

CHAPTER - III

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN

- Joyce's Bildungsroman

"From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit,
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire,
where you must move in measure like a dancer"

- T.S.Eliot.

When James Joyce wrote A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, he took the material of the novel from his own life, his own experiences. He made some changes in it, developed it sometimes, shortened it sometimes. And what was the result ? We have an excellent Bildungsroman of the twentieth century. His race, his experience, the atmosphere in Ireland, all found a way in this novel, in the early life of Stephen (protomartyr) Dedalus (fabulous artificer). In Joyce's bildungsroman, as in most of others, both before and after his, we find a sensitive youth shaped by his surroundings, feeling their pressure, and rebelling against them to become himself. "Stephen Dedalus, created by Simon Dedalus (who represents the fatherland), rebels against father in order to become Stephen Dedalus, a proclaimed enemy of the fatherland and a better creator than father.

Naturally the novels of father and son are more or less autobiographical. But the more we know of Joyce. We come to know that A Portrait is not autobiography. Events

and characters are distorted, rearranged and invented to serve a novelist's purpose. The material, which he selected from his life had to be depersonalized. For example, though Gimon Dadalus owes much to Stephen's father, his attitude towards Stephen differs from Joyce's father's. Joyce, himself, was commonly gay and witty but Stephen is an unhappy egoist and a rebel. Taking into account these, and many similar facts, we must try to see the novel as a work of art.

Something of contemporary Irish politics should be known in order to appreciate Stephen's attitude to his country. For over a thousand years, Ireland has been torn by internal dissension and though the country was unanimous in its desire for Home Rule and independence from England. Charles Stewart Parnell, entering parliament in 1875, secured the confidence of all the confused rebellious elements and was elected leader of the Irish party. He won the love and support of the entire Irish nation including the Church. By 1889, Ireland was on the brink of independence. Then Parnell was accused of adultery and was declared morally unfit, and was deserted by all. He married the lady in 1891 but died the same year. The coming years were full of inaction and national shame for having betrayed its only real leader. Parnell was Joyce's life-long hero. Stephen identifies himself with the Irish political martyr. "Ireland

is the old sow that eats her farrow," says Stephen, including himself and Parnell among the farrow.

In the bildungsroman of Joyce, his backward vision consists a pattern of moral growth and social alienation. It is a typical European attitude, atleast since the Romantics. The individual grows to consciousness with a specific social environment and is partly moulded by its pressures. But as he grows up he finds out that the too restrictive, too materialistic society offers him neither spiritual nourishment nor a usable culture. Yet the society is too powerful to be easily changed. Because of his great sensitivity, Stephen Daedalus is forced apart from his society. His position is a complex one. He is at once a member of the society, a rebel, a martyr and a possible saviour. This is a typical situation in the nineteenth and twentieth century art.

Henceforth the development of the artist from infancy to youth will be discussed.

II

In 'A Portrait' there are both moral and social ideas, there is a narrative movement. But character is the central theme and its development is presented in great details. The action is centered upon developing Stephen. He is shaped by home, religion and country. Each of the five chapters, reveals a stage in the development of Stephen's nature.

The first chapter deals with Stephen's infancy at Bray, a town to the south of Dublin, and childhood at Clongowes Wood. Some of the first pages of the first chapter has a selection from the memorable experiences of infancy to reveal infancy. Each experience, centered upon one or more of the five senses, suggests a direction to Stephen's future development. The selection has harmony of purposes. In the second part of the first chapter, there is an intricate pattern of actual experience, memory and thought. They are connected by free association, parallelism and recurrent images. Here we see Stephen as a schoolboy. The opening scene shows Stephen on the playground. He is bodily there, but memories of his father and mother haunt him. Here we see Stephen's introvert temperament. He is withdrawn, introspective and sensitive. During the football session, he "kept on the fringes of his line, out of sight of his prefect, out of the reach of the rude feet feigning

to run now and then. He felt his body small and weak and the throng of players and his eyes were weak and watery". These lines show that Stephen feels himself to be an outsider. He seems to be on the defensive and adopts cunning tactics to cover up his weak position and avoid commitment. This introvert turns into an egocentric boy. When Wells pushes Stephen into a ditch and Stephen becomes ill, his pride and self pity find expression in a day-dream of his own death and funeral and this makes him think that Wells would then feel sorry for what he had done. When he is unjustly punished by Father Dalan, he feels a sense of injured merit. He finds a sense of superiority in his isolation. "The noise of the children annoyed him and their silly voices made him feel that he was different from others." Thus the seeds of Stephens alienation seem to grow in his childhood. The pressures of the home, religion and nation on his character are evident in this chapter. We can also trace the beginning of his passion for big things, in his childhood. He like to identify himself with big persons. When he is unjustly punished, he thinks of a historical precedent. Here we see the boy's inflated sense of selfimportance. Stephen's interest in fine arts is also expressed in this chapter.

