

boy that a brief passionate life can be more meaningful than a long passionless one. Such a revelation does not imply that he wants to end up buried “on the hill” next to Michael Furey, nor does it suggest that Gabriel is ready to embrace an Irish cultural revival. Instead, this lyrical final paragraph with its trance-inducing alliteration (“soul swooned slowly . . . snow . . . universe . . . descent”) and chiasmic structure (“falling faintly . . . faintly falling”) reveals that Gabriel has begun to see himself not just in terms of the larger cycle of life and death but in his relationship to Ireland and its place in the wider universe. To appease Gretta, he may decide to join the tour with Miss Ivors around the west of Ireland, but it is also possible that he will board another ferry for his annual bicycle trip around the Continent. As with all Joyce’s endings, we can only guess what the morning after will bring.

ERc BUlson, *The Cambridge Introduction to James Joyce*, Cambridge U.P.: 202

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

When Joyce first arrived in Trieste in 1905, he was carrying along an autobiographical novel entitled *Stephen Hero*. Like *Dubliners*, it, too, had “the defect,” he once joked, “of being about Ireland” (*LII*, 132). He continued to draft sections on and off for two years as he was writing stories for *Dubliners*. But when negotiations with Grant Richards over *Dubliners* finally collapsed, so did his desire to finish what he had started. He planned sixty-three chapters, but only got to twenty-five. In 1907 he threw much of the original manuscript away and began revising and refining a new book called *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.¹⁰ In 1909 he gave the new chapters to one of his students, Ettore Schmitz, as a language exercise. Schmitz was impressed by what he read, and his kind words encouraged Joyce to forge ahead. By 1911 *Dubliners* had still not been published and Joyce threw what he had written of *Portrait* into the fire. Thanks to the timely intervention of his sister Eileen, however, the manuscript was rescued. Through the good graces of Harriet Shaw Weaver and Ezra Pound, *Portrait* was serialized in *The Egoist* between 1914 and 1915 and published as a complete book in 1916. If *Dubliners*, as Joyce once said, represents his “last look at Dublin,” *Portrait* is a “picture of [his] spiritual self.”¹¹ As the final words in *Portrait* attest, the “picture” took ten years and two countries to complete: “Dublin 1904, Trieste 1914.”

The idea for what would become *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* came to Joyce after he wrote an essay for the Irish periodical *Dana* in 1904.¹² Following his brother’s suggestion, he called his essay “A Portrait of the Artist,” adapting the title from Henry James’s *Portrait of a Lady* and Oscar

Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. For Joyce, this ironic autobiographical essay was an early attempt to synthesize his ideas about aesthetics, Ireland, religion, and the role of the artist. It was also his way of engaging with an age-old philosophical question: Is our identity fixed or in flux? Because we are always in a constant state of becoming, the portrait can capture us only at a particular moment in time. For that reason, the portrait is not so much a representation of who we are in the present as a portrait of what we were in the past and what we can become in the future:

The features of infancy are not commonly reproduced in the adolescent portrait for, so capricious are we, that we cannot or will not conceive the past in any other than its memorial aspect. Yet the past assuredly implies a fluid succession of presents, the development of an entity of which our actual present is a phase only.¹³

At an early stage Joyce latched onto the gestation motif that he would use to talk about the birth, evolution, and flight of the artist in *Portrait*. How, he asks, does the artist find an independent voice? He recommends that it is only through isolation, "the first principle of artistic economy," that individuation becomes possible.¹⁴ It is a gradual process in which bouts of religious fervor are followed by sexual excess and an eventual break with Church and society. Here in this essay the seeds for *Stephen Hero* and what would eventually become *Portrait* were planted. He formulated the story about a young Catholic artist, who gradually detaches himself from the religious and social institutions that threaten his artistic autonomy.

Despite Joyce's bravura, the editors at *Dana* complained that his essay was too obscure and refused to publish it. They were right: the essay is often obscure, the structure is uneven, and the prose turgid. Nevertheless, the act of writing it gave Joyce the chance to reflect on the kind of artist he wanted to become. At the age of twenty-two, he saw himself as someone who stood, as he wrote in a satirical poem, "The Holy Office," several months later, "self-doomed, unafraid/ Unfellowed, friendless, and alone" (CW, 152).

Emboldened by the rejection from *Dana*, he decided to expand his essay into an autobiographical novel. Almost immediately, Joyce began to compile a list of characters and sketched out the general plot with the help of Stanislaus. In these early notes many of the key scenes were already in place (the retreat and sermon episode, the journey to Cork with his father, and the Christmas dinner scene), though he originally planned to extend the plot beyond Stephen's university years and into his exile. In this earlier version the protagonist was given the surname "Hero," which was taken from an old English ballad called "Turpin Hero" about an English highwayman that

begins in the first person and ends in the third person (for *Portrait* it will be the reverse).

