

Joyce* Annotated

* NOTES FOR
Dubliners
AND
*A Portrait of the Artist
as a Young Man*

SECOND EDITION
REVISED AND ENLARGED

Don Gifford

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JOYCE ANNOTATED

Preface to the Second Edition

Since publication of the first edition of this annotation in 1967, responses from colleagues, students, and correspondents have made it clear that I had assembled something less than a thorough working annotation of *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The subsequent experience of preparing *Notes for Joyce: Ulysses* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974) made the shortcomings of the first annotations even more disturbingly clear. Obviously, the shortcomings resulted from lack of information, from insufficient saturation in Dublin detail, and from failure to perceive many occasions when Joyce's text might have been made more accessible by annotation. Gradually, I came to realize that I was missing "occasions" not only because I lacked information or awareness, but also because in the earlier fictions Joyce was being too offhand and too subtle. He was not consistently attentive to how much a reader might miss, to how much the suggestive potential of cryptic allusion and "mere detail" depended on the writer's ability to alert the reader, to provide frames of reference, markers, and clues which indicate how the text is to be read, how the trivial and the cryptic could be made to resonate.

Joyce was aware of the literary use he wanted to make of what he called "trivial things" (see p. 3 below), and the technique is there at striking moments in *Dubliners*: in the coin in Corley's hand, the clay in Maria's saucer, but it is the technique of the apprentice, not yet the technique of the master. The two published versions of "The Sisters"¹ provide a case in point. *The Irish Homestead* version (13 August 1904; see Appendix) grew up to become the lead story of *Dubliners* by a process characteristic of Joyce, who, as he rewrote, packed a relatively spare narrative with sugges-

1. There is an intermediate manuscript draft of "The Sisters" in the Joyce Collection at the Yale University Library, number Eza in the Slocum-Cahoon *Bibliography*.

tive detail. Several added details suggest that the paralysis from which Father Flynn suffers is not the *result* of the three strokes he has suffered but the *cause* because it is "general paralysis of the insane," or paresis, syphilis of the central nervous system. Old Cotter's innuendoes and the circumlocutions of the other adults in the story are not enough, however, to alert us to the significance of the priest's symptoms; those symptoms might still be read as evidence that the priest is senile, and the suspicions which the adults in the story have of the priest can be put down wholly to what in part they are, Irish anti-intellectualism. To realize the symptoms as those of a specific disease, we need the contrast between the two versions of the story and some prodding by informed critics.² But even when the "trivial things" click together as paresis, the story is not *solved* or foreclosed, because paresis does not reduce the old priest to a physical disease but establishes a physical disease which in turn is to resonate as a disease of the spirit and contribute to a heightening of what to the Irish imagination is "the fearfully potent image of the excommunicated or silenced priest."³ Still, when paresis springs out of the symptoms interpolated into the final version of the story, there is the danger that the revelation will refuse to take its place within the web of significances in the story as a whole—including, for example, the suggestive linkage between "paralysis" and "simony" in the boy's "ears" or the fact that Father Flynn as a young man from a background of poverty showed enough promise to merit training at the prestigious Irish College in Rome.

What I am trying to suggest is that, while "the significance of trivial things" is at the core of the literary technique of *Dubliners* and *A Portrait*, things-significant are not as clearly framed or marked as they are in *Ulysses*, and, as a consequence, it is more difficult to strike a balance between overinterpretation and underinterpretation. The temptation to invent significances for one's own self-aggrandizement is very strong, as is the countertemptation to return the stories to a minimally literal base. For example, echoes of the romance of Tristan and Iseult are present in "A Painful Case." Mr. Duffy lives in Chapelizod (Iseult's Chapel), where at least one Irish version of the legend says Tristan and Iseult consummated their love, and Phoenix Park (the site of the legendary Forest of Tristan, into which Tristan retreated in despair) is also the site of the final confrontation between and separation of Mrs. Sinico and Mr. Duffy and the site of Duffy's devastating self-realization at the story's end. It is therefore tempting to hear echoes of Tristan and Iseult in all the story's details, but the pres-

2. Burton A. Waisbren and Florence L. Walzl, "Paresis and the Priest: James Joyce's Symbolic Use of Syphilis in 'The Sisters,'" *Annals of Internal Medicine* 80 (June 1974): 758-62.

