



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

English

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

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ABSTRACT

The paper entitled A portrait of the Artist as a Young Man clearly demonstrates epiphanies to signify the moment when all of a sudden the personae probes into the heart of things and experiences a sudden spiritual manifestation. In the present novel it is used to resolve and resolute a conflict that an artist face with. Stephen's spiritual manifestation and his aesthetic satisfaction is presented through the epiphanies which is a sudden revelation of the inner truth by paralleling a visual moment. The Journey of Stephen from his very tender infancy till he becoming an artist is presented through certain epiphanies to express the inflow of Stephen's conscious and its changing schedules. In the artistry literary device Stephen's rejection of priesthood, his feeling of nationality, his self-search in an artist in exile are presented through certain revelation meticulously and forcefully. It is fair to say that epiphany is used to experience both the world as Stephen and Joyce as an artist in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN is a subjective novel having its theme the spiritual development of a hero whose personality is founded on the author's. The story of Joyce's break with the catholic church and discovery of his true vocation. It was published in 1916, at the end of process of gestation covering many years. In the Principal product A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN Joyce describes his own development, through the fictional personality of Stephen Dedalus, from early childhood till the time of early manhood. The young man develops by casting off the shackles of patriotism, religion, and languages. The book necessarily describes the agony of the artist, his sensitivity, his passion, his superciliousness, his necessary irresponsibility, his struggling to raise himself above his companions.

Joyce's epiphanies and Woolf's 'moment of importance' are both characteristic writing techniques of stream of consciousness in modern fiction. There are some similarities between them. First of all, both are artistically designed by their writers to represent the moment of mental experience. Epiphanies in Joyce's novel deliberately arranged to reveal characters' complications in inner thoughts and needs the impact of the external world or stimulus on the human mind. Epiphany closely related to the plot of the story, usually marks the abrupt, sudden climax of the story and when it occurred at the certain place and time, the story ends suddenly, while 'moment of importance' often represents a lasting continuous flow of the character's inner world.

According to Skeat's ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY, over which Joyce as a youngman used to pore for hours, the word 'epiphany manifests ' showing forth '. It is an ecclesiastical term, and refers to the three wise men who saw a baby in a manger but who recognized more than a baby (This baby was, of course, Jesus Christ, the son of God) Joyce, however, uses the word to suit his own purpose and means by it the moment when a thing is suddenly realized in all its full and unique significance. He had used all his skill to convey the inwardness of the experience which mould Stephen—Stephen's rejection of his mother's religion, his sense of his nationality, his discovery of his vocation.

Throughout his work Joyce used epiphanies. Such moments are seen as being revelatory first to the fictional character who experiences them, and then to the reader. The figure inside the story is shown the truth about himself or the situation he is in, and the reader is shown the whole process which in its turn becomes an epiphany for them. There are number of epiphanies in the book occur as the symbolic climax of the large dialectical movements covering each of the five chapters.

The first chapter, Stephens has a dream of Parnell death, and this dream immediately follows stephen's day dream about his own death as a result of being pushed into the ditch by Wells. Stephen's self-pity at his own imagined death finds relief in a kind of megalomania. The adolescent Stephen identifies himself with Napoleon. At school he faced with the callous frivolity of the boys, the moral chaos suggested by 'smuggling' in the square and

stealing of the altar wine, and the cruelty of Father Dolan with his pandybat. Thus there is a gulf between what the child expects and what he actually sees, hears and finds. This conflict, is however, resolved towards the chapter when Stephen approaches the rector and tells him his grievance. Justice triumphs and Stephen is greeted by his schoolmates like a hero on his emergence from the rector's office. Stephen's consolidation with his human environment is thus gloriously affirmed. The resolution of the conflict, with the triumph of justice, is the first major epiphany in the book.

