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A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man As a Modernist Novel

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ABSTRACT

In the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the artist is depicted as a young man. Modernism was modelled after a changing reality in which institutions such as social life, religion, and capitalism were questioned. All of modernism's characteristics are present: a great desire to break the rules; a desire to discover Joyce's works include experimentation in style and form, as well as ways for man's position in life. Many characteristics of modernism in this novel had a significant impact on the modernist movement's evolution, making James Joyce a superior modernist writer. The "stream of consciousness" literary style, themes of universe and individual, exceptionally unique language, and the kunstlerroman narrativesare the most detectable modernist approaches in a portrayal of the artist. James Joyce used internal monologue and stream of consciousness, foreshadowing his later approaches.

Keywords: (Modernism, James Joyce, Stephen Dedalus, stream-of-consciousness, Estrangement)

INTRODUCTION

A wide range of cultural groupings, aesthetic movements, and individual writers and artists aspired to extend and modify their relationship with and portrayal of reality around the turn of the twentieth century, resulting in an international revolution in the arts. The term'modernism' refers to the retroactive integration of these widely disparate artistic attempts into a unified style or social and psychological mood of a'modern' epoch, usually spanning the years 1910 to 1930.

Modernism, according to Bradbury and McFarlane, is "an art of a rapidly modernising world, a world of rapid industrial development, advanced technology, urbanisation, secularisation, and mass forms of social life," as well as "the art of a world from which many traditional certainties had departed, and a certain sort of Victorian confidence not only in mankind's onward progress but in the very solidity and visibility of reality itself has evaporated."This dual condition leads to a central contradiction: depending on context and perspective, modernism can be viewed as a fervent creative impulse to'make it new,' through a determined break with the suffocating artistic conventions of the immediate past and an embrace of the modern, or as literature of crisis and dislocation, desperately insisting on the power of art to give shape to a world that has lost all order and stability. Modernism is not interchangeable with strictly historical references such as 'the early twentieth century or 'the 1920s,'evenit overlaps with them.The term 'high modernism' refers to the standard account of Anglo-American literary experimentation between World Wars I and II, which is marked by a shift away from direct techniques of representation and toward increased abstraction, aesthetic impersonality, and self-reflexivity. The canonical figures of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, as well as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, are often associated with aesthetic formalism.

DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN TOPIC

Many of the ideas of modernist writing are reflected in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The novel's modernist elements affected the modernist movement's development and established Joyce as a renowned modernist writer. The modernist style connects the character of Stephen to Joyce, the artist himself, in this semi-autobiographical novel. The "stream of consciousness" style, kunstlerroman storyline, personalised versus universal themes, and unique language and style are only a few examples of modernist tactics seen in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is Bildungsromanan, which focuses on the main character's life and development. It can also be classified as a Kunstlerroman because the main character is an artist who goes through the years of developing his identity throughout the novel. The novel's plot depicted the life of an artist from his early years to his later years. It also focuses on Stephen Dedalus' spiritual liberation from the ties of family, nationality, and religion, which were the defining qualities of his civilization.Throughout the work, Dedalus is depicted as a monster that is detached from his environment. Joyce portrays young Dedalus as little and weak, not competent at games, continually harassed by senior boys, unable to grasp their jokes and mocking, and despondently lonesome. In his childhood and teens, Joyce portrayed the young artist as a forlorn soul. The world was a mysterious place to him, and people were weird to him. Even his classmates were more powerful than he was. In the psyche of the child Dedalus, this scenario caused a sense of loss and isolation. Dedalus suffered from a severe case of identity loss, which prompted him to continuously remind himself of who he was:

"Stephen Dedalus is my name, Ireland is my nation. Clongowes is my dwelling place and heaven my expectation" (Joyce 9)

One of the modernist features in literature is a sense of estrangement. The boy is frequently depicted as a stranger in his environment. This was a feeling that Dedalus had in the novel. His inner existence and his surroundings were alien to one another, as Joyceskillfullyy depicted when Dedalus, as previously stated, frequently reminded himself of his place in the cosmos by writing the following linen on his books:

"Stephen Dedalus Class of Elements Clongowes Wood College Sallins County Kildare Ireland Europe the World the Universe". (8)

