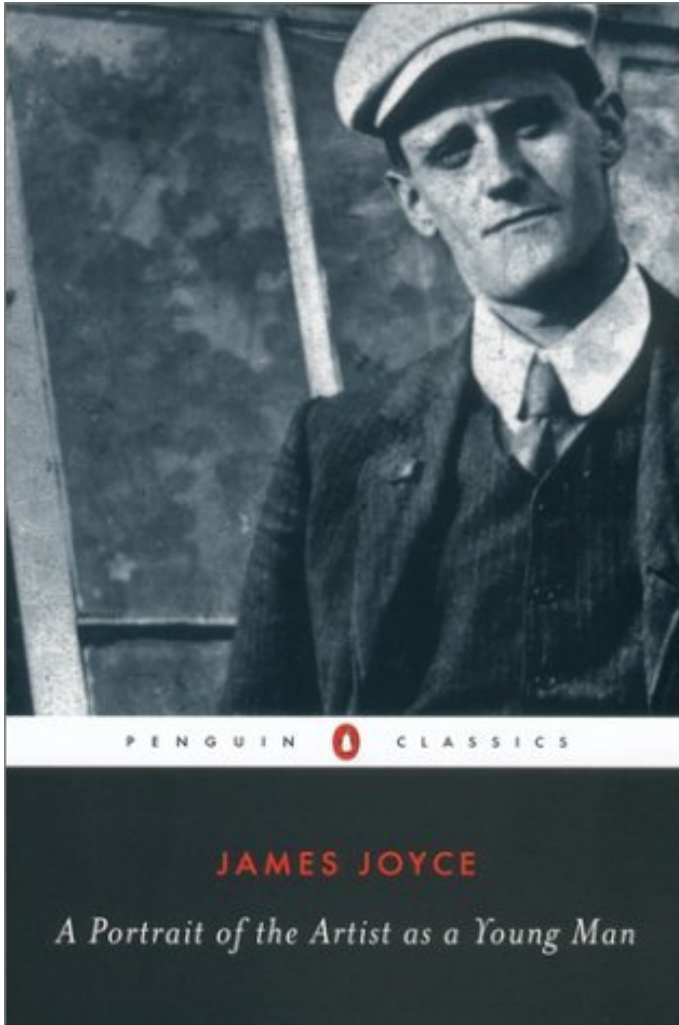

James Joyce

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man



Title: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Author: James Joyce

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Description

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man represents the transitional stage between the realism of Joyce's Dubliners and the symbolism of Ulysses, and is essential to the understanding of the later work.

The novel is a highly autobiographical account of the adolescence and youth of Stephen Dedalus, who reappears in Ulysses, and who comes to realize that before he can become a true artist, he must rid himself of the stultifying effects of the religion, politics and essential bigotry of his background in late 19th century Ireland.

Written with a light touch, this is perhaps the most accessible of Joyce's works.

Insightful reviews

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

Cheryl: My college English professor was a huge fan of Greek mythology. So imagine his delight at dissecting the mind of Dedalus, an illusion to the Greek craftsman, Daedulus. I didn't fully understand Stephen Dedalus then, and I'm still unsure how much I understand him now. Come to think of it, can we ever fully grasp the method of James Joyce, this singular author who has managed to create masterpieces of all his novels? Do most of us even truly understand James Joyce's prose, or is it the pressure of geek camaraderie that forces us to create an illusion of allegiance to the wonderment of mysterious verse? I'm afraid I don't have an answer to that. Frankly, I'm a bit intimidated to try [Finnegans Wake](#) and although I read [Ulysses](#) in college, I don't remember it enough to have much of an opinion. However, I now see why *Portrait* was made popular through academic book circles. It is an easier Joyce read (almost like the simple complexity of his short story, *Eveline*). It is a short read that follows the inner thoughts of a young man coming of age in Ireland. It is about philosophy and self-struggle.

Portrait is prose poetry; it doesn't quite fit the poetic form, yet it is not quite the linear narrative you expect. As I read the beginning of this novel, when Stephen was younger and chanting about baby tuckoo and having conversations about his mother's kiss (the first half of this book is the better part, by the way) I wondered where I had come across Joyce's influence on a contemporary writer and I immediately recalled the beginning of Frank McCourt's [Angela's Ashes](#).

If you're not a fan of literary modernism and its *screw tradition* stylistic maneuvers, you may find Stephen's religio-philosophical stream of thought daunting. I carried this book with me for years, even after I had discarded several college English books (you know, those huge Anthologies that always fell apart in the middle). Was it the pocketbook size of this book that made me keep it, I wondered, or was I smitten by the idiosyncratic storytelling of this highly unusual bildungsroman? Maybe I kept it so that more than a decade later, I would turn to a page and still see my underlines and notes to myself: *Start an outline for an essay based on Joyce's "threefold sting of conscience."* I still do remember having a discussion with my professor (via red ink down the margins of my paper) where he agreed and disagreed with my opinions, challenging me at every turn. I didn't understand it then, how could he have so much to say, so

many questions to ask me about my analysis, and yet tell me that it was great work? Now I understand. It's impossible to read this book and not have questions, differing opinions, and debate, because the book itself is one big question mark. Our protagonist, Stephen Dedulus, challenges everyone and everything. He is so tough on himself, tough on his weakness and humanity, that at times you want to reach through the book and shake him:

To be alone with his soul, to examine his conscience, to meet his sins face to face, to recall their times and manners and circumstances, to weep over them. He could not weep. He could not summon them to his memory. He felt only an ache of soul and body, his whole being, memory, will, understanding, flesh, benumbed, and weary.

