the ingrained influence of his nurse, Riordan. Like Parnell, Stephen becomes a short-lived hero at the end of this Chapter.

We learn also about Stephen’s father in this episode, not by what he does, but what he does not do. Stephen must observe that his father although pleasant, is quite ineffectual. The Christmas dinner scene is another step towards Stephen’s loss of innocence.

Back at the school, Stephen continues to be at the wrong end of cruelty. Through no fault of his own his glasses are broken and although he writes home immediately for a new pair, he is regarded by Father Dolan as a malingerer. Again, Stephen witness’s cruelty from a Church representative, but this time Stephen decides to get some satisfaction for the injustice of the beating he receives at the hands of Father Dolan.

Stephen negotiates the labyrinth of corridors to the Rector’s office. This passage is full of symbolism. We feel as apprehensive as Stephen as “he passed along the narrow dark corridor, passing little doors that were

the doors of the rooms of the community. He peered in front of him and right and left through the gloom and thought that those must be portraits. It was dark and silent and his eyes were weak and tired with tears so that he could not see..... He saw the Rector sitting at a desk writing. There was a skull on the desk and a strange solemn smell in the room like the old leather of chairs." On reading this, we wonder what further cruelty awaits Stephen, but the intuitive Rector supports Stephen and will try and right the injustice he has suffered.

This Chapter is framed by light for Stephen becomes a hero with his classmates at the end of the Chapter because he has stood up to the cruel Father Dolan.

CHAPTER 2

Summary

The opening of this Chapter provides scenes of Stephen away from the Jesuit Boarding School.

Finally the summer holidays have arrived, which Stephen has been waiting for with much anticipation. His family has moved from Bray to Blackrock, which is around 5 miles to the south of Dublin. He spends much of his time with his great-uncle, Charles. "While he smoked the brim of his tall hat and the bowl of his pipe were just visible beyond the jambs of the outhouse door." Uncle Charles called this outhouse "his arbour" and he shared this accommodation with the garden tools and a cat. He was able to smoke his foul-smelling tobacco "black twist" without interruption.

Charles and Stephen's day usually involved a walk through the town market place then onto the park where they would meet up with Mike Flynn, an old friend of Simon, Stephen's father. Mike would put Stephen through his paces, as he wanted Stephen to be a good runner. After the exertions in the park Stephen and his uncle would often go to the chapel where Charles would involve himself in making ardent prayers presumably for the family.

At the weekend, Stephen, Simon and Uncle Charles would participate in long walks, and Stephen would be intrigued with the family stories or Irish politics that the two adults indulged in. At this time Stephen was reading "The Count of Monte Cristo" and he would often escape reality and pretend to be Mercedes' dashing lover. Stephen would exhibit his romance by engaging in fantasies with his friend Aubrey Mills as they relived the adventures described in "Cristo".

The main problem facing the family was Simon's financial situation and Stephen realized that they could not afford to send him back to Clongowes. After the summer holidays he would enroll at Belvedere College, a prestigious Jesuit Day School. Not only had Stephen's school life been changed, but the whole family position was in steady decline to a life of poverty. The family moved to a dismal house in Dublin, far removed from their previously comfortable home. As a means of escape, Stephen absorbed himself with fantasies of love and romance; in particular he had fond loving memories of Eileen, Dedalus' Protestant neighbor.

At first Stephen is excited at the thought of attending Belvedere College, but then this is tainted when he learns that his father has revealed the incident at Clongowes with Father Conmee and Father Dolan.

There is a jump in time of about two-and-a-half years and we find Stephen at around 14 years old. We learn that he has settled in well at Belvedere and is regarded by the teachers as an accomplished essay writer and actor. In all respects he has become a model student. Stephen has found a new sense of confidence mainly due to his academic abilities. Stephen is preparing to make his entrance in the school play when he is confronted by two classmates, Heron and Wallace. They tease Stephen about his dedication to his studies, and a girl who shows an interest in Stephen's acting who has come to see the performance of the play. Stephen is now used to dealing with these bullies and he answers their taunts by reciting the Confiteor, the prayer said during mass for the forgiveness of sins.

Stephen now enjoys some notoriety, for in the past some of his essays were described as heretical by one of the English teachers. Stephen obtusely took this as a compliment. His reputation causes Heron and his companions to be jealous of Stephen, and they instigate a fight with him. He is eventually forced to answer their questions on literature. Stephen regards Cardinal Newman and Byron as the best poets, but Heron and his henchmen insist that Tennyson is the best. They force Stephen to agree with them. Stephen shrugs off the boys' taunts, for he is more focused on the young girl who has come to see him in the play. He wishes that he had a more masculine part to play on the stage in front of the girl, and he is somewhat embarrassed about his performance. The episode leaves him confused, having mixed feelings about his wounded pride and his desire for the young girl.

The next scene deals with Stephen's father, Simon, disposing of the remainder of his property in Blackrock by auction. The auction will take place in Cork and we note that Simon is drinking quite heavily during the journey. Simon spends much of the time reminiscing about the past and better times. He takes Stephen to his old college, Queen's College in Cork. Stephen finds it difficult to visualize his father as he is now, but he

realizes by examining the graffiti on the wooden desks, that he is not alone in being preoccupied with sex. He realizes that this is a natural situation for adolescent boys. Simon is unable to relate to his son's needs and the fact that he needs support whilst going through this transition into manhood. What advice he does give, only highlights his own shallowness and inadequacy.