Dedalus also portrayed the novel's modernist character. He was portrayed as a weak and little figure that was unable to put into practice what his classmates could:
"He kept on the fringe of his line, out of the reach of the rude feet, feigning to run now and then. He felt his body small and weak amid the throng of players and his eyes were weak and water" (2)

Dedalus was, without a doubt, a brilliant exemplar of the modern literary character. Dedalus experienced the theme of alienation, exile, and estrangement that characterised people's lives in the twentieth century as a result of his frailty and the sensation of isolation that he felt:

"All the boys seemed to him very strange. They had all fathers and mothers and different clothes and voices. He longed to be at home and lay his head on his mother's lap" (6)

Modern fiction frequently portrays man as nothing more than a specialised animal through naturalism. This animal spends its entire existence in a fruitless battle against natural forces such as genetics and the environment. His most primal instincts, such as hunger and libido, also drive him. Dedalus suffered from agitated libido in the story, which prompted him to commit adultery with a prostitute to satiate his sexual urge, he had no choice but to act like an animal:
"Such moments passed and the wasting fires of lust sprang up again. The verses passed from his lips and the inarticulate cries and the unspoken brutal words rushed forth from his brain to force a passage. His blood was in revolt. He wandered up and down the dark slimy streets peering into the gloom of lanes and doorways, listening eagerly for any sound. He moaned to himself like some baffled prowling beast. He wanted to sign with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin". (82)

In several portions of the work, Stephen Dedalus is shown as a helpless victim of life. He felt enslaved by the forces of his culture and desired to be free of them. He had to break free from the conventions, traditions, and ideals that governed his life to be an artist. As a result, Dedalus cut himself apart from his family, friends, and society, leading to a burning sense of loneliness:

"He saw too his futile isolation. He had not stepped nearer the lives he had sought to approach nor bridged the restless shame and rancour that divided him from mother and brother and sister. He felt that he hardly of the one blood with them but stood to them rather in the mystical kinship of fosterage, foster child and foster brother" (81)

Through Dedalus, Joyce also commented on the absurdity of life. For Joyce, and many other modern writers, life was always viewed as a senseless tragedy that shattered all of humanity's hopes and goals. Their lives were perpetual battles with the cosmos, and their dreams were suffocated and humiliated by the harsh reality of their existence:

“How foolish his aim had been! He had tried to build a breakwater of order and elegance against the sordid tide of life without him and to dam up, by rules of conduct and active interests and new filial relations, the powerful recurrence of the tides within him. From without and from within the water had flowed over barriers: their tides began once more to jostle fiercely above the crumbled mole” (81)

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the artist is depicted as a young man. One of the most fundamental modernist aspects is the "stream of consciousness" approach. "Stream of consciousness" is a narrative technique that aims to "depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings that run through the mind" of a narrator, according to literary criticism. Some reviewers use the terms "stream of consciousness" and "internal monologue" interchangeably. The focus on the individual mind's subjective consciousness has become one of the modernist novel's distinguishing traits, serving as both its primary theme and dominant style. The phrase comes from William James' account of how the mind experiences thoughts, perceptions, memories, associations, and sensations in all of their forms. William James described the conscious experience as continuous and unbroken in *Principles of Psychology* (1890):

'It is nothing jointed; it flows.' The metaphors most commonly used to describe it are "river" and "stream." Let us refer to it as the stream of thought, awareness, or subjective life from now on.' Unlike the intuitive, anti-representational aspect of duration, James' stream of consciousness refers to the never-ending associative flow of our conscious or half-conscious ideas, sensations, and feelings, the mental activity that we are always vaguely aware of.In literary criticism, the concept of stream of consciousness is frequently conflated with the narrative technique of interior monologue, but it is more accurate to think of it as the active subjective life that interior monologue imitates in the symbolic form of language in an attempt to represent it. The novelist's technique of explaining how the protagonist Stephen Dedalus reaches consciousness is significant in this novel, as is Joyce's style of a stream of consciousness. The novelist is not given a straight narrative, a flawless comprehension of what is happening in the first few pages of the novel. Instead, the novelist is presented with a collection of images that are recounted in a disjointed narrative. In the first few pages, we're introduced to Moocow, who smells like an oiled sheet and cuckoo. While this may be disconcerting to the reader, it is very fitting because these pages depict Stephen's early years as an infant, when he is first becoming aware of the world and his role in it. Stephen's discussion of religion and family disputes over Irish freedom, the experience of sin, and consciousness of sin are all done in this form throughout the narrative.