3. Tom MacIntyre, Irish man of letters, in conversation, September 1977.

ence of that bit of Arthurian legend is not to "A Painful Case" as *The Odyssey* is to *Ulysses*. The aura of the Tristan legend is evoked as grace note rather than exploited throughout as, by contrast, the towering presence of Parnell is exploited in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," conjured up to preside over the hopelessly cramped confines of the Committee Room in Wicklow Street. Another example of an allusion in passing: Stanislaus Joyce remarks that "Grace" has "an obvious touch of parody of The Divine Comedy."⁴ The "touch" may be there in Mr. Kernan's fall down the lavatory stairs in the first part of the story (*Inferno*), in Kernan's convalescence in the second part (*Purgatorio*), and in his achievement of the beatific vision in the third part, "the distant speck of red light which was suspended before the high altar" (*Paradiso*). But the parody, while demonstrable, seems to stop there and to remain an in-joke between brothers rather than a pervasively informative presence in the story.

In the prefaces to the first edition of this annotation and to the annotation of *Ulysses* I tried to list at least some of those to whom I have been indebted for information, advice, and reproof. But the list has expanded in so many directions that it threatens to outrun memory, and I hesitate to compile it for fear the list, like the annotations themselves, can never be complete, let alone give each his due.

D. G.
June 1980

4. *Recollections of James Joyce by His Brother* (New York, 1950), p. 20.

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Introduction

THE NOTES AND THEIR USE

The primary intention of this volume is to provide a semi-encyclopedia that will inform a reading of *Dubliners* and of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. As they stood in 1967 and as they stand now, the notes are not complete, and undoubtedly some of the completed notes will prove inadequate or inaccurate. But the vernacular world of the Dublin on which Joyce so heavily depended for his vocabularies is rapidly receding out of living memory, and the effort to catch the nuances of those vocabularies before they are permanently lost is timely in its importance.

The annotated passages are presented in the sequence of the fictions themselves—not unlike the footnotes at the bottom of the pages of an edition of Shakespeare or Milton; thus this book is designed to be laid open beside the Joyce texts and to be read in conjunction with those texts. That method of reading has its disadvantages. It threatens a reader not only with interruption but also with distortion, since details which are mere grace notes of suggestion in the fictions may be overemphasized by the annotation. Several compromises suggest themselves here: one is to follow an interrupted reading with an uninterrupted reading; another is to read through a sequence of the notes before reading the annotated sequence in the fictions.

I have tried to balance on the knife edge of factual annotation and to avoid interpretive comment. This is something of a legal fiction since it can hardly be said that the notes do not imply interpretations or that they have not derived from interpretations in the first place;¹ but the intention

1. See the headnote to *A Portrait*, pp. 129–31 below, for a notable instance of the shadow zone between annotation and interpretation.

has been to keep the notes “neutral” so that they will inform rather than direct a reading. For example: the speaker in “Araby” remarks that he liked *The Memoirs of Vidocq* more than he liked *The Abbot* or *The Devout Communicant* because the pages of *The Memoirs* were “yellow,” i.e., because the book appealed to a romantic fascination with antiquities. The notes to this passage in *Dubliners* indicate *The Memoirs* to be the least aged of the three books; the notes also state that *The Memoirs* are “inauthentic and/or unreliable,” compiled in the interest of exciting and titillating an audience rather than in the interest of autobiographical accuracy. The neutrality of the “annotation” dictates that the reader be left to draw his own conclusions about the suggestiveness of these details, even though the details themselves can be read as implying that the boy has a preference for romantic fakes with little perception of the objects he observes (as subsequently in the story he romantically distorts “Mangan’s sister” and “Araby,” with little perception of their realities). The preference for *The Memoirs* thus can be regarded as a detail which is a clue to the way the boy participates in the processes of his own paralysis, but the notes, if they are to be informative rather than interpretative, should leave this development of the detail to the reader, since the detail does not have “meaning” in itself apart from its interrelations with the total context of the story (and with the whole of *Dubliners* as, in turn, the story’s context).

