

# James Joyce and Modern Fiction

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Please Silence Cell Phones

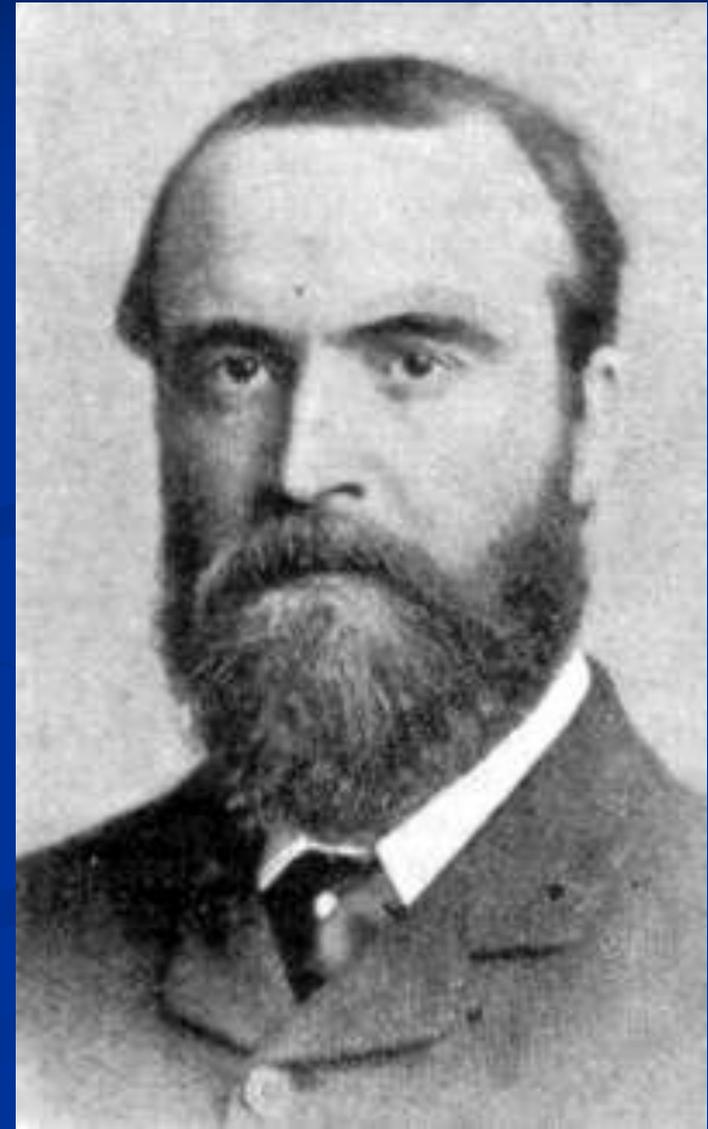
# Biography, 1882-1941

- Family life and the façade of Middle Class Pretense
- Jesuit education
- University College in Dublin
- Left for Paris in 1902
- Nora Barnacale; married in 32
- Lived in Europe as journalist and writer



## Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland

- Family, Church and Irish Nationalism: he loves all three but also reacts against them
- Irish nationalist Charles Stewart Parnell
- Infidelity and gender tension in the family
- Catholic Church was suspect in the eyes of nationalists for ‘conspiring with English’



# Joyce and Modern Art

- Like Dadaism, the “point” is no longer to “mean” anything precisely; it is the “process” of making meaning that is of interest to Joyce
- Just as artists are abandoning traditional forms, he is abandoning the structures of literature such as character, plot and setting



# Works

- *Dubliners*: collection of short stories set in Dublin; more narrative than the rest of his work; 1914
- *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1914-1915, semi-autobiographical; stream-of-consciousness narrative; psychological;
- *Ulysses*, 1922; first published in France because of Censorship; major theme: adultery; very loosely based upon Homer's *Odyssey*.
- *Finnegans Wake*, 1939; narrative and plot are completely obscured; verbal play; experimentation with language, embedded meaning, playful

# Dubliners

- Series of short stories
- His intent was to provide a “moral history” of Ireland
- Editor objected to the “stark realism—or sordidness—of several scenes”
- “The Boarding House”: daughter of the home has an affair and gets pregnant; mother forces the young man, a clerk, to marry her