The novel's bildungsroman, or story of puberty and growth, is maintained by Joyce's use of a stream of consciousness format. It also eliminates the necessity for a separate or false narrator, allowing the reader to fully immerse themselves in Stephen's life. The philosophical implications of the novel are paralleled by this technique. Joyce creates a modernist work that questions the legitimacy and development of power systems while also attempting to establish a foundation that critiques these institutional uses of power. This can be seen, for example, in Joyce's criticism of religion and national identity. This is reflected in the stream of consciousness style since we can see that consciousness is not something with a single vision or narration.

The novel's language and style also served to identify it as a "modernist" work. As a common and common literary approach, images and symbols can be used to depict any modern work. As readers, we can note the ornamentation of the language in this work, such as words, recollections, symbols, repeating pictures, and epiphanies:

“A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whose magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller Ansoft-headed as ivory, were bared almost to the hips where the white fringes of her drawers were like feathering of soft white down….” (144-45)

To raise the artistic level of his work, Joyce employed a lot of repeated images. Throughout the film, images of birds, water, and death were continually shown. To indicate Stephen's escape from the middle class and its materialistic worries, he utilised "the image of birds." The "picture of water" reflected Stephen's physical and spiritual environment's negative features, while the "image of death" symbolised his emotional transformation.

The novel's language was utilised in a realistic (Realism) manner to portray Dedalus' intellectual development from "childhood immaturity to artistic knowledge of manhood." Joyce utilised simple vocabularies and emulated the manner of a children's storey at the start of the story:

“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 comingdown along the road met a niceness little boy named babycuckoooo….(1)”.

In this scene, Stephen Dedalus was a youngster. As a result, the narrator's vocabulary, syntax, and diction reveal his immaturity. However, as the narrator matures, the vocabulary grows more complex, shifting from talks of children's stories to philosophical considerations of art and aesthetics. To make the text more adult, the vocabulary and syntax were also altered. Joyce also alluded to the modern approach of borrowing from different cultures and languages, as evidenced by the repeated French or Greek words or the storey of Dedalus, the Greek architect.

In his novel, Joyce also employed peculiar punctuation. He wanted his story to defy all of the traditional novel's rules, including punctuation. At the beginning of paragraphs where he offered character remarks, he omitted quotation marks and replaced them with a lengthy dash. This unusual punctuation style made it difficult for the reader to tell who was speaking and mingled the characters' speeches in the reader's imagination. This style was chosen by Joyce to reflect the flow of ideas and thoughts as they travelled through a character's mind.

In his novel, James Joyce addressed a variety of topics, including the artist and society, coming of age, God and religion, and the essence of sin. The majority of these themes aren't contemporary. However, Joyce employed his style and approaches to mix traditional subjects with a new writing style. For example, Joyce portrayed the concept of sin and repentance in Christianity, but he modified the theme to depict not just the traditional fight between good and evil, but also Dedalus' struggle with religious ties and desire to be free of the Catholic Church's religious restraints.

CONCLUSION

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is a modernist novel, according to the debate above. We can observe as readers that James Joyce did not write a story with a logical storyline and a typical beginning, middle, and end. Instead, he employed the stream of consciousness technique to pick out key episodes in Stephen Dedalus' life. By doing so, James Joyce rejected the chronologically structured plot that dominated most nineteenth-century novels. Joyce stressed his goal to write a novel that focused on the protagonist's inner self and psychological identity. In the projection of Stephen Dedalus and his artistic goal, this concentration was completely shown. The stream of consciousness and the interior monologue developed the novel through the portrayal of the central character's ideas, dreams, and fancies in the novel's narrative style. This was combined with the novel's syntax and diction, which fluctuated from infantile speech to sophisticated English depending on Dedalus' age and experience. It is also self-evident that a thorough examination of this novel entails a thorough examination of Joyce's character and life. Skillfully blended his artistic ingenuity and literary aptitude to create a masterpiece that lingered in many readers' minds and imaginations. Finally, the novel might be viewed as a portrayal of Joyce's life as well as a proclamation of independence from all of the conventions and norms that governed the novel as a literary genre. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is still regarded as one of the most important and valuable works of twentieth-century literature, as well as the history of modernism as a literary movement, many years after its publication.

WORK CONSULTED

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