The suggestive potential of minor details was, of course, enormously fascinating to Joyce, and the precision of his use of detail is a most important aspect of his literary method (see p. vii above). Early in his career Joyce frequently used religious metaphors for the artist and his processes, and in *Stephen Hero* he couched this fascination with detail in the religious term “epiphanies”—minor details that achieve for a moment a suggestive potential all out of proportion to their actual scale. “By an epiphany he [Stephen Daedalus] meant a sudden spiritual manifestation” when the “soul” or “whatness” of an object “leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance.”² This passage suggests Joyce’s fascination with the ways in which what he called “trivial things” could be invested with significance. But the term “epiphany” has been overquoted to the point where it has become remarkably fuzzy; it is not clear whether the “soul” which is made manifest is inherent in the object itself, or in the artist’s response to the object’s potential as metaphor, or in the response of a character within a fiction, or in the response of the reader to a revelatory moment in the fic-

2. *Stephen Hero* (New York, 1963), p. 211. In 1904 Joyce used the pseudonym Stephen Daedalus when the first versions of “The Sisters,” “Eveline,” and “After the Race” were published in *The Irish Homestead*. He used the same spelling for the protagonist of *Stephen Hero* (1904–5), but when he came to recast *Stephen Hero* as *A Portrait*, Joyce changed the spelling to “Dedalus” and separated his hero by one letter from the “cunning artificer” of Greek mythology.

tion. For example, the end of "Araby" raises the possibility of several questions; is the "epiphany," or "sudden spiritual manifestation," the "soul" of the tawdry, exhausted commercialism inherent in the bazaar? or is it Joyce's perception of the bazaar as the "soul" of romance Dublin-style? or is it the boy-narrator's romantic disillusionment when he reaches the bazaar? or is it our perception as readers of the disparities between the boy's expectations and responses on the one hand and Mangan's sister and the bazaar (and perhaps even the boy's own disillusionment) as objects on the other hand? The term "epiphany" tends to blur rather than direct answers to these questions because its scale as metaphor distracts us from what Joyce is really after—the "significance of trivial things" and the literary techniques involved in developing that significance.

It is notable that Joyce dropped the term "epiphany" from Stephen's discussion of his aesthetic theory in *A Portrait* and that Stephen mocks the adolescent pretentiousness of his book of epiphanies in *Ulysses* (p. 40.)³ Joyce did begin to compile a "book of epiphanies" (1900–1903) in which he attempted to record minor moments in such a way as to develop (without explicitly or discursively so stating) their metaphoric potential. He did not abandon his collection of epiphanies (the dream moments at the end of *A Portrait* are culled from those notebook fragments), but his interest in the ideal of artistic detachment displaced the overstatement of "a sudden spiritual manifestation" in favor of a precise attention to the handling of detail together with the author's refusal to point, evaluate, or interpret in any direct way the meaning of a detail.

When he was working on the stories that were to comprise *Dubliners*, Joyce said to his brother Stanislaus:

Do you see that man who has just skipped out of the way of the tram? Consider, if he had been run over, how significant every act of his would at once become. I don't mean for the police inspector. I mean for anybody who knew him. And his thoughts, for anybody that could know them. It is my idea of the significance of trivial things that I want to give the two or three unfortunate wretches who may eventually read me.⁴

The technical difficulty was how to let the man in the fiction skip "out of the way of the tram" and yet give the reader the sense of "the significance of trivial things" consequent on the man's having been "run over." If we are to count ourselves among the "unfortunate wretches," we have to strike

3. Page references to *Ulysses* are to the Modern Library edition (New York, 1961) and to the subsequent Vintage edition. To locate all the appearances in *Ulysses* of characters mentioned in *Dubliners* and *A Portrait* consult Shari Benstock and Bernard Benstock, *Who's He When He's at Home: A James Joyce Directory* (Urbana, Ill., 1980).