Stephen feels quite alone and at odds with the world around him. When he recalls his childhood experiences they are again focused around his restlessness and loneliness. Instead of building his son up, Simon has a tendency to bring him down, and during their circuit of the local pubs, he seems to delight in humiliating Stephen. Simon shows his insensitivity by recounting his own and his father's drunken revelries.

In conclusion, Stephen regards his own childhood as mainly an unhappy time, and that he should not dwell on the past, but try and make the best of the present and the future.

The next scene deals with Stephen receiving prize money for a winning essay. Never having had money of his own to spend, he embarks on a sojourn of extravagance. He buys gifts and enjoys expensive dinners and pays for some much-needed improvements to his family home. This brief exuberance soon gives way to disillusionment and he spends much of his time wandering the dark streets of Dublin. Whilst traveling through Dublin's brothel district he accepts an invitation from a young pink-gowned prostitute when he is seduced. "He closed his eyes, surrendering him to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly parting lips."

Interpretation

This Chapter marks the progression from childhood into adolescence. Bolstered by his success at Clongowes over the Father Dolan affair, he looks forward to an enjoyable summer with his family. Stephen has more hope for the future and perhaps at last he can come out of this miserable time he has had, but his family's social situation is about to drastically change, as his father's financial affairs worsen.

Joyce provides us with a detailed analysis of Stephen as he passes through the years from 11 to 14. Any male will be able to relate to the mood swings and confusion over girls that Stephen goes through. Like any typical teenage boy, Stephen tends to over-react to certain situations. He is excited that a young girl has come to see his performance in the play, but wishes he had a more impressive part in order to show off to the girl. Like many a young man, he finds the opposite sex a mystery. He has seen women in many different forms – the strict religious nurse, the caring dutiful mother, and then there are the romantic women he has read about, in particular Mercedes from "The Count of Monte Cristo".

At the end of the Chapter his innocence is lost when he submits himself to a prostitute. This marks the climax of the Chapter and Stephen has come full circle from naïve boy to an experienced adolescent on the verge of manhood. This final experience provides Stephen with the full picture of womanhood, as the prostitute has different facets of all the other women he has come in contact with. Although the prostitute is herself young, she is still able to "mother" Stephen by calling him "a little rascal". He feels guilty about consorting with this prostitute and he is reminded of his nurse and the fact that this act is sinful. Remember the nurse is sometimes called Aunt Dante symbolizing Dante's inferno (hell). At the end, Stephen gives in to the temptation and allows himself to be immersed in the lust that he has felt for so long. His visit to the prostitute's bed is a means for escaping the poverty of his Dublin life. At this stage he wonders if he will ever be able to escape this way of life. Perhaps if his father had been a better role model, he might not have felt it necessary to take the action that he did at the end of Chapter 2.

Joyce is at pains to show the irony of the relationship that Stephen has with his father. The relationship between Daedalus and Icarus was that of a devoted father to his son. Joyce explores the relationship between Simon and his son and it is in stark contrast. The only real gift that Simon has given to his son is a good education. In all other respects he has failed Stephen and we sense that he has never really grown up. His irresponsibility regarding his financial affairs has led his family to near ruin and it has come at a particularly bad time for Stephen as he is at a vulnerable stage.

Stephen feels betrayed by his father and this is illustrated through a number of incidents. When Stephen changes schools he hopes to forget the past, but he learns that his father has insensitively joked about Stephen's episode with Father Conmee. His father perhaps does not appreciate that Stephen is growing up fast, and now recognizes when he is being patronized by Simon and ridiculed in front of others in the local pubs of Cork. What is sad about the situation is that Simon does not realize how communication has broken down between father and son, and Stephen feels in some regards sorry for his father.

Joyce's writing style is both intricate and descriptive and in order to absorb its full intensity, the reader requires having a high degree of concentration. The reader should also note that Joyce does not waste his words, and all his phrases have a purpose and meaning, although sometimes it is not clear what Joyce is driving at in some of the passages:-

"Stephen shook his head and smiled in his rival's flushed and mobile face, 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. A shock of pale hair

lay on the forehead like a ruffled crest: the forehead was narrow and bony and a thin hooked nose stood out between the close set prominent eyes which were light and inexpressive." There is much in this passage where we again have the symbolism of a bird as mentioned in Chapter 1, and a sample of Joyce's descriptive writing.

We now begin to appreciate the consequences of Stephen's isolation from his father and his contemporaries at school. He had thought that his preoccupation with sex was unnatural, but after his visit with his father to his father's old college where he saw the old graffiti in particular the word 'fetus' scored on a desk, he realized that his sexual urges were not unique to him. Perhaps this was the closest that his father could get to having a man-to-man chat with him. Another consequence of his isolation is Stephen's problem with women as described above. To him women were comprised of several species - saints, martyrs, mothers or sinners. At this stage in his life, Stephen is bound to be submissive to women having been smothered by them throughout his childhood, by both his dominating nurse and his overbearing deeply religious mother. Finally, Stephen's isolation attracts bullies and this is repeated again in Chapter 2, but the emotional effects of this bullying are not so important.

CHAPTER 3

Summary

Being brought up in a God-fearing Roman Catholic home, Stephen will be well aware that his liaison with the prostitute marks the point where he committed his "first violent sin". This sets him on the road to debauchery and his sexual appetite is now matched by his quest for food, meat, carrots and potatoes. He now succumbs to temptation and acts against his strict upbringing. He leads a double life in that he still serves as Prefect for the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is a statue of the Virgin and is a refuge for sinners. Stephen is well aware of his hypocrisy, which is heightened by the fact that he still attends his catechism classes.