Stephen Hero grew to a thousand pages in less than a year. The style is more direct and naturalistic than *Portrait*. Joyce came up with the five-part structure for *Portrait* only after he abandoned this initial effort. This discovery enabled him to bring Stephen's consciousness to the center of the novel and resulted in an economy of style and structural coherence that the earlier novel lacked. It was also a move away from the more descriptive style of *Dubliners* and toward a psychological impressionism that will be found in the characterization of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses*.

Portrait belongs to the genre of the *Bildungsroman*, or novel of education, and the *Künstlerroman*, or novel of artistic development, which typically involve a young man or woman in search of life experience and success. Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, Jane Austen's *Elizabeth Bennet*, Stendhal's *Julien Sorel*, Balzac's *Rastignac*, George Eliot's *Dorothea Brooke*, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, and Flaubert's *Frédéric Moreau* are some of the most famous examples. As noble as their ambitions may be in the beginning, they are put under pressure by the more powerful, and oftentimes corrupt, social and political institutions of their time. In the *Bildungsroman* the protagonist finds his or her place in society but ends up disillusioned by the ways of the world. The protagonist of the *Künstlerroman*, on the other hand, forcefully rejects the commonplace life that society has to offer.

Stephen belongs a bit to both traditions: he comes up against the social, political, and religious institutions that want him to conform, and he rejects them for the artistic life. But there is also a twist. Unlike the other novels whose protagonists I just mentioned, *Portrait* was the first to articulate a distinctly Irish-Catholic experience. In addition, Joyce gave his creation a mythical dimension. Stephen's last name, Dedalus, comes from the name of the Greek artificer, Daedalus, who built a labyrinth for King Minos in Crete to imprison the evil Minotaur. The epigraph of *Portrait* is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and it describes Daedalus's reaction after King Minos tells him that he cannot return to his native country: "Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes" ("He turned his mind to unknown arts"). In order to escape with his son Icarus, Daedalus applies his "unknown arts" and fashions wings made of wax and feathers. Icarus flies too close to the sun, his wings melt, and he plunges to his death. The myth of Daedalus and Icarus provides two possible destinies for Stephen: he can be the father artificer or the rebellious son.

Portrait follows Stephen Dedalus from childhood until about the age of twenty. As the title itself implies, the dramatic action is organized around the

formative moments that lead up to Stephen's decision to become an artist and leave Ireland. The plot proceeds chronologically and each chapter identifies a significant stage in his emotional, intellectual, and artistic development. In *Dubliners* Joyce had already found a way to unite disparate stories under a single theme (paralysis), city (Dublin), and life-cycle (childhood, adolescence, maturity, and public life), and in *Stephen Hero* he learned how to develop a more extended narrative. In *Portrait* Joyce learned how to write a novel. It is an autobiography of sorts that begins with a third-person narrator and ends with a first-person narrator. Joyce adapted the form of the autobiography, but the characters and events, though loosely based on real people and real events, are creatively refracted through the consciousness of a fictional character. Stephen Dedalus, to put it bluntly, is not James Joyce even if so many of Stephen's experiences have a biographical correlative.

As with *Dubliners*, Joyce represented the complex inner lives of his characters by experimenting with point of view. Stephen is the unifying consciousness for each of the five chapters, and we see the world as he does. When the novel opens, he is a young child listening to the stories of his father: "Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo . . ." (P, 3). At this point Stephen cannot speak, but he can listen. He experiences the world through basic sensory impressions: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. Throughout Chapter 1 he learns to distinguish between pleasant and unpleasant (sometimes painful) sensations. The body will become a contentious site for Stephen. He will be forced to decide between a life in the Church that wants him to repress bodily desire and an independent artistic life in which he can embrace it.

We can chart Stephen's development throughout the novel by his capacity to rationalize the world around him. We first find him passively processing the world through his body, but he soon moves into the more complicated socialization process. The childlike simplicity of the first chapter gives way to an increasingly sophisticated style that mimics Stephen's intellectual growth. In the second, third, and fourth chapters, the language becomes more complex because his mind is developing, and he is beginning to find ways to express himself. As Stephen learns about the world, his observations are accompanied by more intense intellectual reflections.