The second chapter, Stephen's day dream about Mercedes (a character in Duma's novel, THE COUNT OF MONTE CRIT, 1844-45) expresses an early romantic form of woman's image in the adolescent boy. Stephen thinks that when the image is projected on to a real woman, this will prove a transfiguring experience. The Chapter moves straight from the achievement of emotional unity into other baffling complexities. These complexities coincide with the family's removal to Dublin. The home life is increasingly squalid, and the boy becomes more lonely and restless.

Stephen's whole picture of society suffers a similar damage. Early dim apprehension of sin and guilt is raised into horrible prominence by the word 'Foetus' which he sees inscribed on the desk at Queen's college. Meanwhile, his idealistic longings for beauty and purity and gentleness and certitude are concentrated in a vaguely erotic fantasy of the dream-girl. The synthesis is constituted here by a triumphant integration of the dream of Mercedes with the prostitute embrace.

In the third chapter, the conflict that takes place in Stephen's mind is even more agonizing. This time it is a conflict between his sinfulness and the demands of religion. He has started paying regular visits to the whore to gratify his sexual urge, but his mind remains troubled by this moral corruption. He felt miserable at the thought of alienating God and yet he continued sin. When he tried to pray, something from within him told that offence was too serious to be pardoned by his false homage to God. The climax of this conflict is reached when he listens to Father Arnall' soul stirring sermons.

In the beginning of chapter-IV, we find Stephen transformed into a saintly figure. The contrast between the sinner that he is in the beginning of the third chapter and the ascetic he becomes in the beginning of fourth chapter is noteworthy. He now leads a life of piety and religious devotion. He mortifies his senses. He overcomes the temptation to sin mortally. But soon he finds himself afflicted with doubts, insecurities, and rebellions. He felt that the devil was still trying hard to make him 'fall'. He is priesthood by the director. This offer accentuates the conflict. In fact, this offer generates yet another conflict—between a theoretical desire to accept this grand offer and a practical realization of his incapacity to do so.

The resolution of the conflict comes when he takes a decision to

reject the priesthood to the church and accepts his father's proposal to join the university. Stephen is escaping from his father and the public house where he has left Simon is the sordid core of the Dublin environment. He is trying to shake off the claims of this environment. At the same, he has become conscious of a breach with his mother, a breach that is related to his decision not to accept a priesthood in the church. Dublin and the Roman Church have failed to provide him with a vision of reality corresponding with his experience. He thinks in terms of a movement beyond these towards another possible synthesis. The epiphany which confronts him now on the beach is a manifestation of his destiny in term of a winged movement. He hears his name Dedalus, called out, and the name seems to be prophetic. He sees the radiant image of a girl standing in a rivulet of tide she seems "like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird".

Finally, chapter V contains a series of epiphanies expressing Stephen's attempt to realize his vocation as artist. Thus, we are given Stephen's vision of create inspiration which finds an outlet in the villanelle and the act of poetic creation is seen as a kind of the ceremony of mass a priest of external imagination, transmuted the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of ever-living life. We should not be surprised at Stephen's secular use of religious terms. This does not show his clinging which he has rejected.

We must not forget the essentially SPIRITUAL nature of Stephens' progress towards an identity, or his self-realization as artist. Spirituality and the artistic experience are not set up as an antithesis in the book. While watching the flight of the birds, Stephen experiences the archetypes of Dedalus and Thoth, god of writers, and perceives that his vocation as an artist demands of him that final terrible form of isolation which is known as exile. Yet Stephen finally embraces his fate with great joy. Stephen has progressed from identity with the ego to identity with self; that is as artist, he has transcended the ego and invokes the aid of the 'old artificer' symbol of the artistic self.

Joyce's doctrine of the epiphany assumes that reality does have wholeness and harmony and that it will radiantly show forth its character and its meaning to the prepared consciousness, for it is only in the body of reality that meaning can occur and only there that the artist can find it. This is essentially a religious interpretation of the nature of reality and of the artist's function. It insists on the objectivity of the wholeness, harmony, and meaning and on the objectivity of the revelation—the divine showing—forth.

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