As well as the sins of lust and gluttony, he indulges in the other deadly sins of anger, pride, envy, sloth and avarice.

Just when there seems to be no hope for Stephen, he learns of a three day Spiritual Retreat that is being organized at Belvedere to honor the school's Patron Saint, Francis Xavier. On the first day of the Retreat, Father Arnall gives a sermon based on Judgement Day, his text coming from Ecclesiasticus Ch.7 v.36. The sermon is designed to make an impact on those present and coupled with Stephen's imagination, he is able to vividly see Father Arnall's described scene. Father Arnall emphasizes that everyone should ensure that they are prepared for life after death in case this suddenly happens and they might find themselves damned. The Father's words seem to haunt Stephen and he feels guilty about his recent sinful behavior. He feels that every word of the sermon is directed straight at him. Stephen regrets the actions he had taken concerning his childhood "love" Emma. He had composed fictitious letters concerning Emma, which were obscene and left them in a place where any unknown girl might find them.

The second day at the Retreat, the sermon given to those present concerned Isaiah Ch.5 v.14 and Father Arnall describes how hell is always seeking to enlarge its domain. It seeks all those that are sinful. It seeks Stephen. Stephen is intrigued by the story of the once-favored angel Lucifer who due to his pride is cast into everlasting darkness. The sermon goes on to illustrate how mankind's nature can so easily be tempted by sin and that is what led to Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden of Eden. It was Jesus Christ, through the crucifixion that took on the sins of the world. It is important that man should repent of his sins and confess them. Again Stephen's imagination is working overtime as he imagines the endless torment awaiting those who are bent on hell. The sermon is aimed at describing the torments of hell through the senses, hearing, smell, touch and sight. What frightens Stephen most is being confined in a cramped situation being suffocated by the bodies around him in the fiery furnaces of hell. However, hell is more than just physical torture; it is also being separated from God's love. At the end of the sermon, Stephen is horrified and his sense of guilt has increased. In an almost panic state, he realizes his need to be saved. He can be saved if he makes his confession, but through shame he cannot do this in the College Chapel.

Father Arnall's sermon on Day 3 of the Retreat follows on from the first two, and his text comes from Psalms 30, v.23. He now describes the spiritual pain of hell. He tells those in attendance that Satan has a three-pronged attack on the sinners he receives. The sinner will see his past pleasures with repulsion, secondly he will see himself as God sees him, and thirdly he will be given enlightenment, which reveals that because he did not repent, he must suffer eternal damnation.

After this final sermon, Stephen analyses what he has heard and concludes that he is lost due to the magnitude of his sins. He must obtain absolution through confession and so he leaves the College to find a Chapel outside. This he does and he receives his absolution from an old Capuchin. This Priest gives

Stephen his penance and advises him to seek help from the Blessed Virgin to overcome his temptation. Stephen is elated and feels that he is in a state of grace.

Next day he takes Holy Communion and vows to begin a new life of obedience and service to God.

Interpretation

Following on from Chapter 2, the start of Chapter 3 deals with Stephen's sinfulness and his association with the Dublin prostitutes. "The whores would be just coming out of their houses making ready for the night, yawning lazily after their sleep and settling the hairpins in their clusters of hair. He would pass by them calmly waiting for a sudden movement of his own will or a sudden call to his sin loving soul from their soft perfumed flesh." This section together with the last paragraph of Chapter 2 shows how Joyce's use of words can conjure up a scene. Here it is the dark world of the prostitute that is examined and while the words in themselves are not sordid, the passage as a whole conjures up the atmosphere and Stephen's desire to be engulfed by it.

Stephen submits himself to this sinful world. His lusting after the prostitutes increases his appetite, and he becomes a glutton. He now seems quicker to anger, and his overall behavior spreads into the other deadly sins – avarice, pride, envy, sloth. This degeneration slowly drains his whole spirit and his whole being.

Stephen is thrown a lifeline to escape from this existence when he hears of the 3 Day Spiritual Retreat. During this time, Stephen will hear three sermons, based on Ecclesiastes Ch.7, Isaiah Ch.5, and Psalm 30. All three texts are from the Old Testament and we can well imagine the Bible thumping Father Arnall instilling fear on his captured congregation describing the fire and brimstone of hell. The design of the sermons is to awaken even the dullard, so the impact on Stephen with his vivid imagination is striking. His recent sins are all too fresh in his mind.

In Ecclesiastes Chapter 7, we read, "The wiles of a woman I find mightier than death; her heart is a trap to catch you and her arms are fetters. The man who is pleasing to God may escape her, but she will catch a sinner." Stephen will feel that he has been caught through the sin of lust and his behavior will be well known to God.

In Isaiah Chapter 5, we read, "Shame on you! You who rise to go in pursuit of liquor and draw out the evening inflamed with wine, at whose feasts there are harp and lute, tabor and pipe and wine, who have no eyes for the work of the Lord, and never see the things that he has done..... but the Lord of Hosts sits high in judgement." This follows on from the previous text. This whole section of Isaiah deals with the shame in being a sinner and Stephen feels this shame directly. He needs to confess, but cannot do so in the College Chapel and finds a more discreet place in which to obtain forgiveness.

The final sermon is based on Psalm 30, where we read of the joy of a sinner repentant and lifted up from those who are to go down into the abyss. "O Lord thou has brought me up from Sheol and saved my life as I was sinking into the abyss..... Thou hast turned my laments into dancing; thou has stripped off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy that my spirit may sing psalms to Thee and never cease." Stephen's spiritual state at present is such that he will fall into the abyss and suffer the physical torments of hell and will know of the joy of heaven, but will never be able to experience it.