At Clongowes Wood College when still a young boy, for instance, he thinks about big ideas like "politics" and "the universe," but he still does not know what they mean: "It pained him that he did not know well what politics meant and that he did not know where the universe ended. He felt small and weak. When would he be like the fellows in poetry and rhetoric?" (P, 14). As

Stephen gets older, big ideas like politics and the universe will begin to make sense to him. He might never find out where the universe ends, but he will be able to find his place in it. Early on in Chapter 2, Stephen cannot return to Clongowes Wood College because his father can no longer afford the fees: "In a vague way he understood that his father was in trouble and that this was the reason why he himself had not been sent back to Clongowes. For some time he had felt the slight changes in his house; and these changes in what he had deemed unchangeable were so many slight shocks to his boyish conception of the world" (P, 67). Since we see the world from Stephen's perspective, we do not get an explanation for the financial causes behind these changes in the Dedalus household. Instead, he records only how it affects his own "boyish conception of the world."

In the final pages of *Portrait*, when Stephen is a "young man," we come across an abrupt series of journal entries. The third-person narrator disappears at this point, and Stephen begins to speak (or write) in the first person. This dramatic shift indicates that Stephen has found a voice, and he is finally able to narrate his own experiences directly. The style is less dense, and Stephen even seems to have found a sense of humor. As playful as many of these journal entries are, they represent a necessary step in his development as an artist. He is no longer the passive child listening to stories. He is the adult conjuring them up from his own experiences. The gestation motif of the original "Portrait" essay, which I mentioned earlier, achieves its full resonance here. Stephen reflects on the previous twenty years of his life and understands that his future requires living with, not breaking with, the past. His entry for 6 April provides a perfect synopsis: "The past is consumed in the present and the present is living only because it brings forth the future" (P, 273).

Before analyzing the steps involved in Stephen's development as an artist, it helps to have a general sense of what happens in the individual chapters. In Chapter 1, Stephen is a child passively absorbing impressions from the world around him, first at home and then at Clongowes Wood College, a Jesuit boarding school for boys. During the explosive Christmas dinner scene, his Aunt "Dante" Riordan argues with his father and Mr. Casey over the death of Parnell, whose ghost haunts "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" in *Dubliners*. Although Stephen is not always conscious of it, he associates betrayal with Parnell's tragic downfall. He gets his first taste of betrayal when Father Dolan beats him unjustly at the end of Chapter 1.

In Chapter 2 the Dedalus family moves from the suburb of Blackrock to the city of Dublin. Because of his father's financial troubles, Stephen is unable to return to Clongowes Wood College and he soon begins attending a Jesuit

day school, Belvedere College. It is here that he begins to discover his talents as an essay writer and actor, but he feels “that he was different from the others” (*P*, 67). He stages a mini-rebellion against his fellow classmates when he chooses Lord Byron as the “best poet.” As part of the punishment, they beat him against a barbed-wire fence. When Stephen accompanies his father on a trip to Cork, he confronts his father’s frailties and feels that “his childhood was dead” (*P*, 102). By the end of the chapter, Stephen can no longer repress his adolescent sexual urges, and he visits a prostitute for the first time.

In Chapter 3 he goes on a retreat with the Jesuits. After hearing a terrifying sermon about hell, damnation, and eternal punishment, Stephen is horrified and repents of his sinful ways. When the retreat is over, he confesses to a Capuchin priest and vows to live a virtuous life. In Chapter 4, he mortifies his five senses to repel physical desire. Soon his religious dedication catches the attention of the director of studies at Belvedere College, and he is asked to consider a life in the priesthood. He refuses. Shortly after his refusal, he sees a young girl wading in the water and vows to accept a life of the senses.

In Chapter 5 Stephen stages his rebellion more openly. Throughout the chapter he outlines an aesthetic theory and writes a poem (I will return to the poem at the end of this section). In a series of three conversations with Davin, Lynch, and Cranly, he explains why he must break with his nation, home, and church. Voluntary exile is the price Stephen must pay for an artistic life. But in this rejection he paradoxically embraces this same church, society, and nation precisely because he needs to write about his own life experience.

In what follows I will focus on some of the central themes and issues in the novel: betrayal, language, politics, religion, and art. While I will analyze them separately, they are, in fact, mutually constitutive. Stephen will learn over the course of his early life that language and politics are as intertwined as art and religion. Part of achieving his independence involves wresting language and art away from the religious, political, and social institutions that attempt to coopt them.

Stephen can achieve his independence only by imagining that the entire city of Dublin is out to betray him. He is obsessed with betrayal and looks at everyone around him as a potential traitor: fathers, brothers, priests, prostitutes, crushes, and friends. Most obsessions can be traced back to an early and traumatic childhood experience. For Stephen, it is the explosive Christmas dinner scene when he hears his father rage against the Catholic Church for leaving Parnell in his hour of need: “When he was down they turned on him to betray him and rend him like rats in the sewer” (*P*, 33). Stephen, as his

aunt suspected, remembers these words, but he will have his own reasons for associating the Church with betrayal. Late in Chapter 1, when he breaks his glasses during recess and returns to class unable to complete his assignment, the prefect of studies, Father Dolan, accuses him of being a “lazy little schemer” (P, 51). To punish him, Father Dolan beats Stephen’s hands with a stick. Such an unjustified beating by a Jesuit priest in front of the entire class reaffirms Stephen’s sense that he has been unjustly treated. Unwilling to let the prefect off the hook, Stephen does what any proud nine-year-old might do: he asks for justice from the rector, the Reverend John Conmee, S.J. (he will later appear in the “Wandering Rocks” episode of *Ulysses*). In his encounter with Father Conmee, Stephen wins a small victory, but his distrust of priests is now firmly in place. Instead of brothers, they become potential rivals.

