

James Joyce
A Portrait of the Artist
as a Young Man

English 4520F
 September 26, 2011

stages of *A Portrait of the Artist*
as a Young Man

“A Portrait of the Artist” - January 1904 - short essay / sketch - rejected by *Dana* (published 1960)

“A Portrait of the Artist” (1904) - 1

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 iron 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. Our world, again, recognises its acquaintance chiefly by the characters of beard and inches and is, for the most part, estranged from those of its members who seek through some art, by some process of the mind as yet untabulated, to liberate from the personalised lumps of matter that which is their individuating rhythm, the first or formal relation of their parts. But for such as these a portrait is not an identificative paper but rather the curve of an emotion.

(MS p. 1)

“A Portrait of the Artist” (1904) - 2

To those multitudes, not as yet in the wombs of humanity but surely engenderable there, he would give the word: Man and woman, out of you comes the nation that is to come, the lightning of your masses in travail; the competitive order is employed against itself, the aristocracies are supplanted; and amid the general paralysis of an insane society, the confederate will issues in action.

(MS pp. 14-15)

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from *Stephen Hero* (1904-07)

XXXI

BETWEEN Easter and the end of May Stephen's acquaintance with Cranly progressed night by night. As the time of the Summer Examinations was approaching Maurice and Stephen were both supposed to be hard at work. Maurice retired to his room carefully every evening after tea-time and Stephen repaired to the Library where he was supposed to be engaged in serious work. As a matter of fact he read little or nothing in the Library. He talked with Cranly by the hour either at a table, or, if removed by the librarian or by the indignant glances of students, standing at the top of the staircase. At ten o'clock when the library closed the two returned together through the central streets exchanging banalities with the other students.

It would seem at first somewhat strange and improbable that these two young men should have anything in common beyond an insatiable desire for leisure. Stephen had begun to regard himself seriously as a literary artist; he professed scorn for the rabblement and contempt for authority. Cranly's chosen companions represented the rabblement in a stage of partial fermentation when it is midway between vat and flagon and Cranly seemed to please himself in the spectacle of this caricature of his own unreadiness.

Stephen had lent his essay to Lynch as he had promised to do and this loan had led to a certain intimacy. Lynch had almost taken the final vows in the order of the disconcerted but Stephen's unapologetic egotism, his remorseless lack of repentment for himself no less than for others, gave him pause. His taste for fine arts which had always seemed to him a taste which should be carefully hidden away, now began to encourage itself timidly. He was also very much relieved to find Stephen's estheticism united with a sane and conscientious acceptance of the animal needs of young men.

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A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man - written 1907-14 - published in *The Egoist* 1914-15 and as book 1916

titles

"A Portrait of the Artist"

Stephen Hero: ballad "Turpin Hero"

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Bildungsroman, Kunstlerroman

character's name

"Stephen Daedalus" in *Stephen Hero*

"Stephen Dedalus" in *Portrait*

St. Stephen = first Christian martyr

Dedalus (Daedalus) →

Daedalus

Greek: brought to Crete by King Minos to build labyrinth for minotaur (half-man, half-bull)
imprisoned by Minos in labyrinth

built wings to escape

son Icarus tested wings

Icarus flew too near sun

wings burned, fell into sea, drowned

Daedalus escaped to Sicily

epigraph: Et ignotas animus dimittit in artes.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VIII, 188

And he sets his mind to work upon unknown arts
[and changes the laws of nature]

Every morning, therefore, uncle Charles

repaired to his outhouse but not before he had creased and brushed scrupulously his back hair and brushed and put on his tall hat.

(near beginning of Chapter II of

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man)

Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man* (1927):

"People *repair* to places in works of fiction of the humblest order."

Hugh Kenner, *Joyce's Voices* (1978):

"the Uncle Charles Principle":

"the narrative idiom need not be the narrator's"

structure of *A Portrait*

1) father --> Clongowes --> Christmas dinner (Parnell) --> Clongowes and Father Conmee

2) family stability --> school --> Cork with father --> sex and prostitute

3) sermon: hell, heaven, grace --> confession

4) Church and priesthood? --> vocation as artist

5) university: Irish culture --> artistic theory --> poem: villanelle --> "nets": "I will not serve" --> flight

2 other villanelles

"Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"
Dylan Thomas (1951, pub. 1952)

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rage at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

"Mad Girl's Love Song"
Sylvia Plath (1951, pub. 1953)

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead;
I lift my lids and all is born again.
(I think I made you up inside my head.)

The stars go waltzing out in blue and red,
And arbitrary darkness gallops in:
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.

I dreamed that you bewitched me into bed
And sung me moon-struck, kissed me quite insane.
(I think I made you up inside my head.)

God topples from the sky, hells fires fade:
Exit seraphim and Satan's men:
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.

I fancied you'd return the way you said,
But I grow old and I forget your name.
(I think I made you up inside my head.)

I should have loved a thunderbird instead;
At least when spring comes they roar back again.
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.
(I think I made you up inside my head.)