Stephen is resolved to obtain a state of grace by receiving absolution for his sins. He gets this by seeking out an old kindly Capuchin Cleric who seems rather off-hand about Stephen's sins. No doubt the locality of his Chapel in Church Street means that he will not be shocked by the level of Stephen's sinfulness, and the penance he gives Stephen will not match the penance Stephen imposes on himself later on. Stephen will wonder whether he has received true absolution later as he appears to have gone for the easy option in not seeking absolution from one of his own Priests.

From Chapter 1 we were aware of Stephen's sensitivity and how he perceived the world through his senses. Like Joyce, we know that Stephen had problems with his eyesight and this will have enhanced his other senses. Coupled with Stephen's imagination he is assaulted by the imagery described by Father Arnall through his sermons. By the end of these three days, Stephen can smell, hear, feel the pain, and see what is in store for those that are damned to Lucifer's realm. We are reminded of Lucifer's downfall and Stephen parallels his own possible fate to that of Lucifer.

Stephen can save himself and he is guided in this by the Capuchin Cleric who directs him towards the Blessed Virgin. She represents the softer side of God who is depicted by Father Arnall as a vengeful, fearsome God. Joyce is making the point that the tone of the sermons is extreme and he is making a direct criticism of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland in that it does not give enough emphasis to the God of love. Even when reference is made to Jesus, it is not as a bringer of peace, but as one who suffered pain on the cross in order to bring salvation to mankind.

The reader may think that Stephen has over-reacted, but he is only 16 years of age and still feels quite vulnerable even though he enjoys some degree of importance at Belvedere College. In fact he would normally be a role model for the younger boys and this is another aspect that makes Stephen feel guilty.

Although he continues to be a somewhat solitary figure, he still recognizes that he has some responsibility to his fellow students.

There had always been a special place in his heart for Emma, but we learn that he desecrated his image of her by concocting letters regarding her of a sordid nature. He had left these in a place where a young girl might find them. The relevance of this incident and others is that they parallel similar events in the young Joyce's life. When Joyce was apart from Nora Barnacle he wrote a series of "foul long letters", which survived despite Nora's efforts to destroy them. In Ellman's biography of Joyce he suggests that the contents of these letters provide an insight into Joyce's literary treatment of women.

It is evident that the fear of God was instilled into Joyce by the Priests of the Jesuit Schools, which resulted in Joyce's own image of hell, which is recounted in this book. Like Stephen, Joyce has acute senses and these were accosted by the imagery that God is a fearful God and not a God of love. Rightly or wrongly, Joyce vents his criticism of the Roman Catholic Church he has had experience of.

Joyce does not wish to lay bare his own soul, so it is up to the reader to decide how much of Joyce is in Stephen and vice-versa.

In the end, Joyce is stating that it is not the degradation of the human spirit through sin, nor the physical and psychological tortures of hell that is the factor in making Stephen confess his sins, but the fact that if he remains unrepentant, he will be forever removed from God's divine presence. However, this is not the God of vengeance, but the God of love.

The Chapter concludes with Stephen's rededication to a life without sin.

CHAPTER 4

Summary

Stephen immerses himself in the rituals of the Roman Catholic faith. He is resolved to be pious and give his life over to God. He must purge himself of the sins he has committed and the temptations that he faces daily. He engages on a strict regime of prayer, attending services and austerity. He suffers the freezing early morning conditions in order to make his way to Mass. He observes all the fasts that arise during the Church Calendar. He tries to sleep without movement to bring each of his senses under his control. For a short time he experiences exhilaration as he believes he is getting closer to God but he is wearing a mask, for deep down his old feelings still persist even though they are currently subdued. He is unable to keep up the discipline he has set himself and slowly his mask of piety starts to evaporate. He starts to wonder whether his hasty confession to the Capuchin was truly genuine and he tries to justify the relevance of the confession by whether in fact he has changed his life.

Stephen's dedication to his faith does not go unnoticed and the School Director discusses with him the possibility of taking up a religious vocation. At first this is an attractive possibility. Stephen imagines what power he would have as a Priest. The School Director does not quiz Stephen about his religious vocation; he just seems keen to sign up another recruit. After further consideration, Stephen realizes that he could not devote his entire life to the Priesthood and has doubts whether he could control his emotions in order for him to carry out his duties properly.

At home, he learns that his family has to move. Their slide into poverty continues as his father's debts mount. It seems that Stephen will have no stable home-life and spends little time with his family. He desperately desires to be free of his grim impoverished family and decides that his only chance of escape is through a University education.

He is concerned; however, that he still has no real direction in his life. He continues to be apart from his fellow students who by and large regard him as aloof.

Whilst walking by the sea he observes a young girl who is wading in the water with her skirts tucked up around her waist. Stephen is moved by the beauty of the scene and the girl turns and returns his gaze. Through his senses Stephen is in awe of the beautiful scene. Although he sexually desires the girl, this is outweighed by his view of her through his artistic eyes. This unknown girl suddenly enables Stephen to see where his future lies and it is not in Ireland, but abroad where he can shake off the oppressive life he has led to date.

Interpretation

The start of this Chapter deals with Stephen's quest to return to the fold after his sinful excesses. We see the pendulum swing from one extreme to the other; from Stephen's reveling to his piety. He is determined to become a zealous Catholic depriving himself of all the normal comforts and enduring physical hardship in order to be closer to God.