The second chapter includes childhood at Blackrock, the removal to Dublin, the first years at Belvedere, the

visit to Cork, subsequently to the whorehouse. Here childhood is becoming adulthood. His growing dissatisfaction with his environment is expressed in a longing for his dreams to come true . Now Stephen's family moves into a poorer part of the city. Here we come to know that Dublin is to be the great imprisoning labyrinth from which Dedalus will at length fly. In this chapter Stephen identifies himself with Byron and squeezes out a love poem. Here we see him, fascinated with his own image. He takes part in a play, expecting E - C - , the girl of his dreams, to attend the performance, only to be disappointed. In the end of this section we see there is a breach between father and son. He tries to bring a little luxury and order into the growing squalor of his family, with the money of literary prizes. When these attempts prove futile, he feels more detached than ever from his family. His sexual reveries have now become so violent that he seeks refuge in the arms of a prostitute. Stephen fails to establish relationship with his family.

The third chapter, exploring the troubles of adolescence, concerns sin, guilt, confession and communion. Joyce moves Stephen from brothel to classroom. We see him reflecting on his sins and on his dinner. He no longer goes to Mass, though he is still interested in the doctrines of the Catholic Church. He is conscious of his sins but his

feels 'cold, lucid indifference' towards it which is in fact a childlike protective arrogance. But when he is told of the retreat in honour of St. Francis Xavier, which involves confession, all the connotations of apologize cause his heart "to fold and fade with fear like a withering flower." Father Arnall takes the retreat the subject of which is death, judgement, hell and heaven. On hearing the descriptions of punishment inflicted upon sinners like himself, he, for a moment feels that he is already in hell. The retreat ends with the preacher leading the boys into an act of contrition. The hell-fire sermons are a threat directed at his senses. The very smell of hell is impressed upon the imaginative Stephen. The sermons create a new emotional response in Stephen and Stephen, for the first time apologises. The section ends with the kneeling Stephen "praying with his heart O my God, I am heartily sorry". This chapter records a great turning point in Stephen's spiritual life. In the last section of this chapter, the horrified Stephen has a fearful vision of his own personal hell. He finds a church in the remote part of Dublin. He confesses to a kindly, old priest and promises never to commit the sins of the flesh again. His soul rejoices in its newfound purity and purpose of life. In the next morning he receives Holy Communion. It has been said that if the novel had ended here, it would have been one of the greatest Catholic novels written. But Joyce is not taking

Stephen's sudden conversion very seriously.

Starting with repentance and austerity, the fourth chapter proceeds through the rejection of Catholic priesthood for that of the more or less secular imagination. In the beginning of this chapter, Stephen sets for himself a rigid course of prayer and mortification. He becomes very much conscious of his detachment from society. The outside world becomes unreal for him. As the artist or poet which he is to become, he is utterly dependent on the world around him as perceived by his five senses, which upto this point have become extremely active. It is hard for him to merge his life into the common tides of other lives. As a result, he doubts his new way of life. The director of the college asks him whether he has considered a religious vocation. He is tempted for a moment but then realizes that his vocation lies neither with his church, nor with his country. He is to learn his wisdom on his own. His family has become poorer now but his father arranges for his university education. Once, on the seashore, his friends call out his name in greek which reminds him of Daedalus. He feels himself flying like that "hawklike man." In a state of great excitement, he wades into the sea water where he sees a girl standing before him. As he gazes intently at her, his journey of self-discovery reaches a climax, and he realizes that he is destined to become a

poet. He is no longer to apologize, to confess, to obey, to submit, to conform. Now he knows that his purpose in life is "to live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to re-create life out of life."

