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“The Development and Disillusionment of the Artist- A Study of Stephen Dedalus’ Transformations During and In-between A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses”

The development of the Artist, while a seemingly directed trajectory of fledging, stumbling student to soaring master artist, can be much more cyclical in nature. This holds true for Stephen Daedalus throughout Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses. Through the two books, we see Stephen mature from a devote Jesuit schoolboy into the ex-patriot artist that comes back to Ireland at the beginning of Ulysses. Stephen’s development in becoming an artist is spurred mainly by his burgeoning aesthetic theory, which culminates and is expounded upon in Chapter 5 of Portrait. Prior to Chapter 5, a look at Stephen’s Religious and Familial background set the foundation for which his aesthetic theory is built upon. This aesthetic theory, that one’s aesthetics are based in their own reality, which through differences of experiences and background might completely differ from another’s. It is then through looking at Stephen’s writing, namely his poem and journal entries that his now established aesthetic theory is visible.

Once out of Portrait, Joyce gives a different view of Stephen and raises the question, what type of person has Stephen become? Also, why is Stephen now shown as a minor character and only present in a few of the chapters of Ulysses? To answer these questions, a look at the Proteus chapter of Ulysses, along with a few highlights from the other Stephen-centric passages, is needed to show us his continued development as an Artist and the shifts in his ways of thinking. By pulling together both works, I show the cyclical nature of Stephen’s development as an artist.