Stephen’s experience with the priest also teaches him an early and valuable lesson about language. Words do not always mean what they say. Father Moran thinks Stephen is playing a trick on him to get out of his lesson, but Stephen has no idea what “trick” he means: “Why did he say he knew that trick?” (P, 51). Central to Stephen’s education, artistic and otherwise, is the gradual command he takes of language. He learns to make words belong to him by personalizing the definitions. As a young boy, he thinks about how the word for “rose” can conjure up the colours of lavender, cream, and pink. This leads him to wonder if you could have a “green rose”: “Perhaps a wild rose might be like those colours and he remembered the song about the wild rose blossoms on the little green place. But you could not have a green rose. But perhaps somewhere in the world you could” (P, 9). Without being aware of it, Stephen has, in fact, brought a “green rose” into the world precisely by naming it. When remembering the litany of the Blessed Virgin called Tower of Ivory, he thinks of ivory in terms of the “long white hands” that his neighbor Eileen once used to cover his eyes: “That was ivory: a cold white thing” (P, 35). The word “wine” conjures up the color “dark purple” and images of Grecian houses (P, 47). But when Stephen smells wine on the rector’s breath, the Grecian houses and purple disappear, and he feels sick to his stomach.

There are some words that Stephen cannot understand as a child. When Stephen’s classmate, Simon Moonan, is called a “suck,” he does not know what to make of it: “Suck was a queer word. The fellow called Simon Moonan that name because Simon Moonan used to tie the prefect’s sleeve behind his back and the prefect used to let on to be angry” (P, 8). Stephen is way off the mark here. “Suck” is slang for “sycophant,” but Stephen mistakenly associates it with the act of tying the prefect’s sleeves behind his back. As Stephen continues to unpack this term, he makes a random onomatopoeic identification. The word “suck” sounds like water running down a drain after

a chain has been pulled up: "And when it had all gone down slowly the hole in the basin had made a sound like that: suck. Only louder" (P, 8).

A number of readers have argued that there is also a sexual meaning for "suck" that Stephen is too young to get. Not long after this incident in the schoolyard, Stephen finds out that the "suck" Simon Moonan was caught "smuggling," a slang term for amorous homosexual behavior, in the square with another boy. Stephen is as confused by "smuggling" as he was by "suck," but he still makes an association based on his limited life experience: "But why in the square? You went there when you wanted to do something. It was all thick slabs of slate and water trickled all day out of tiny pinholes and there was a queer smell of stale water there" (P, 43). Although he does not fully grasp the implied sexual content, the associations that he makes with "smuggling" and "suck" are the same: water, holes, and queer. Suck is a "queer" word associated with water; "smuggling" is a word that reminds him of a "queer smell." Jeri Johnson has pointed out that the word "queer" can mean eccentric, drunk, and bad, but it is almost impossible for modern readers not to think of "homosexual."

The language that the adults speak also confuses Stephen, but it has more to do with politics than the playground. Early in Chapter 2, he listens to his Uncle Charles discuss "Irish politics." Stephen does not know what Uncle Charles and his friends are on about, but he realizes that he can make foreign words familiar by committing them to memory:

Words which he did not understand he said over and over to himself till he had learned them by heart: and through them he had glimpses of the real world about him. The hour when he too would take part in the life of that world seemed drawing near and in secret he began to make ready for the great part which he felt awaited him, the nature of which he only dimly apprehended. (P, 64)

In this vague prophecy of Stephen's future as a wordsmith, he imagines that the "word" gives him access to the "world." If he can harness and control language through memory, he will be able to shape the reality around him. At a much later phase in his linguistic development, he will come to realize that words have an independent existence for him, and through them he can contemplate "an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose" (P, 180–81).

As an Irishman, Stephen also learns that the English language has a complicated history in Ireland. Although he repeatedly thinks that adults talk about politics, he will come to understand that the very language they speak, English or Irish, is political. During the nineteenth century, a number

of nationalist groups blamed the rapid Anglicization of Ireland on centuries of British colonization. In an effort to recover a lost language and tradition, groups like the Gaelic League were founded to teach the Irish language and culture to a generation that had grown up speaking English (the majority of native Irish speakers were primarily relegated to the west of Ireland).