Again there are parallels to Joyce's own youth when he went through a spiritual revival, and through Stephen, Joyce is poking fun at the Roman Catholic faith. Despite all the hardships Stephen and Joyce went

through, they do not obtain any comfort and they realize that this is not the way to become closer to God. The way to God is much broader than the road that is preoccupied with ceremony and rituals. Stephen misguidedly thinks that the way to God is to make the senses suffer. Perhaps the fact that Stephen voluntarily makes himself suffer comes home to him when he sees the suffering endured by his own family, which is forced upon them by Simon's mounting debts. In particular Stephen's mother suffers, not by choice, yet she does not seem to have knowledge of God's great mystery of love.

It is not long before Stephen feels to need to escape from the self-imposed prison in which his spirit resides. There is an interesting passage when Stephen crosses the bridge over the Tolka River. He looks back on his earlier years when he sees the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin. He has difficulty in recalling it. His memory seems blurred on the subject.

Just when Stephen is at a crossroads in his life he is approached by the School Director with a proposal that he take up a religious vocation. It was standard practice to recruit promising students into the Priesthood and those that took up the offer would do so for a number of reasons - some for the power they could wield or to carry out missionary work dedicating a whole life in the service of God, and others are attracted to the Priesthood because of the rituals. Stephen's first thought concerns the power he would have as a Priest, but after further consideration he realizes that he could not tolerate the strict way of life he would have to follow. "Once a Priest always a Priest, remember. Your catechism tells you that the sacrament of Holy orders is one of those which can be received only once because it imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark which can never be effaced."

Joyce satirizes the nature of the Roman Catholic faith. This is typical of the doctrines that he rebelled against. The above statement from the catechism is mere conjecture and is designed to instill fear into those that are considering taking Holy orders. It is far removed from God's love and is more akin to the wrathful, vengeful God of the Old Testament.

Throughout this Chapter Joyce uses elaborate religious imagery.

During Stephen's interview with the Director, Joyce uses imagery to great effect. We read Joyce's description of the Director as follows:-

"The Director stood in the embrasure of the window, his back to the light, leaning an elbow on the brown crossblind, the Priest's face was in total shadow, but the waning daylight from behind him touched the deeply grooved temples and the curves of the skull."

Joyce purposely describes the Director as appearing like an icon, but the Director's behavior soon reverses this image. Again we have reference to a skull where you will remember that the Rector at Clongowes also had a skull on his desk. Joyce is clearly indicating to the reader that should Stephen decide to embark on a vocation in the Priesthood, it would mean the death of his free spirit.

At the end of the meeting with the Director Stephen feels embarrassed by the Director's flippant attitude. Again there is a feeling of betrayal, which is a theme that runs through the novel. Stephen feels that the Director is betraying his own Roman Catholic faith and in a way is betraying him by not taking the meeting seriously.

At the end, there is no doubt as to the decision Stephen will make. Taking on a religious vocation will not solve Stephen's problems. A career as a Priest is out of the question because it would bring too much control and confinement. He cannot stay with his own family because there lays disorder and chaos. Ireland itself, his homeland, is controlled by the English and the Roman Catholic Church, so Stephen's only course is to obtain education so that he can escape country, Church and family.

The end of Chapter 4 deals with Stephen's walk by the seashore. It is full of lyrical passages providing a descriptive and beautiful portrayal of the seascape. He comes across a girl and we read, "A girl stood before him in mid-stream, 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 seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and soft hued as ivory, were bared almost to the hips, where the white fringes of her drawers were like feathering of soft white down." Again we have reference to birds. This symbolizes Stephen's spirit, which up until now has been caged and longs to fly free in the sky.

Stephen experiences a mix of desire for the girl and wonder at the aesthetic beauty of the picture. He realizes that he can paint this picture in words and at last he is beginning to form an idea of what his future might hold.

This scene marks the emotional and artistic climax of the novel. The girl he describes is seen by the reader as the perfect female. There is a mystical quality to the image she projects. She is likened to a graceful bird, the crane, and her Irish ness is symbolized by the emerald green seaweed. Although Stephen feels a sexual attraction towards her, Joyce stresses the fact that the girl is innocent with references to purity and ivory. However, there is a hint of Stephen's darker side when he refers to the girl as a dark plumaged dove, for doves are usually considered to be white, and her situation tempts Stephen. Perhaps Joyce has been

influenced by the French artist Renoir who was a famous Impressionist artist who delighted in painting the human figure, particularly women. Two of his most famous works were 'Bathers' and 'After the Bath'. We now learn that Stephen's soul contains the image of this girl for eternity far removed from the indelible mark he would have borne had he taken Holy orders. "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."

The girl is quite aware of Stephen's gaze, and she excites him by moving "her foot hither and thither". This only serves to make Stephen's artistic nature glow.

In a state of euphoria, Stephen falls asleep on the beach and refreshed, awakens as night falls.

Stephen will meet the next day as a young artist.

CHAPTER 5

Summary

In the Dedalus household, Stephen sorts through the pawn tickets that have in recent weeks provided money in order that the family might buy the essentials for survival.

The stress is evident on both Stephen's parents. His mother nags him to leave for University so that he is not late for his class whilst his father accuses him of being lazy.

