

SAMPLE JOURNAL ENTRY

Teacher's Name Mr. Kempe

Date June 30, 2009

Title of book and pages read *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: 178 - 187*

Today I read the passage in which young Stephen Daedalus makes up his mind to go to the University. The decision is significant because it means he will be going against the wishes of his family, who wanted him to stay in the seminary and become a priest. He uses a very significant Latin phrase, *non serviam* (I will not serve), to indicate the intensity of his emotion. Stephen has been moving towards this moment of decision throughout the novel. I realize now that the author had been preparing us for this moment. Joyce had been showing us all the ways in which Stephen thought he might find security and peace, but these ways were all ideas that other people had for him. They were not his own. Now, he knows who he must be: an artist. And he knows that he must be responsible for his decision.

The very moment that Stephen decides to move on, to know and accept himself, he experiences the world differently. His throat “throbs”; his heart “trembles”; he feels that his “soul is in flight.” The author uses this language to let us know that Stephen is radically transformed. He also notices details that he had never seen before: people swimming, the wet gleam of rocks by the ocean, the salt in matted hair. I felt Stephen’s joy and enthusiasm through the author’s use of descriptive language.

My reading today reminded me of my friend, Josh, who told me the other day how he had finally realized that only he could take responsibility for his actions. He also said that when this happened, he didn’t feel more confined; he actually felt more free. I think this must be what Mr. Kempe meant when he talked about paradox: two feelings that don’t seem as though they ought to be related to one another, and yet they are.

Well, I guess I’ll have to tell him I finally “got it” this summer. I can’t wait to find out tomorrow what Stephen’s life at the University will be like.