In the long, important fifth chapter, Stephen stands fully revealed. In the university, after lecture, he meets his friend Cranly, Davin, an Irish Nationalist friend and Lynch. Lynch and Stephen leave others and Stephen explains his aesthetic philosophy to Lynch. Beauty, according to Aquina's definition is that which is pleasing to the senses". Three things are needed for beauty : wholeness, harmony and radiance." Art has three lyrical forms; the lyrical form, or most personal form; the epical form, where the artist's feelings are as important as narration, the dramatic form where the artist's feelings are entirely absorbed by his characters and narration. The Artist himself is in the background, detached and impersonal. While discussing it, he sees Emma and watches her closely. In the night he lies in bed in a state of creative ecstasy inspired by his meeting with Emma. As a result, he composes a poem in her honour but decides not to send it to her. Afterwards in the third section of the chapter we see Stephen standing on the steps of the library. He is reminded of the flight of Daedalus and realizes that the time has come for him to leave family, church and country. Emma Clarsy passes and meets Cranly. Then he confesses to Cranly

that he has offended his mother by refusing to make his Easter duty. He declares that he has lost faith in church, home and fatherland and will not serve them. He repeats Lucifer's words: "I will not serve", stressing the analogy with Lucifers fall. Time has come for loveless, blind Stephen to go. He makes a formal declaration to Cranly: "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." - The same were the only arms of Telemachus, son of the lost Ulysses. Stephen's search for a father has begun. He does not fear to be alone and he does not fear to fall. The last section of this chapter is a series of dated entries in Stephen's diary as he prepares to leave Ireland. Here he comments on his friends, his feelings, and expresses his dissatisfaction with his present situation. There are several references to Emma. He meets her but is unable to communicate with her the idealized love of Dante for Beatrice. The last three entries are filled with longing to escape and resolution to become a poet ending with a prayer to his namesake for assistance. The famous last sentence "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead." has a wonderful air of finality about it. This cry is not only of Icarus to Daedalus but also of God the son to God the Father. Here Icarus and Lucifer are combined in Stephen.

III

Joyce was familiar with Butler, Meredith and Goethe, the pioneers of Bildungsroman. Whether deliberately based on this pattern or not, *A Portrait* generally confirms to it. The original intention of Joyce was to write an account of his own escape from Dublin. One cannot escape one's Dublin. So he reconceived *A Portrait* and recast Stephen Daedalus as a figure who could not even detach himself from Dublin as he had formed himself on a denial of Dublin's values. He is the egocentric rebel whose shape is that of an aesthete.

Stephen, at first, is a sensitive youth, ready to obey. But experiences of the harsh realities of the world change his obedience into revolt. The pressures of home, religion and tradition try to patternize him. In order to achieve a separate personality, Stephen revolts. He decides to leave fatherland, becomes a proclaimed enemy of the fatherland and become a better creator than his father. Here Stephen is not only an individual, not a simple character but he suggests all youth, all loneliness, all desire.

The centre of *A Portrait* is the character and the gradual development of Stephen Daedalus from creature to creation. The period of the novel extends from his early

childhood - when he becomes first conscious of the world's attempt to dominate his life - to the last day of his young manhood - when he sets out in pursuit of his goal. The young man develops by casting off the shackles of patriotism, religion and language. The book necessarily described the agony of the artist, his sensibility, his passion, his superciliousness, his necessary irresponsibility, his struggling to raise himself above his passions. Here Joyce describes the making of an exile. Shaped by home, religion and country, Stephen is increasingly impatient with what has shaped him. He resolves, at last, upon escape and exile.

Until near the end of his schooling at Belvedere, Stephen's habits of quiet obedience persist. He heeds the voices of father and masters urging him to become a gentleman, an athlete, a patriot and, above all, a Catholic. He also attempts the conformity the urge on him; but finds himself to be an alien. The playing fields of Clongowes are the epitome of Stephen's relation with Ireland. "He kept himself on the fringe of his line", pretending to be a member of the team. Stephen, unjustly beaten by Father Dolan flies to Father Connel. But both of them laugh at him privately. Stephen comes to know it through his father, Simon Daedalus. This experience shakes his idea of what a church should be. His own father joins with Father Dolan

and Father Conmee. After his visit to Cork, Stephen finally gives up that drinking, philandering sentiment gentleman of his dreams. No father, actual, ecclesiastical or even divine seems fatherly or reliable. The Christmas dinners proves that home and politics are no less unreliable to the "terrorstricken" boy. His companions betray him one by one. As for the city, Stephen finds Dublin a place of squalor, insincerity and corruption. The "order and elegance" within him are insufficient to dam or clear the sordid tide of life around him and within him. He is completely discouraged. He resolves to commune no more whether the communion be religious or secular. Serving others no more, he will serve himself only, abroad. Society has betrayed him, not he it. He has found trouble with Dublin, not with self.