But the tug-of-war is really between the main character and the prose: they compete with each other and you can't help but to pick one. *Shake Dedulus. Wow, read this passage again. Back to Dedulus: come on Stephen, you're human, you can't be perfect, stop beating yourself up so--wait, wow, look at the stylistic flow of James Joyce's prose: short and long sentences, back-to-back comma usage, repetition to create lyricism--OK, Focus: back to Dedulus.* This was me while reading James Joyce.

It is said that this novel is semi-autobiographical. After receiving a rigorous Jesuit education, Joyce left Dublin in 1902 and renounced his Catholicism. It took him seven years to complete *Ulysses*, seventeen for *Finnegans Wake*, and he revolutionized the form and structure of the novel. He did what most struggling writers do: get teaching jobs to pay the bills while working on the book. Yet he managed to complete what most writers won't: masterpieces.

His life seemed to have drawn near to eternity; every thought, word and deed, every instance of consciousness could be made to revibrate radiantly in heaven: and at times his sense of such immediate repercussion was so lively that he seemed to feel his soul in devotion pressing like fingers the keyboard of a great cash register.

Penny: I am three quarters of the way through this book, and I've just decided to bail out.

I have Irish Catholic heritage, so the early part of the book was mildly interesting because I could relate to the quasi-gnosticism of the priests in the boys' school.

Later on I stuck with it because I kept thinking that, eventually, there had to be some flesh-and-blood characters that I'd care about, some relationships between people (or even some realistic conversations), a tiny bit of action taking place outside of the protagonist's head...

As I was dozing on the bus today while the reader's voice droned in my headphones, I realized that I wasn't going to get any of those things.

I'm sure if I were taking a literature class and studying this book with some supporting material and guided discussion, I would appreciate it more, and maybe understand why it made the RH

"best books of the 20th century" list. When it's just me, myself, and the online Cliff's Notes, though, it's really not my kind of novel.

Agnieszka: we will learn A Portrait of the Artist As a tender guy as a prequel to Ulysses but when we reject for it slow first institutions then what is left ? An intimate, internal portrait of a tender guy who makes an attempt to outline himself as a guy and an artist. If we learn it this manner - then it's easily an common tale concerning the torments of early life and look for his personal identity, his personal voice. Stephen Dedalus, crushed by way of Irish God-and-Homeland tradition, is suffocating via provincialism of overdue 19th-century Ireland. Ireland, residing within the shadow of England, confronted with poverty, additionally and maybe especially else , poverty and narrowness of mind. Stephen, proven from an early age, in the relations home, a Jesuit school, in college, is attempting to do away with all of the old baggage. these kinds of precepts to be a superb son, student, to like God and country. yet a man's state comes first. eire first, Stevie. You could be a poet or or a mystic after. Stephen, layer by means of layer throws out inhibiting him bonds of family, faith and country , conscious that typically may fall , painstakingly forges his self. Chooses loneliness and voluntarily condemns himself to exile , to discover that sort of life, wisdom or art, which might let him to specific himself such a lot fully. i don't worry to be by myself or to be spurned for an additional or to depart no matter what i need to leave. and i'm no longer afraid to make a mistake, even a superb mistake, a lifelong mistake, and maybe so long as eternity too .

John: An semi-autobiographic novel, that includes a fictionalized personality as Joyce's alter-ego, it lines his formative formative years years that led him ambivalently clear of a vocation within the clergy and into that of literature. There are sections which appealed to me (a priestly sermon at the damnation of ones soul into hell is very vivid), yet generally the plot line used to be too disjointed for me to interact with. doubtful of precisely the place I were or what course the unconventional used to be taking me, i discovered myself suffering via lengthy pages looking for moments of clarity. there have been moments the place Joyce's deft dealing with of the english language carried me clear of my confusion over the plot line, yet regrettably those weren't common adequate for me to forgive the unconventional as a whole. there have been few, if any, characters that have been built good sufficient to hold my curiosity and boost the plot. As I neared the top of Portrait I felt cheated. one of many purposes I had chosen this novel used to be the need to learn a vintage of contemporary literature (it is ranked #3 at the glossy language's best novels of the twentieth century), and finally i used to be left wondering my skill to understand the depths of this novel. For a good written evaluation espousing a opposite opinion discuss with Mohsen, 17Dec07.

Parastoo Ashtian: ??? ????? ????? ?? ?? ??? ?? ????? ????? ?? ????? ????? ?? ????? ??????? ??????? ???

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