Stephen leaves this squalid existence and sets off to his world at the University. There, the reader sees that Stephen is not totally committed to his studies. He is bored at his English Literature class and finds it difficult to concentrate. He engages in one of his favorite pastimes of considering certain words and establishing their Latin derivatives. This is the start of Stephen formulating his own general principles in his chosen field of literature and art. He longs to leave behind him the ugly and tasteless world that has surrounded him throughout his growing years. He has still has much to add to his theory of aesthetics and he uses his friends and University teachers as sounding boards in order to develop his own artistic character.

He meets McCann who is a "self-proclaimed Democrat" and he wishes Stephen to sign his Petition which seeks equality among the classes and sexes in the United States of Europe. Stephen does not agree with McCann's aims. He is not the least bit interested in democracy and McCann calls him anti-social.

Stephen next meets with another student, Davin. He is a rustic lad with a strong Irish accent and he is an activist pursuing the cause of Nationalism. Stephen admires Davin for his athletic ability, but mocks him for his association with "the sorrowful legend of Ireland". Davin recalls an incident he had with a young peasant woman, which is similar to Stephen's experience with the girl standing in the stream. The contrast is that Stephen remembers the scene with the girl purely as an artistic experience. He paints the picture with his eloquent words, whereas Davin's recounting of the incident concerning the peasant woman is full of crudity and lacks subtleness.

The next scene deals with a discussion between Stephen and the Dean of Studies. Stephen soon realizes that the Dean cannot match him concerning artistic enlightenment. The Dean is an English Jesuit Priest and is a purely practical man and believes that the arts should be applied accordingly. He lacks Stephen's philosophical insight and Stephen informs the Dean that he has been inspired by the writings of Aristotle and Aquinas. Aristotle was a Greek philosopher who founded the science of logic. He was a student of Plato. St. Thomas Aquinas was an Italian theologian and philosopher. He became an authority on the philosophies of Aristotle and argued that faith and reason are two complementary realms. Both are gifts of God, but reason is autonomous.

After this discussion with the Dean, Stephen takes part in a boisterous discussion with a group of his fellow students. He meets Cranly who, like Stephen, is somewhat of a loner. However, he fears isolation and will later try and persuade Stephen not to leave Ireland. Cranly has a distinctive face, pale and priest like, "the lips that were long and bloodless and faintly smiling".

McCann is still urging students to sign his Petition for world peace, but some of the students wish to discuss this topic. Cranly tries to persuade Stephen to sign the Petition, but he wishes to keep his independence and not be one of the crowds.

Another student, Temple, admires Stephen and follows him like a disciple. He agrees with Stephen's decision not to sign the Petition. However, Stephen is annoyed at Temple who is always trying to ingratiate himself with him.

Lynch joins the discussion. He is a crude individual and is only a fair-weather friend to Stephen. Stephen tries to explain to Lynch his theory of aesthetics, giving him his hypothesis on pity and terror. We read, "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."

Lynch does not understand these definitions and Stephen goes on to explain the difference between static and kinetic art. Lynch is bemused by Stephen's pronouncements, but that allows him to continue his philosophizing as he finds it quite entertaining.

The pair continues to discuss this topic until Stephen observes Emma Clery, his childhood "sweetheart". She now becomes the object of his attention. He wonders what her life is like and what she thinks about. Next day Stephen awakens refreshed having experienced a passionate dream about Emma. He is moved to write a poem, a villanelle, in her honor.

Stephen's dreaming on the steps of the Library is interrupted by the discussion group that he had left yesterday - still bickering about political and religious ideas. The discussion slowly breaks down and becomes a battle of insults.

He sees Emma again, and she seems to be calling to Stephen to leave his life at the University.

Later Stephen talks with Cranly concerning problems at home. His mother is pressurizing Stephen to come with the family for the Easter Day Mass. Stephen does not wish to be a hypocrite as he has no respect for the Roman Catholic rituals. Cranly finds it hard to believe that Stephen should go against the Church after being brought up and educated inside the fold of Roman Catholicism. Stephen has an overwhelming urge to rebel against his family, the Church and Ireland. "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church."

The Chapter ends with entries from Stephen's diary from March 20th to April 27th. This deals with Stephen's preparations for his departure from Ireland. The first entry recalls his last conversation with Cranly. The following entries deal with his feelings concerning leaving his friends and life in Ireland. We sense Stephen's growing anticipation as the day of his departure approaches. There is an element of hope in his words and the final entry has a mythical tone where we read, "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead."

Interpretation

The 5th, and last, Chapter of the book is the longest and the reader will in a sense be relieved that the challenge that Joyce has set has been achieved. The criticisms that can be made about the book may be lack of plot, the abrupt transitions, the general formlessness of the novel, and why Joyce makes the reading of the book such a challenge. However, in making these criticisms, we would be missing the point that Joyce is trying to make.

'The Portrait' is Joyce's statement on the Irish nation, the Roman Catholic Church, and Stephen Dedalus' family, which in many respects mirrors his own.

The intensity of the book grows as you pass through each Chapter. Joyce cleverly sets the literary standard to Stephen's age so we have traveled from the simplistic prose in Chapter 1 when Stephen was a young child, to the sophisticated and intricate thoughts of Stephen the University student in the final section of the book. Stephen wishes to escape the three main elements that have controlled his life and we will examine these later.

Chapter 5 opens with a reminder of Stephen's home life. The fall to poverty suffered by his parents has a lasting effect on them. He finds it impossible to forgive his father, not just because he has failed the family due to his worsening financial situation, but also because he has failed to be a good father to Stephen and the rest of his siblings. Stephen feels betrayed by his father because he has not guided him and helped him face the problems particularly when he was moving into adolescence. He was disappointed by his father who always seemed to put him down in public and treat him as a joke. He feels more loyalty to his mother, but he realizes that she will always hold him back unless he can put some distance between her and himself.