From his early days at Belvedere, various Irish nationalist groups attempt to enlist Stephen to their cause. At a pep rally he is told to “raise up her [Ireland’s] fallen language and tradition,” but he soon loses interest (*P*, 88). At this point in his life, he is uninterested in the national revival not because of its politics, but because it asks him to belong to the group. He prefers to be “far from them, beyond their call, alone or in the company of phantasmal comrades” (*P*, 89). When he is old enough to articulate his rejection of Irish nationalism more clearly, he tells his friend Davin that the Irish “threw off their language and took another . . . They allowed a handful of foreigners to subject them. Do you fancy I am going to pay in my own life and person debts they made? What for?” (*P*, 220). For Stephen, the Irish are as much players complicit in their own oppression as they are victims of a foreign power. The solutions offered by Davin and other nationalists like him will not give Stephen the independence he wants. “I shall express myself as I am,” he says (*P*, 220). By aligning himself with any movement, Irish or otherwise, he would have to give up his own voice and pay for the “debts” of others.

Stephen’s fierce rejection of the Irish language is fraught with contradictions. On the one hand, he believes that a language, once lost, should not be resuscitated in the present for political reasons. On the other hand, he embraces the English language knowing that it is the language imposed on Ireland by the British Empire. He will choose to speak (and eventually write in) English but he is always conscious of its history and politics in Ireland. It is a native tongue for him, something he was born into, but it is also, historically speaking, an acquired tongue in Ireland.

In one decisive encounter, the English dean of Belvedere claims never to have heard the word “tundish.” When Stephen assures him that it means “funnel,” the dean mistakenly assumes that it must be Irish. It is, in fact, an English word, and Stephen translates this misunderstanding into a charged symbolic victory for the colonized Irishman over the colonizing English speaker. He knows English better than his English master. Looking back on this experience in his journal, he is even more unforgiving of the dean’s ignorance: “Damn the dean of studies and his funnel! What did he come here for to teach us his own language or to learn it from us? Damn him one way or another” (*P*, 274). Shortly after this exchange, Stephen reflects on the psychological effects of this linguistic divide:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write, these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language. (*P*, 205)

Stephen may never feel at home in the English language, but by using it to articulate an Irish experience he can make it foreign to the English.

In addition to Irish nationalists and English deans, Stephen must confront Jesuit priests. Having observed his religious devotion after the retreat, the director of studies at Belvedere asks Stephen to consider a life in the priesthood. As tempted as Stephen is by the “secret knowledge” and “secret power,” he also realizes that he will have to deny the senses and accept a “passionless life” (*P*, 172, 174). We never see Stephen refuse the vocation directly. It is another “gnomonic” instance like those we find in *Dubliners*. Instead, the third-person narrator accesses Stephen’s thoughts as he walks home from the priest’s office. This absence of a straight refusal demonstrates that Stephen has already begun to internalize the experience and transform it into the stuff of art. Instead of saying “No” (or more appropriately “*non serviam: I will not serve*,” 126), he stages his denial by repeating the word “fall,” one that alludes simultaneously to the fall of Lucifer from heaven, the fall of Adam and Eve, and the denial of eternal life offered through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ: “The snares of the world were its ways of sin. He would fall. He had not yet fallen but he would fall silently, in an instant. Not to fall was too hard, too hard: and he felt the silent lapse of his soul, as it would be at some instant to come falling, falling but not yet fallen, still unfallen but about to fall” (*P*, 175).¹⁵ Stephen’s tortured mind is reflected in the gnarled syntax as it struggles to express a fall that has both happened (because he will not accept the priestly “vocation”) and is about to happen (because he will sin many times in the future). It is only the next day that we find out for sure: “He had refused” (*P*, 179).

When asking Stephen to consider the vocation, the priest urges him to remember his patron saint, St. Stephen (“make a novena to your holy patron saint, the first martyr,” 173). Once he refuses, he conjures up the image of his patron pagan, Daedalus:

Now as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy . . . Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air. What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some medieval book of prophecies and symbols, a

hawklike man flying sunward above the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being? (*P*, 183)

Stephen has been waiting for this dramatic awakening all along, the moment when he can imagine himself as a Daedalian artificer, who can escape by and with the nets of language, nationality, and religion. The acceptance of his namesake marks both a final farewell to his youth and the first step in his future. He has finally risen from what he calls "the grave of boyhood" (*P*, 184). He has denied the Church, but he has accepted the fact that he will "serve" as an artist.