Thus the formation of Stephen's character shows us clearly that the home, religion and society can form or deform a man's character. The family, the school, the Church, the political situation of the nation, the Catholic Church; all these pressurize Stephen. His sensitive mind is crushed under them. For a long time he obeys; but then his frustration leads him to rebellion. The ardent student, at once, becomes a rebel. He becomes an alien in his own house, in his own town, in his own country. When he can no longer adjust with the situation, he resolves to leave

all. He is utterly frustrated with the situation and hence the cry, "Non servium " Here we see that if a sensitive mind is unnecessarily pressurized, there is a danger of a rebellion. In Joyce's Bildungsroman, we find the shaping up of a sensitive youth, an artist.

IV

Joyce was a great master of words. He experimented with motif in Dubliners and brought it to perfection in A Portrait. Joining parallel and isolated correspondence or epiphany, the running correspondence became favourite device. Joyce's value owes much to such devices. Without his magic of words, his work would have been less rich, less formal and less massive.

In the first two pages of the book many of the motifs are stated. Stephen's infancy, his delight in all five senses is expressed in the motifs of road, cow, water, woman, flower and bird. Here Simon Dedalus is telling Stephen a story about himself, a road and a cow. Stephen hears the story under paternal, godly and gospel auspices. Then mother plays the piano and Stephen responds to rhythm while dancing to another's tune. Everywhere in these crowded pages are pressures of home, religion and nation. Subjected to these pressures, the child alternates between desire and guilt. It is in this context that the images of water, bird, flower and woman begin their work.

In the story told by Simon Dedalus, he (Stephen) stands passively on a trodden way. A road implies direction, limited movement, past and future. A cow, coming along it may imply everything aggressively maternal : church

and country for instance. The cow is a traditional image of Ireland. Later Stephen loves to walk the roads and to ride along them with the milkman, but he is dismayed by the cowhouse with its "foul, green puddles". There is a possibility that the milkman suggests the priest and his cow the church. If so, his first desire to become a milkman and his dislike of the profession predict the future.

The roads, sometimes straight, sometimes circular, run everywhere in A Portrait. Most of the roads are not encouraging, for instance, the dark country road where Davin sees the beckoning woman, and all those circular tracks. Stephen gets the training of running in a customary style on a circular track. Stephen is all but blinded, breaking his spectacles on the tracks in Clongowes. Circular paths implying customs and confinement are disagreeable throughout A Portrait. In the last page, the image of the road changes. Here, "the white arms of roads" abandoning tradition, invite escape.

Water is a more important image in A Portrait. It appears on the first page and proceeds becoming the sea at last. Here water has two aspects, good and bad. In the first half of A Portrait, water is commonly disagreeable, in the second half it is agreeable. The "square ditch" into which Stephen plunges like a rat is the cesspool for the college "square" or urinal. The turf coloured "bogwater"

of the baths repels Stephen as the colour of the Irish bogwater is yellow. But the metaphysical fountain dripping "pick, pack, pock, puck" into its "brimming bowl" seems the turning point. After this, the image of water changes and expands. Conditioned by bad water, Stephen fears the sea but the wading girl brings renewal. It is over water that Stephen flies to exile.

The image of the bird emerges again and again in the novel. We are encountered with the birds, at first, in the eagle which is a symbol of authority. Heron, not only threatens but also punishes. The wading girl is a seabird and a dove. Birds flying over Molesworth Street seem symbols of departure and loneliness. But the bird is complicated by the bat. Davin's beckoning woman is a "batlike soul" the "type of her sex." Bats also seem connected with the theme of blinding : the famous split, the broken spectacles and the lowered blinds at the retreat.

The flower, the "green rose" is the object of Stephen's earliest desire. It is not only unnatural but also suggests by colour both unripeness and Ireland. Though fascinated by it, Stephen could not articulate the name. Later the flower image is complicated by the white rose and the red rose. Stephen is assigned to the white rose but when he is able to choose, the red rose is his favourite. The green rose of his childhood may symbolize

aesthetic immaturity. The roses of his adolescence are white or red.

Women in A Portrait are associated with flowers, birds and roads. There is a flower girl offering Stephen blue flowers for which he cannot pay. There is Mercedes, his dream girl from Monte Christo who lives in a garden of roses by the side of a road. Most of the girls in A Portrait suggest the Virgin in one way or another. Mary is woman to him and woman is Mary, remote, ideal, unattainable. Woman is, generally, an image to Stephen. Yet these are women like Davin's bat - woman, Fresh Nelly and other women. Stephen's trouble is seeing woman as Virgin or whore. His problem is to find someone who, at once Virgin and whor , pleasingly embodies the actual and the ideal.

The Kitchen is one of the important figures of A Portrait. The Kitchen brings Stephen down to earth after his ecstasies and flights. It also represents family communion and harmony. A Kitchen is a place for making things and putting them together.