Joyce's lyrical style is evident in this Chapter. He composes a well-structured villanelle concerning his dream about Emma, but then in the very next paragraph we read, "What birds were they? He stood on the steps of the library and looked at them, They flew round and round the jutting shoulder of a house The air of the late March evening made clear their flight, their dark darting quivering bodies flying clearly against the sky as against a limp hung cloth of smoky tenuous blue." This is yet another artistic scene painted eloquently by Joyce in words. There is further bird symbolism here, and again we relate birds to Stephen's free spirit.

During this Chapter we see Stephen breaking loose from the bonds that have restricted his developing artistic soul.

The Chapter opens with Stephen sifting through the pawn tickets. In a sense, Stephen is pawning his loyalty to Ireland in order to obtain freedom.

The scene with the girl on the shore convinced Stephen that he had a specific purpose in life and a duty to pursue it. It was not by chance that his conditions worsened as he grew older, and from this poor base, he will build a promising future. We see that Stephen is not a model student; he is not interested in any topic that does not relate to his own personal development. He has no strong opinion on world peace or

socialism. He prefers his own company and solitude. He does not wish to be regarded as one of the crowd. He looks at scenes in his life through an artistic eye and not a crude primitive eye. He will not become a servant of the English authorities. He feels he can learn more from the works of Aristotle and Aquinas than from the lecturers and Dean of the University. All this we learn from his conversation with various characters in Chapter 5.

As we have said before, Stephen desires escape from family, country and religion, and the reasons are as follows:-

Family: Stephen desires to leave his family and his decision for doing so is purely selfish, but essential if his artistic soul is to survive. It is easy to leave his father because of the sense of betrayal he feels, and his mother being a sound Roman Catholic is bound to her husband for better or worse. Stephen has lost his faith and he knows that if his mother were to find this out, she would be heartbroken. He does not wish to join the family at Easter because this would be hypocritical, but if he remains in Ireland he will not be able to maintain the façade that he is a true Roman Catholic. On the day before Stephen's departure, his mother hopes that his emotional development will be paralleled by his artistic idealism.

Country: It is important that the reader has some understanding of Irish history and its relationship with England. Ireland has had the misfortune of facing conquest after conquest. Initially Ireland was divided into five kingdoms inhabited by Celtic tribes. These clans warred frequently amongst themselves, which weakened the race as a whole. In the 8th Century they were invaded by the Danes who were not ousted until the 11th Century. Ireland enjoyed a brief period of independence until they were invaded by the English in 1171. Ireland remained under English rule until the early 20th Century. Tensions mounted when England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church whilst Ireland remained predominantly Roman Catholic. The English were determined to convert as many Roman Catholics to the Protestant Religion as possible, but this proved impossible. They embarked on a campaign of encouraging Protestants to migrate to Ireland in particular to the northern province of Ulster, in order to weaken the Roman Catholic position. The English exacted a strict control over Roman Catholics but this was alleviated in 1829 by the Act of Catholic Emancipation, which allowed Catholics to hold Civic Office and sit in Parliament. This enabled the likes of Parnell to raise the voice of Roman Catholics in the British Parliament. Independence for the Irish nation was a hard and bitter campaign. In the 19th Century Ireland suffered great hardship through the failure of the Irish potato crop from 1845 – 1849. In 1905 Sinn Fein was founded and finally in 1914 Home Rule was agreed, but implementation was suspended because of World War I. In the Easter of 1916 Irish nationalists organized a rising and created the Republic of Ireland. The British army brutally crushed the rebellion, but this led to Sinn Fein having a landslide victory in the Irish elections of 1918. At this time, the Irish Republican Army was formed and they embarked on a guerrilla war against the British forces. In 1922 the Irish Free State was formed, but the Northern Province of Ulster, which was by now predominantly Protestant, remained part of the United Kingdom.

Ireland's struggle for independence can be likened to Joyce's and Stephen's struggle.

Church: The vast majority of children in Ireland were brought up strictly in the Roman Catholic faith. Both Joyce and Stephen endured similar experiences. They were indoctrinated into a religion governed by ritual and rules. The schools they attended were intrinsically linked to the Roman Catholic Church. They were not given alternatives and were only taught the Catholic viewpoint on life. At an early age, they were told that God was all-powerful and a vengeful God. To give in to temptation and commit sin would lead to eternal damnation. What annoyed Joyce was the Church's involvement in politics as well as family life. He totally opposed their stance on the Parnell affair, as he believed this seriously damaged the Irish Nationalist cause. He could not abide the self-destructive tendency of the Church and the Irish people. Joyce could not understand why they seemed to tolerate English Protestant rule rather than support Parnell who although was flawed, still had the best interests of the Irish people at heart. So far as the Catholic Church in Ireland is concerned, independence was secondary, as the most important affiliation was to the Bishop of Rome and English dominance could, therefore, be tolerated. Joyce felt that the problems faced by Stephen's family were not eased by their loyalty to the Church, but in some ways worsened by it.

This book presents problems to every reader regardless of age and ability. It is Joyce's most widely read work and is among the most frequently taught novels in modern University curricula, but it is also useful for younger students who do not need to delve so deeply into Joyce's philosophy.