Stephen's revelation influences how he perceives those around him. Shortly after he imagines the "hawklike man," he walks down to the sea and spies a young girl wading in the water. She is not just any girl. Instead, she reminds him of a "seabird" (*P*, 185). This identification is significant because it demonstrates that Stephen has found a new way to process and understand the place of women in his life. Until this moment, his relationship with women has been limited to his mother, his aunt, prostitutes, Eileen, and his boyhood crush Emma (also referred to as E—C—, and "she"). He has been able to see them only as symbols of otherworldly virtue or as temptresses and betrayers.

This reductive view reflects Stephen's limited life experience. When the girl's eyes meet Stephen's, he does not feel shame, as he once would have, but guilt-free desire: "She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness" (*P*, 186). This nameless "girl" is representative of a life-giving force that he is finally ready and able to accept: "Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!" (*P*, 186). As these two passages indicate, Stephen may have renounced his faith, but he has not given up on religious language and images: we have "the worship of his eyes," the "sufferance of his gaze," the "soul," and "the holy silence of ecstasy." For Stephen, this girl is not an intercessor between his soul and heaven but between his body and his art. He has already begun to see himself as a "priest of the eternal imagination," someone who can transmute "the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life" (*P*, 240).

By the time you arrive at the end of Chapter 4, you begin to wonder where the “artist” part of the title fits in. Until this point, we have not actually seen Stephen write anything. These four chapters, however, have established the life experiences and education that he will draw on for his art. In Chapter 5, the longest chapter in the novel, Stephen’s emergence as a practicing artist in private is interwoven with his renunciations of home, nation, and religion in public. He tells the Irish nationalist Davin, “When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets” (*P*, 220). Later on, he gives Cranly a slightly elaborated version of his new credo:

I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning (*P*, 269).

Stephen expounds his aesthetic theory to Lynch, who is seriously hung-over.¹⁶ This dramatic monologue takes place as they walk around Dublin, and Stephen’s more serious philosophical reflections are punctuated, thankfully, by Lynch’s witty asides. Before getting to Stephen’s aesthetic theory, it helps to have some background on Joyce’s occasional aesthetic writings. Between 1900 and 1903, before he began writing *Dubliners* and *Portrait*, Joyce collected a notebook of “epiphanies.” The “Epiphany” is a theological term for the manifestation of Christ’s divinity to the Magi, and it was adapted from the Greek word for revelation.¹⁷ Joyce’s epiphanies were prose fragments, never more than a few lines, and they described a scene that Joyce had witnessed or a conversation he overheard. Instead of publishing them separately, he incorporated a number of them into *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait*.

Stephen Hero includes both an epiphany and a definition. As Stephen walks down Eccles Street (the street where Leopold and Molly Bloom live in *Ulysses*), he listens in on a conversation between a young man and woman:

The Young Lady – (drawling discreetly) . . . O, yes . . .
I was . . . at the . . . cha . . . pel . . .
The Young Gentleman – (inaudibly) . . . I . . . (again inaudibly) . . . I . . .
The Young Lady – (softly) . . . O . . . but you’re . . .
ve . . . ry . . . wick . . . ed . . .

This triviality made him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. By an epiphany he meant a sudden

spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. (*SH*, 217)

This epiphany, you have probably noticed, looks a lot like the “gnomonic” conversations I discussed in the *Dubliners* section, and many critics have taken the liberty of referring to the *Dubliners* stories themselves as epiphanies. For Joyce, the epiphany represents one of his first attempts to generate a theory that would explain his art. It was more of an exercise than an aesthetic system, and he quickly came up against its formal and theoretical limits.

When Joyce revised *Stephen Hero* into *Portrait*, he cut out the theologically charged epiphany. Instead, he based Stephen’s theory on a series of notebooks he kept in Paris (1902), Pola (1904), and Trieste (1907). These jottings are not very extensive but with them he was wrestling with a number of aesthetic questions raised by Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas.¹⁸ In *Portrait* Stephen begins to talk about aesthetics during his encounter with the English dean. As with the word “tundish,” Stephen’s knowledge of philosophy becomes another way for him to flex his intellectual muscles. At one point, when Stephen discusses the metaphorical “light” offered by Aristotle and Aquinas, the dean thinks that he is talking about a literal lamp (“Epictetus also had a lamp,” 202). Although Stephen mentions a few pages earlier that he would like to “forge out an esthetic philosophy,” it is the dean who challenges him to get started (*P*, 194): “You are an artist, are you not, Mr. Dedalus? . . . The object of the artist is the creation of the beautiful. What the beautiful is is another question” (*P*, 200–01).