4. Quoted from Stanislaus Joyce's *Diary* in Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York, 1959), p. 169.

a dynamic and ever-shifting balance between the sense that trivial details are (and should remain) trivial and the sense that they are capable of revelatory metaphoric significance. What makes the balance difficult is that the excitement attendant on the recognition of a significance can so easily make us forget that the man has only figuratively, not literally, been run over by the tram.

BIOGRAPHY

Joyce depended heavily on the people, events, and environments in his own life for models of the characters and events of his fictions. This is a commonplace of scholarship on Joyce, and indeed much of that scholarship has been devoted to researching Joyce's personal environments and to identifying the autobiographical elements in his work. The notes in this volume intentionally neglect this phase of scholarship on Joyce. Presumably every novelist relies to some extent on the range and vocabulary of his personal experience. In this respect Joyce is not different in kind from other novelists, although he may well be so different in degree as to appear different in kind. But once the event or the person (or even the stick of "Dublin street furniture") is transferred from "fact" to the page (and inevitably transformed in the process), the "true" nature of the event or person loses much of its relevance for the reader who is attempting to grasp the forms and meanings inherent in the fiction itself. This is particularly true if one grants Joyce the achievement of his ideal of artistic detachment.

The "facts" do remain relevant to a study of the writer's biography and of his habits and processes as a writer, and that study can contribute to an understanding of the writer's works, but the contribution is primarily indirect. To know that Cranly is a partial portrait of John Francis Byrne or that Lynch is a partial portrait of Vincent Cosgrave does not particularly illuminate a reading of Chapter V of *A Portrait* since the "truth to life" (or at least the plural truth—other perspectives, other views) of the two sitters would require a thoroughness and immediacy of observation of them that is probably beyond the capacity of scholarship and certainly beyond the capacity of the well-informed reader. Furthermore, this whole tangled question of Joyce's personal life and its relation to his work has been re-tangled by the comments and objections of several of the people whose partial portraits Joyce rendered in ways that were not always exactly flattering.⁵

5. See the writings of Stanislaus Joyce; John Francis Byrne, *The Silent Years* (New York, 1953); Eugene Sheehy, *May It Please the Court* (Dublin, 1951); Oliver St. John Gogarty, *As I Was Going down Sackville Street* (New York, 1937) and *Mourning Became Mrs. Spendlove* (New York, 1948). See also Ellmann's sources in *James Joyce, passim*.

MacCann and Davin provide splendid examples of the ways in which the retrospect of history could distort a reading of Chapter V of *A Portrait*. MacCann is a partial portrait of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington (1878–1916); Davin, of George Clancy (d. March 1921). Sheehy-Skeffington was shot without trial (murdered by a deranged British officer) during the Easter 1916 Rebellion in Dublin because Sheehy-Skeffington's pacifism compelled him to urge British soldiers to stop looting. Clancy, as Nationalist mayor of Limerick, was "foully murdered, by the Black and Tans at night in his home before the eyes of his family" (Byrne, p. 55). The "facts" of the two deaths could easily be read back into *A Portrait*, deepening the shadows in the prior fictional careers of MacCann and Davin. But those careers do not point "ineluctably" toward the untimely and pointless violence of the deaths of the two men. The modern reader should be distant enough from the Dublin of 1900 and its rich play of personality to be able to face Joyce's work squarely as the "fiction" which it is, and to refuse to let the retrospect of fact cloud the prospect of fiction.

The imposition of autobiographical time on fictional time can also distort the way *A Portrait* is read. The fragment of *Stephen Hero* that remains to us is cast in a picaresque narrative time which is a familiar way of imitating the chronological succession of day-to-day, season-to-season in autobiographical time. The narrative time of *A Portrait* does not attempt to imitate chronological continuity; it is discontinuous, episodic, a sequence of portraits rather than a flow of happenings. (To reflect the episodic nature of the novel, the notes to *A Portrait* in this volume are organized not only into five chapters but also into subchapters: I:A, I:B, I:C, etc.)