Many of the problems faced by Joyce and Stephen are with us today. The authority of the Church or religion, the quest for independence and self-determination, and the influence of parents and families are just as important in today's world as they were for Joyce one hundred years ago. Joyce has an intricate statement to make and it is contained in the five Chapters of this book. His views are punctuated by literary works of art when he is describing particular scenes that Stephen experiences. This enables the book to be more palatable for it is, as well as a statement, a poetic masterpiece.

THEMES

BETRAYAL

Stephen feels betrayed by various characters and institutions as follows:

His father: As Stephen develops, he realizes how inept his father is and there are two particular instances where he feels betrayed. On their visit to Cork when they do a circuit of the pubs, Simon ridicules his son in front of his drinking companions. Stephen recognizes that his father is trying to patronize him. He is disappointed that his father does not realize how intelligent he is. When Stephen starts his new school at Belvedere his father jokes about Stephen's previous experience with Father Dolan at Clongowes. The adults seem to be having a joke at Stephen's expense and to him this was an important event in his life, not one to be ridiculed.

His mother: Stephen feels betrayed to a lesser degree by his mother, because she blindly stays loyal to her husband and the Catholic Church, even although this loyalty brings deprivation on the whole family. She never questions her faith and expects all her family to suffer along with her. Consequently Stephen is forced to betray her. He knows he cannot stay with his family and change it because they are impossible to influence, so he has to leave them to their fate.

The teachers: Apart from a few exceptions, most of the teachers who are Clerics, betray their pupils and therefore, Stephen. Some seem to delight in inflicting physical pain and punishments on their charges, and only abide by those passages in the Bible that support their harsh regime. Even at University, the Dean betrays his students by not allowing them to express themselves fully. They must stay within the confines of religious doctrine and totally free expression is not allowed.

The Church: Stephen feels that the Church betrayed the Irish Nationalist movement when they crushed Parnell. In Stephen's opinion the Church puts too much store in blind obedience and following the rituals of Catholicism rather than promoting God's love for his people. God's love in the view of the Church can only be experienced in the life hereafter, and is reserved for those that are in a state of grace. It is the lot of the majority of people to suffer in this life and reap the benefits in the next.

IMAGERY

Joyce uses imagery in order to provide a thematic unity through the novel.

This starts in Chapter 1 where there is the basic imagery observed through a child's eyes. Here it is basic, wet/dry, hot/cold and light/dark. This 'senses' imagery continues with the section dealing with Stephen's 'baptism' in the cesspool.

Much of the imagery is associated with birds and these have been highlighted in the various Summaries and Interpretations – e.g. the greasy football, the birds on the library steps and the portrayal of the girl on the shore etc. Birds are associated with flight as was Icarus, and Stephen's artistic soul yearns to break loose from its cage and fly over the sea in order to obtain full expression.

Another image in the book is a skull; some are obvious such as the skull on Father Conmee's desk at Clongowes, and the Director at Belvedere whose description reminds us of a skull. Joyce's description makes him look like a religious icon framed against the stained-glass window, but his stance is that he is leaning on a crossblind, which provides the reader with a clever pun indicating that the Director will lean on Stephen about choosing a religious vocation. The skull emerges again with Cranly, which is an abbreviation of 'cranium' meaning 'skull'. He is Stephen's priest-like companion to whom he confesses his deepest feelings. When Stephen tries to focus on Cranly's image, he can only remember his facial features and nothing about the rest of his body, so he appears like "a severed head".

We obtain a graphic description of the Dedalus' new home in Chapter 2, "the parlour fire would not draw half-furnished uncarpeted room weak light over the boarded floor" and so it goes on providing an atmosphere not only inside the stark house, but the surrounding streets in foggy Dublin city.

In Chapter 1, we have covered the description of Stephen's first day at Clongowes.

There are many other instances of imagery in the book e.g. the prostitute in the pink dress, the girl wading at the water's edge etc. that have already been covered.

THE SYMBOLISM OF STEPHEN DEDALUS

Like his martyred namesake, Stephen suffers through this novel because of his unique artistic perception of the world. His family, religion and country all try to make him conform, but he will not be subdued and cuts his ties with all three when he leaves Ireland at the end of the book. If he had stayed, his very essence would have been destroyed, it would have been killed. This relates to the skull image that comes to the fore on numerous occasions.

Daedalus constructed a labyrinth for King Minas. The labyrinth presents itself in a different form to Stephen at Clongowes School when he has to make his way to the Rector's office. There too, a skull awaits him, but his meeting with the Rector is initially a success, although this will be an object of betrayal later on (see above). Later, Stephen manages to escape the labyrinth, which is Dublin in order to travel to the free environment of Europe. The association between Stephen and Daedalus comes right at the end of the book when he says, "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead."

Ironically, Daedalus' relationship with Icarus is in total contrast to the relationship between Simon and Stephen. Metaphorically, Daedalus encourages Icarus to fly in order to experience the exhilaration of freedom. Icarus has to trust his father's skill and guidance. Stephen receives none of these from his father Simon who tries to clip his wings and keep him earthbound. He provides him with no encouragement so far as his artistic feelings are concerned.

The message here is that perhaps Stephen will not share the impetuous nature of Icarus and steer a good course not too close to the sun.

QUESTIONS and IDEAS FOR STUDY

- (a) The death of Parnell is an important event in this novel. It affects several characters in the book in differing ways. How?
- (b) Stephen has real and imaginary relationships with several women in his life. How do these relationships influence his emotional growth?
- (c) How does Stephen regard the Clergy as he grows throughout the novel? Please give examples.
- (d) The degree to which this book is autobiographical has been the subject of much debate. Provide a list of the similarities between Joyce and Stephen that we can be sure of.