In response to the dean’s sly provocation, Stephen defines “beauty” by using two lines from Aquinas, which I will return to shortly. When he gives Lynch a more expansive version of his aesthetic theory soon after this encounter, he begins with Aristotle. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle claimed that tragedy elicited two extreme emotions from its audience: pity and terror. The audience feels pity at watching someone else suffer and terror because it could happen to them. Stephen puts his own spin on Aristotle by introducing the two terms “static” (fixed) “kinetic” (moving). He argues that art can be “improper” when it has a “kinetic” effect that incites one’s desire to go to or loathing to go away from something (he puts “pornographical” and “didactic” art in this category). Proper art has a “static” effect because it raises one beyond the physical world to a purely mental realm.

Stephen moves from a consideration of art’s effect on the viewer to the act of aesthetic apprehension. In doing so, he returns to Aquinas and repeats one of the quotations he used earlier with the dean: “*Pulcra sunt quae visa placent*” (“We call that beautiful which pleases the sight”). At this point Stephen examines the process by which the viewer enjoys art through the

senses. Aesthetic apprehension is a static process that involves the intellect and the imagination: the intellect beholds truth, the imagination beholds beauty. Beauty, however, has still not been defined. Stephen goes back to another line from Aquinas: "*ad pulcritudinem tria requiruntur, integritas, consonantia, claritas*" ("three things are needed for beauty, wholeness, harmony, and radiance") (*P*, 229). Stephen uses these three "things" to explain the phases of aesthetic apprehension that enable the viewer to contemplate the "beauty" of an aesthetic image. With *integritas* the aesthetic image achieves its oneness, with *consonantia* the aesthetic image is seen as both a sequence of parts and a whole thing, and with *claritas* the aesthetic image achieves its singularity or whatness.

At first, Stephen uses *claritas* to define the moment when the viewer apprehends the "radiance" of the aesthetic image. But as his monologue reaches one of its crescendos, he deftly turns to the artist and the creation of the aesthetic image.

The supreme quality is felt by the artist when the esthetic image is first conceived in the imagination. The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal. The instant wherein that supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure, a spiritual state very like to that cardiac condition which the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani, using a phrase almost as beautiful as Shelley's, called the enchantment of the heart. (*P*, 231)

The many strands of Stephen's aesthetic theory come together here. He synthesizes the concepts borrowed from Aquinas and moves outward to include the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and the physiologist Luigi Galvani. In this shift from scholastic philosophy to poetry and physiology, the "mysterious instant" of aesthetic apprehension is redefined according to a metaphorical image ("the fading coal") and a visceral effect ("the enchantment of the heart"). This shift suggests that Stephen has moved away from theorizing the aesthetic to performing it, and the "silent stasis of esthetic pleasure" he mentioned in his theory is followed by "a thoughtenchanted silence" once he has finished.

In the final stage Stephen reflects on the relationship between literary form and artistic personality. There are three forms available to the artist (the lyric, epic, and dramatic), but they "are often confused" (*P*, 232). For Stephen, the dramatic form is ideal because it enables the artist to represent personal experience and simultaneously withdraw behind a curtain of impersonality.

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, impersonalizes itself so to speak. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination. The mystery of esthetic like that of material creation is accomplished. The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails. (P, 233)

In the climax of his exposition, Stephen gives the artist a godlike role. Moving from scholastic philosophy (Aquinas) through romanticism (Shelley) to realism (unacknowledged reference to Flaubert), he has found a way to explain how the artist can build from autobiographical material and remain detached from it.¹⁹

After Stephen puts together an aesthetic theory, he writes a poem. Instead of immediately giving us the poem in its finished form, Joyce staggers the scene so that we watch Stephen in his workshop cobble together words and phrases before fitting them into the verses of a villanelle, a French poetic form popular at the end of the nineteenth century. Ten years earlier, he had tried to write a poem to Emma but failed. This time he has had enough education and life experience to draw on. Although we barely see Stephen interact with Emma throughout *Portrait*, it is clear that he has developed an intense crush on her. Part of his inspiration for the poem comes out of his jealousy after he sees Emma talk to Father Moran as she plays with “the pages of her Irish sees phrasebook” (P, 238). Stephen thinks that they were flirting, but his friends claim they were talking innocently.

It does not really matter if they were flirting or not. Stephen interprets this moment as another act of betrayal, one that conflates the two forces, religious and national, he has decided to rebel against. As much as he feels slighted on a personal level, he attempts to universalize the experience by making her a “figure of the womanhood of her country” (P, 239). This phrase, in fact, passes through Stephen’s mind in a slightly different form after he hears Davin’s story about the Irish peasant woman, who asked him to spend the night when her husband was away. As upset as he may be by thoughts of betrayal, the image of Emma and the pangs of his jealousy leave him sexually aroused:

A glow of desire kindled again his soul and fired and fulfilled all his body. Conscious of his desire she was waking from odorous sleep, the temptress of the villanelle. Her eyes, dark and with a look of languor, were opening to his eyes. Her nakedness yielded to him, radiant, warm, odorous, and lavishlimbed, enfolded him like a shining cloud, enfolded him like water with a liquid life. (P, 242)

Although Stephen modeled his aesthetic theory on the procreative cycle of “artistic conception, artistic gestation and artistic reproduction,” this moment is more masturbatory than anything else. Artistic creation derives from the sexual desire of a poet, who is alone in his bed. We finally get Stephen’s “Villanelle of the Temptress” immediately after this description, but it is difficult to read the line “While sacrificing hands upraise/The chalice flowing to the brim” without thinking about where Stephen’s own hands have been.