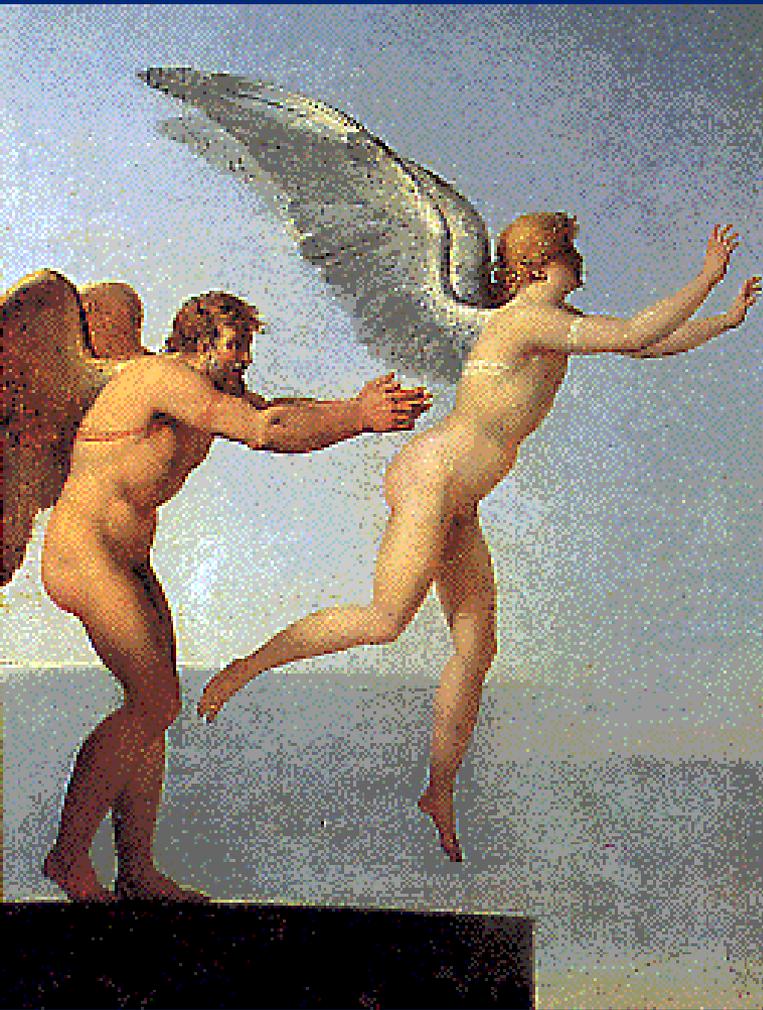
# “The Dead”

- Gabriel , a professor, goes to an annual New Year’s dinner hosted by his Aunts
- Alienation: he is out of place in terms of class and also ethnicity; his Irishness is under challenge (Miss Ivors)
- Epiphany: Song: “The Lass of Aughrim”; Wife, Greta, tells of a young man, Michael Furey, who loved her.
- Who are “The Dead”? Gabriel and Greta? The Irish? Everyone?

# Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man

- Praised by Yeats, H.G. Wells, and Ezra Pound; yet, rejected by every publisher in London
- Published in New York, 1916
- Autobiographical
- Rejection of Family, Religion, and Nation
- Stephen starts out wanting to be a priest; goes through a period of sexual experimentation; has an epiphany and becomes an ascetic; sees a girl and has another epiphany
- Leaves Ireland to go to Paris and pursue writing

# Name: Stephan Daedalus



- Greek Myth: Daedalus was an inventor and scientist
- Represents the aspirations of the Artist
- The artistic attempt to attain spiritual transcendence and its failure
- Joyce as a young artist

# Ulysses

- Banned in England, Ireland and the US; 1933 ruling by a Federal judge found the book's language was justified artistically
- Loosely structured on 18 episodes from Homer's *Odyssey*.
- Each in a different location in Dublin
- Each parodies a specific writing style; Newspapers; Ladies Journal; Catechism
- Motif: Body Organ

# Summary of *Ulysses*

- A day in the life of Leopold Bloom (Ulysses)
- Goes to pubs, attends a funeral, goes to the newspaper to solicit an ad, goes to the post office, finds a letter from his wife's lover, sends a letter to his erotic correspondent, lunch, sees a woman in a park expose herself, goes to a brothel, comes home and goes to bed with his wife
- Stephen Daedalus, a teacher, is Telemachus, in search of a father; Bloom a sort of False Father Figure

# What does Homer do for Joyce?

- Joyce on his Homeric borrowing: “a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history”
- Mock Epic novel; Joyce both parodies and yet acknowledges the greatness of Homer
- The contrast of the two is the means of conveying the Modern aesthetic

# *Finnegans Wake*

- Appeared in installments between 1928-1939
- Early drafts were first done in the early 1920s
- Subsequent drafts become more and more lyrical and allusive and less and less narrative
- Time and Place do not play a structural role
- Logic and language are not stable, clear systems
- Layers and layers of meaning and multiplicity of languages

# Style of Wake

- Hybrid language of a dozen modern and ancient languages
- Joyce: “I’d like a language, which is above all languages, a language to which all will do service. I cannot express myself in English without enclosing myself in a tradition.”
- Anticipated the literary critical development of Deconstruction by thirty years; the notion that language is always insufficient; emphasis on connotative meaning rather than literal meaning

# Summary

- Psychological and surreal in *Portrait of an Artist*
- Stark realism devoid of authorial commentary or morality in *Dubliners*
- *Ulysses* is the ultimate expression of Formalism in literature; Form over Content
- *Finnegans Wake* abandons form and narrative altogether; emphasis upon the word itself and the act of constructing meaning
- Parallels the art of the period in its attempt to do something new, while still being steeped in the traditions of the past.