The language in A Portrait is the register of the intellectual and emotional cleavage. The sustaining tone, which it adopts toward the outside world, is that of precise and mordant description.

In the introductory pages of A Portrait the reader faces the primary impact of life itself, a presentational continuum of the tastes, smells, sights and sounds of infancy. Emotion is integrated by words. Feelings become associated with phrases. His conditioned reflexes are literary. In his mind there is a far-fetched chain of literary associations.

Joyce's language has a kind of magical potency, but its weakness is that it is sometimes hard to visualize. The wading girl scene concludes wit, "But her long fair hair was girlish; and girlish and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face". Here what is said about the hair and face is intended to produce an effect without presenting a picture.

Joyce's use of conversation is the most vital element in A Portrait. As a reporter of Irish life, for all his reservations, Joyce is a faithful and appreciative listener. Religion and politics are among the intimations of early childhood : harsh words and bitter arguments spoil the Christmas turkey. Dante denounces the disgraced nationalist leader. Mr. Casey, the guest of honour, is of the anticlerical faction. Mr. Dedalus is by no means neutral. Mrs. Dedalus softly rebukes him. As the book advances, it becomes less sensitive to the outside impressions and more intent upon speculations of its own. Each epiphany,

awakening of the body, literary vocation, farewell to Ireland - leaves him lonelier than the last.

Thus we see that the language used by Joyce in this novel has a certain fluidity. He has expressed the experiences of a child, growing into maturity in a language, suitable for his purpose.

Stephen's aesthetic theory was once Joyce's own. Joyce had the habit of taking what was handy from his life and experience and transforming it, making it the matter of art. The theory of art serves to show Stephen's character forth and to advance the plot.

There are three main points of the theory. A) Distinction between the static and the kinetic, B) The hierarchy of kinds (lyric, epic and dramatic), C) Wholeness, harmony and radiance as requirements of art and stages of its apprehension. This amounts to a theory of autonomy and impersonality. We may expect an egoist to maintain autonomy, if not impersonality. In this sense, the theory is another way of showing an egoist up.

As Stephen is separate from society, he thinks that art is separate from morality. Art is all alone. He thinks that as the kinetic art arouse desire or loathing, it is bad. He rejects the didactic. In the same way he rejects pornography, as it includes persuasion and lacks morality. Stephen's theory, is formalist. This theory of 'Art for art's sake' follows Oscar Wilde's theory.

The word 'conscience' is rather difficult and puzzling. Standing near the library Stephen thinks, "How could he hit their conscience or how" could be cast his

shadow over the imaginations of their daughters
 that they might breed a race less ignoble than their
 own ?" This desire seems out of harmony with his rejection
 of kinetic art. His desire to "forge in the smithy of
 my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" is equally
 puzzling. The word 'conscience' can mean thought, conscious-
 ness, awareness, knowledge, self-realization. It is possible
 that Stephen's static art improves awareness. But it also
 has a didactic purpose.

Stephen states that there are three requirements
 of art : wholeness, harmony and radiance. Wholeness means
 that a work of art is all by itself alone and self-
 sufficient. Within this isolated thing is an intricate
 relationship or harmony of parts. Harmony is apprehended
 by analysis. Wholeness and harmony together produce radiance
 or epiphany. The word relation is much important which
 recurs throughout his discourse. Wholeness and radiance
 depend upon harmonious relationship of parts within the
 important lonely thing. Truth and beauty also depend upon
 "the most satisfying relations" of their materials.

The theory of impersonality is the third important
 part of Stephen's aesthetic theory. According to Stephen,
 there are three kinds of art : lyric, epic and dramatic,
 rising in this order from the personal to the impersonal.
 They acquire merit as they rise. A lyric writer is one with

his work. An epic writer stands between his work and the audience. But the dramatic writer has distanced himself to the point of disappearance. His work alone speaks for himself. Stephen thinks that according to the writer's position and attitude, we can define his work.

Stephen calls his theory "applied Aquinas." His aesthetic discourse is Joyce's way of shedding more light on Stephen. A theory of art is on one hand formal and impersonal and on the other hand morally significant. Taking sides, the theorist reveals art and also reveals himself.

Many critics apply Stephen's theory to Joyce's works. One critic thinks that A Portrait contains all the three kinds. Lyric at first, it becomes epic in the middle and dramatic at the end. Other critics apply the theory to Joyce's other works also. They call A Portrait lyric, Ulysses epic and Finnegan's Wake dramatic. The Portrait is thus a fictional pre-figurement of some of the aesthetic possibilities Joyce was to explore in his later works.