When we come upon Stephen’s journal entries in the last section of Chapter 5, we should pause to remember the second half of the title: “as a young man.” It was this youngness that led Frank Budgen to remark that Stephen is like “a young cat sharpening his claws on the tree of life.”²⁰ This qualification of Stephen as a young man, or young cat, is precisely what gave Joyce the necessary ironic distance through which he could paint this semi-autobiographical portrait. It was not a portrait of the artist as a “fully-grown man.” Instead, it was a portrait of one who has the potential, talent, hope, and vision to become an artist.

Although Stephen vows “to recreate life out of life,” does he really have that much to show for it at the end of the novel (*P*, 186)? He has sketched an aesthetic theory borrowed from Aristotle and Aquinas, composed a villanelle, and kept a private journal. The first two exercises demonstrate that he has the potential for deep thought (philosophy and poetry), but Stephen would be the first to admit that they are more valuable as a process than as a final product. Upon rereading his villanelle, even he admits in his journal that he has found “vague words for a vague emotion” (*P*, 274). Aquinas and the villanelle will not give him the form he needs for any revolutionary mode of literary expression. Neither will the journal. But these reflections on friends, family, and Emma are a necessary step in finding a voice and their fragmentary form provides another example of the individualized voice we come to know in his more adult conversations with Davin, Lynch, and Cranly.²¹ The journal represents the public exposure of a private voice, one that he has wrested forcefully from the more dominant voices of his church, nation, and home.

Emboldened by this newly acquired voice, Stephen makes some big promises. The penultimate journal entry is a case in point: “Welcome, O Life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” (*P*, 275–76). Hugh Kenner has noted that the verb “forge” plays on the dual meaning of “create” from scratch and “copy.”²² The question of what and where he wants to create or copy is ambiguous. A more skeptical reading of Stephen emphasizes above all that this declaration of independence is also a moment of

uncertainty, hesitation, and fear. Stephen, we must remember, is not sure exactly what he is going to do once he leaves Ireland, and the novel never tells us. Even more daunting is the fact that he has brought upon himself the monumental task of “forging” nothing less than the “uncreated conscience” of an entire race.

The act of becoming symbolic of his race requires that Stephen transcend the geographical borders of his country and break down the stereotypes of his countrymen through his art. He will be Irish by leaving Ireland for Europe and by writing about his experience through Greek, Latin, and European models. Richard Rowan in *Exiles* and Gabriel Conroy in “The Dead” face a similar dilemma about their futures. Unlike his fictional fellow countrymen, Stephen seems more convinced that he might actually succeed in bringing Ireland to Europe, the world, and the universe beyond. If you read *Ulysses*, you get to find out what happens.

Exiles

Upon first reading *Exiles*, Ezra Pound commented that it was too cerebral for the stage. Each line, he thought, requires too much concentration so that the average theatergoer would be hopelessly lost between the acts. “It takes all the brains I’ve got to take in the thing, *reading*,” he told Joyce, “And I suppose I’ve more intelligence than the normal theatre goer (god save us).”²³ After the play was published in London on 25 May 1918 by Grant Richards (who published *Dubliners*), Pound reviewed it, sticking with his original opinion, but adding that Joyce was too important a novelist to meddle with the “inferior” form of drama.²⁴ When situating it in the larger context of Joyce’s work, he found that *Exiles* “was a wide-step, necessary katharsis, clearance of mind from contemporary thought.”²⁵ Pound’s frank commentary in published reviews and private letters did not dissuade Joyce from trying to get his play staged. “An unperformed play,” he said, “is really a dead shoot.”²⁶ Favorable reviews greeted its publication, but Joyce’s various attempts to stage *Exiles* were stymied by critical opposition and censorship. Yeats liked *Exiles* (though he still preferred *Portrait*), but believed that it was not folksy or Irish enough for the Abbey Theatre. The Stage Society of London rejected the play, finding parts of it obscene. In Munich, *Exiles* sharply divided its German reviewers. Until the first American production in 1924, *Exiles* was exiled from the English-speaking stage.

Unable to bring *Exiles* to the stage, Joyce decided to approach Carlo Linati for an Italian translation. After stumbling upon Linati’s Italian translations of