

James Joyce as a novelist: - A Portrait of an artist as a young man. (7)

James Joyce is a pioneer of modern English novel and occupies an important position in the 20th Century. Fictional world. He has first hand knowledge of social, religious and economic condition of Irish people and personal experiences of all the vicissitudes of human life. His novels reveal his creative art and narrative technique and, at the same time, paint a true picture of Irish society. Undoubtedly, his 'A Portrait of an artist as a young man' is an autobiographical novel that demonstrates his rebellious attitude against the existing condition in his fatherland which is, in ^{no} way, conducive to the growth of an artist's ^{fictional} imagination. This novel is a master piece of his writings. Here, he has used the stream of consciousness technique, myths, images, symbols and motifs that enable him to move freely into the past and the present to depict the actual thoughts and actions of his characters. Let us see some of his important traits as a novelist.

James Joyce has elaborately used the stream of consciousness technique in 'A Portrait of an artist as a young man'. The technique is also called an 'Internal Monologue'. It is based on the modern psychology that testifies that human mind does not work in a logical manner. It jumps from one idea to another with lightning speed. In fact, the novelist takes the readers to the mind of the character and makes them see the mind's reactions to various ideas and situations. The novelist does not show his thoughts, feelings, musings, memories, recollections and speculations in sequences, but as they actually come to his mind. Stephen's day's dreams take us frequent into his past and future. While he is in the school, he thinks of returning home during the holidays. This thought produces reverie in him and the description gives the impression that he is already at home. See the following lines.

"All people; welcome home, Stephen! Noises of welcome."

(8)

His mother kissed him. Was that right? His father was a marshal now! higher than a magistrate. Welcome home, Stephen!

Joyce has effected unity in his novels by introducing motifs, the words, ideas or images which are used in the beginning and then repeated again and again serving as unifying factors. There are several motifs in 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man', recurring throughout the novel. For example, on the very first page we are introduced to the motifs of light and fire and their opposites darkness and punishment. Darkness also stands for blindness. Dante tells Stephen when he is only a child that if he thinks of marrying a Protestant girl the eagles will pluck out his eyes. Throughout his life, Stephen is worried about his vision. In the school, he breaks his spectacles, so he does not work in the class and is punished by the Rector. He is always afraid of darkness. Light and fire also stand for knowledge and insight.

Joyce has successfully and effectively made extensive use of images, symbols and myths in his novels that play important parts. For example, we see that as the mythical Daedalus flew away from his captivity, Stephen, the hero of this novel wants to escape from the bondage of family, nation and Church, to work as an artist with individual freedom. Similarly, the symbols of Roses and Birds are marvellously used. The Rose is associated with the beauty of woman as well as that of art. The green rose symbolises Ireland whereas the white one suggests Catholic purity. The rose also stands for Stephen's inspiration for art and his ideal for beauty. In the same way, the bird symbolises unpleasantly in the first half of the novel, but in the second half, suggests his liberation from the bondage.

Another important feature of Joyce's art is his use

of Epiphany, a device ^① that leads to the sudden revelation of some truth which makes an important impact on the characters in a moment of crisis. In other words, when the character is in a fix, he gets unexpected illumination and finds out the path he should tread on. Thus, Stephen receives an offer to become a Jesuit Priest that may solve his material problems as well as will endow him with secret power and knowledge. But his spirit revolts against the passionless life of Jesuit Fathers. He is confused, bewildered and undecided. But when he sees a beautiful girl wading in water as a sea-bird, he feels a spiritual change and visualises his life with almost clarity. That is he will not be a priest of church but a priest of imagination, an art.

Joyce is a master of Prose. He does not use the uniform style for the entire novel. What a character speaks at a particular time shows the stage of his mental development at that time. We find, in 'Portrait', that the language used by Joyce Stephen as an infant is different from that he uses as a school student and, furthermore, it is refined and excellent when he shows mental maturity. He uses the befitting words to the age, situation and mood of his character. He measures and judges the significance of each word and then writes it down. He also uses puns frequently because he wants to say several things at the same time. Though Joyce has been criticised for being coarse and vulgar, but an impartial study reveals that he is psychologically disinterested in goodness and badness, ugliness or beauty. Like a scientist, he describes these objects as revealed by his mind searching microscope.

Thus, we see that James Joyce is a great novelist of the modern age. His technique of novel writing has had a profound effect on the nove-

novelists all over the world. His ¹⁰ 'A Portrait of
an artist as a young man' is a master piece of
the fictional world.