In autobiographical time Joyce spent three years at Clongowes Wood College (September 1888–June 1891). In *A Portrait* those three years are focused (and summed up) as an afternoon-night-morning in October (chapter I:B) and a Wednesday morning-early-afternoon during Lent—of the following year?—(chapter I:D). Obviously the novel does not ask us to follow a succession of events in autobiographical time but a sequence of tableaux in which the climate of that-time-of-life and the textures of that-phase-of-the-mind are imaged. Nor does it matter that the death of Parnell (October 1891) is an anachronism in I:B (because in autobiographical time Joyce left Clongowes four months before Parnell's death). That death is appropriate in fictional time because it provides an image of the shadowy presence that the world of Irish politics had for the child, Stephen—appropriate to the child-as-child and structurally appropriate as prelude to the political and religious donnybrook of the Christmas dinner in I:C.

The autobiographical years at Belvedere College (1893–98) are focused as one night in May (autobiographically, 1898) in II:C. The five days of Chapter III are also autobiographically Belvedere time (the retreat itself,

30 November–3 December 1896). And here Joyce has juggled time (or paid little attention to it) in the fiction. St. Francis Xavier's feast day, 3 December, fell on Thursday in 1896. In the novel it falls on Saturday; that would mean it is 1898, but it could not have been in Joyce-time because Joyce was already a student at University College, Dublin. As an expanded episode the retreat fits the episodic pattern of the novel, but the narrative presentation of the retreat also imitates chronological succession. The function of this sustained narrative at the structural center of the novel would seem to be that chapters III and IV : A (its afterglow) are to stand not only as tableaux of that phase-in-life but also as sustained and concentrated images of the all-pervasive and fearful presence of religion for Stephen during his coming-of-age in the novel.

In *A Portrait* succession in chronological-autobiographical time is not as important as the succession and juxtaposition of tableaux, of portraits. Subchapters IV : B and IV : C provide paired portraits of Stephen at the end of his time at Belvedere. Chapter V presents four portraits located in University College time (1898–1902), but the “Thursday” of V : A and the evening in Lent of V : C are not precisely located, though clearly we are meant to sense them as toward the end of that phase-of-life. Here again the attempt at a direct correlation of fictional time and autobiographical time could mislead. Stephen's diary in V : D begins on 20 March, which (whether Joyce was aware or not) was a Thursday in 1902 (the autobiographical year of departure). One way to underscore the fictional nature of time in *A Portrait* (and to suggest that it does not matter which calendar year) is to point to the fact that Good Friday and Easter must inevitably fall within the time covered by Stephen's diary, and Stephen takes no notice of those notable days in the liturgical calendar (other than to notice the season as the time when he should do his Easter Duty but refuses).⁶

Far more important to a reading of *A Portrait* than a knowledge of autobiographical time is a sense of the political and cultural climate in Ireland at the turn of the century. The collapse of Parnell's leadership in the Great Split of December 1890, the factional bitterness engendered by the Split and exacerbated by what the faithful regarded as Parnell's martyrdom in October 1891 plunged Ireland into at least a decade of political disorientation. The cultural climate was politicized by the rise of the Gaelic League (1893ff.) and by deliberate intensification of Irish cultural self-consciousness. The artistic climate was characterized by conflicting claims: of the nationalists who demanded an art in the service of a national self-image, of

6. If it were 1902, the entry for 30 March would be the entry for Easter Sunday, and the final entry would be (27 April) a Sunday.

the Catholic and Protestant moralists who demanded an art that would inculcate Victorian morality, of the symbolists who urged an art-for-art's-sake aestheticism—as against the naturalism of Ibsen and Zola and its rejection of what Ibsen called “the aesthetic” in favor of “the ethical, the prophetic.”⁷ In this connection it is notable that Stephen's preoccupation with Ibsen is as absent from *A Portrait* as it is present in *Stephen Hero* (and in Joyce's own personal interests).

There are, of course, exceptions to this no-biography rule in these notes, particularly when the persons or events Joyce used as raw materials have a public or historical existence that provides meaningful perspectives or points of reference. In general, however, it seems more intelligent to examine Joyce's complex relations to his raw materials in separate study—tributary to but apart from a direct reading of the works themselves, and for that study there is no better place to begin than with Richard Ellmann's splendid biography, *James Joyce* (New York, 1959).

