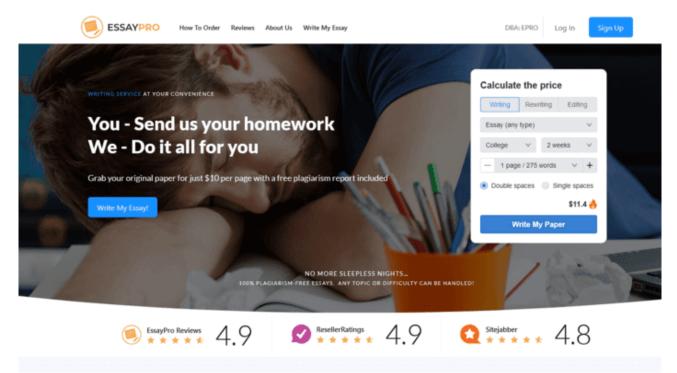
Portrayal of Women in James Joyce's Ulysses



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The novel, "Ulysses", by James Joyce shows the reader hour by hour a single day in the life of one man. But this epic which specifically deals with Leopold Bloom and has reference to Stephen Dedalus, holds so much more appendage to other areas of life. One, is the <u>portrayal</u> of women in Ulysses. A common speculation is that men seem to have a more dominating status over women. However, in Ulysses that theory dwindles due to the women who play significant roles in the story. Although the women in the novel all use various tactics to entice the men to succumb and cower to them, it all ends up that the men do heed to the qualifying factors.

The first woman of purpose that we become aware of is Stephen <u>Dedalus</u>'s mother. Even though she is dead, her presence is accounted for in Stephen's night and day dreams. His refusal to pray at her bedside while she was dying triggered an immense amount of guilt that he cannot shake. His undeniable brooding over her was shown when he remembered the song by W.B. Yeats, " and no more...the brazen cars." In the annotated text it claims that, "The song, accompanied by a harp, is sung to comfort the countess, who has sold her soul to the powers of the darkness that her people might have food." That song is

important because he is trying to lift the blame from his heart by reaching out for forgiveness. The book then tells of a "bowl with bitter waters." That bowl implies what is told in "Portrait of a Young Man", which is that his mother was an adulteress, and that recollection was bothering him. He even goes as far to say aloud, "No mother, let me be and let me live." It seems that he wants to escape her clutches, yet is clinging...

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... get away with acting disdainful and speaking to Bloom with a harsh tongue, but he does not leave her. In fact, he does cower, and takes her, illicit affairs and all.

The men in "Ulysses" are viewed as the warriors, or bread-winners, yet they are only characterized as that due to the women in the novel. Many of the women are able to be looked upon as the "hierarchy" in a sense because of the way the people around them reacted. It is said that whenever there is an action, there is a reaction. As cliché as that may be, the women were the ones that created the "action" and the men rebutted with the "reaction". Despite the social conventions that most of us are familiar with pertaining to men and women, "Ulysses", can surely counteract with notable arguments.

Works Cited

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