References to *Stephen Hero* have also been omitted from these notes on the basis that a comparative study of that fragment and *A Portrait* is more appropriate to a study of Joyce's development as an artist than it is illuminating to a reading of *A Portrait* itself. Indeed, it has proven all too easy to distort readings of *A Portrait* by importing particulars if not “facts” from *Stephen Hero*; see the discussion of “epiphany” above, pp. 2–4, for one example of this distortion. Another example: in *A Portrait* Stephen's “beloved” is called “Emma” three times in two pages in III : B; otherwise, she is “she,” never “Emma Clery” as she is in *Stephen Hero*, though once she is “E—— C——” when Stephen addresses a poem to her in II : B. In *A Portrait* she is on stage only twice: at the end of V : A and the beginning of V : C (and then only fleetingly). Heron and Wallis see her in II : C. For the rest she is present only in Stephen's recall and in his imagination. But the tradition of referring to her as Emma Clery persists in Joyce criticism and brings with it the temptation to import particulars from *Stephen Hero* in order to lend flesh and blood to the appropriately ghostly presence of E—— C——. Many critics assume, for example, that the reason she snubs Stephen in favor of Cranly in *A Portrait* V : C is because Stephen has offended her by proposing one night of passion as he does in *Stephen Hero*, pp. 197–99. This gives her a dramatic will of her own which in *A Portrait* she does not enjoy unless one counts her “reply to Cranly's greeting” in V : C as response to the fact that Stephen, preoccupied with his “confessor,” Cranly, has not raised his hat to greet her. As her “image” floats through *A Portrait*, she is a technical triumph, a *tour de force* reflection of

7. Ibsen in a letter to Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, 12 September 1865, q. in *Brand*, translated by G. M. Gathorne-Hardy (Seattle, 1966), p. 14.

the narcissism of the adolescent poetic imagination, 1890s style. To import her name and an independent flesh-and-blood voice from *Stephen Hero* is to deny Joyce an artistic triumph and to distort a reading of *A Portrait*.

IRELAND AND EXILE

The contemporary American reader may very well be baffled by Stephen Dedalus's dramatic insistence (and Joyce's personal insistence) on exile from Ireland as precondition for artistic enterprise. Why, we might ask, couldn't the artist both remain in Ireland and maintain his artistic integrity? Wasn't there some underground that could be discovered or created? Or is this insistence on exile a latter-day Byronism? One answer to those questions is reflected in the figure of Gabriel Conroy in "The Dead." Like Stephen (and Joyce) he is put off by the Gaelic League and its self-conscious attempts to revive the Irish language and to revive a truly "Irish" culture. Unlike Joyce, Gabriel has remained in Ireland, where he is teased by the militant Gaels (Molly Ivors) as a "West Briton" (a proponent of English culture *and* English rule). Gabriel has not evolved into a writer but into a literary journalist. At best his literary independence is clouded by an inevitable association with the politics of *The Daily Express*, the conservative, pro-British newspaper for which he writes reviews in fiction (and for which Joyce wrote reviews in fact). At worst Gabriel is shown as an insecure panderer to the tastes and demands of the middle-class world around him—as he worries about quoting "that difficult poet," Browning, and tailors his after-dinner speech at his aunts' annual dance so that it won't be "above the heads of his hearers."

Cultural-political confusion would seem to be part of the answer to the question: why exile for the Irish artist? since the Irish revival movement was as covertly political as it was overtly cultural. Any display of cultural (artistic) independence would have immediate political overtones whether they were intended or not. And there was also a corollary problem: English was, in a root way, the language and culture of Joyce and his literate Irish contemporaries, just as it is for the contemporary American. The self-conscious attempt to deny those English roots and to replace them with Irish "roots" was the attempt to substitute an artificial medium for the natural medium (even though the connotations of the English medium were sometimes difficult to accept). One wonders what would have happened in the United States had post-Revolutionary hotheads been successful in their advocacy of French (or German) as the official language of the newly born republic?

The religious environment of turn-of-the-century Ireland adds an interesting dimension to the problem that would have faced the artist-in-