James Joyce (1882-1941)

**Life**
- A rebel among rebels.
- Contrast with Yeats and the other literary contemporaries who tried to rediscover the Irish Celtic identity.
- He had two children, Giorgio and Lucia, with his long-time partner, Nora Barnacle, whom he eventually married.
- He left Dublin at the age of twenty-two and he settled for some time in Paris, then in Rome, Trieste, where he made friends with Italo Svevo, and Zurich.

**The most important features of Joyce’s works**
- The setting of most of his works Ireland, especially Dublin.
- He rebelled against the Catholic Church.
- All the facts explored from different points of view simultaneously.
- Greater importance given to the inner world of the characters.
- Time perceived as subjective.
- His task to render life objectively.

**Isolation and detachment of the artist from society**

**Evolution of his Style**

- Realism
- Disciplined prose
- Different points of view
- Free-direct speech

- Third-person narration
- Minimal dialogue
- Language and prose used to portray the protagonist’s state of mind

  ➔ *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

- Interior Monologue with 2 level of narrations

  ➔ *Ulysses*

**Dublin and Joyce**
- The Dublin represented by Joyce is not fixed and static, it is «the revolutionary montage of “Dublins” through a range of historical juxtapositions and varied styles».
- The 15 stories of the *Dubliners*, though set in the same city, are not united by their geography: each story has a singular location.
• The evocation of his town in *A Portrait* is deeply influenced by Joyce’s prolonged temporal and spatial distance; **Dublin is filtered through Stephen’s mind.**
• In *Ulysses*, **Dublin overwhelms the reader.**

**Dubliners**
• **Dubliners** are described as **afflicted people.**
• All the stories are set in **Dublin**, “The city seemed to me the centre of paralysis”, Joyce stated.

Structure and Style
• The stories present human situations
• They are arranged into **4 groups:**

**Narrative Techniques and Themes**
• **Naturalistic, concise, detailed descriptions.**
• **Naturalism combined with symbolism** ◊ double meaning of details.
• Each story opens in medias res and is mostly told from the perspective of a character.
• Use of free-direct speech and free-direct thought ◊ direct presentation of the character’s thoughts.
• **Different linguistic registers** ⇒ the language suits the age, the social class and the role of the characters.
• Use of epiphany ⇒ “the sudden spiritual manifestation” of an interior reality.

• **Themes** ⇒ paralysis and escape.

Absence of a didactic and moral aim because of the impersonality of the artist.
Joyce’s aim ⇒ to take the reader beyond the usual aspects of life through epiphany ➞
It is the special moment in which a trivial gesture, an external object or a banal situation or an episode lead the character to a sudden self-realisation about himself / herself or about the reality surrounding him / her.

**Understanding the epiphany in each story is the key to the story itself**

• The main theme of **Dubliners** ⇒ paralysis

**Physical paralysis** caused by external forces
**Moral paralysis** linked to religion, politics and culture

• **The climax of the stories** : the coming to awareness by the characters of their own paralysis.
• Alternative to paralysis = escape which always leads to failure.
• **Characters in Eveline (vedi testo su Voices o su Lit & Lab)**
  Eveline = passive, influenced by her family’s mentality
  Her father = a violent and strict man
  Frank = a very kind, open-hearted and brave boy

• **Antithesis** between Eveline’s house and her new one in Buenos Aires

Paralysis/Escape
Structure and Style in *Evelyn*

- The story opens in medias res: "She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue"
- Third-person narrator but Eveline's point of view.
- Subjective perception of time.
- Epiphany ➔ a street organ which reminds Eveline of the promise she made to her dying mother.
- Symbolic words = dust = decay, paralysis
  sea = action, escape
- Themes: paralysis and the failure to find a way out of it.

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

- The importance of the indefinite article "A" ➔ the novel is only one of the possible interpretations of a subject.
- It is divided into five chapters dealing with the spiritual evolution of Stephen Dedalus, a fictional alter-ego of Joyce, from childhood to maturity.
  - The setting in place = Dublin
  - Joyce was the son of a religious mother and a financially inept father.
  - Joyce was the eldest of ten children and received his education at Jesuit schools.
  - Joyce had early experiences with prostitutes during his teenage years and struggled with questions of faith.
  - Joyce left Ireland to pursue the life of a poet and writer.

His Name:

Stephen = the name of the Christian martyr.
He is a martyr to art
Dedalus = the mythological character.
He escapes from the social, political labyrinth of Dublin’s life.

His Transformations
- From a shy little boy to a bright student who understands social interactions.
- From innocence to corruption, from an unrepentant sinner to a devout Catholic.
- From a fanatical religiousness, to a new devotion to art and beauty.

Narrative technique
- Third-person narrative though Joyce does not tell what is happening but rather tries to show what is happening without explaining the events that he is showing.
- The narrative ➔ not continuous but fragmented, with gaps in the chronology.
- Every narrative detail ➔ filtered through Stephen's consciousness.
- Use of the experimental stream-of-consciousness technique ➔ to let the reader see, hear and feel what Stephen is experiencing as the action unfolds.
- Different languages and styles ➔ linked to each phase of Dedalus’s evolution
• **Content ➔** Stephen remembers his school days.

• **Language ➔** Stephen is a baby so he uses a *naive vocabulary and childish expressions.*

vedi brano su Voices

- **Stephen’s first song:**
  
  *The wild rose blossoms / On the little Green Place* ◊

  *red = Irish patriotism.*

  *green = the Irish countryside.*

- **His song:** = a sort of *epiphany* ◊ it foreshadows **his future struggle against authority.**

Vedi brano su *Lit &Lab* : Where was he….the wading girl

- The importance of the setting **the beach.**

- **The epiphany** *the image of the wading girl* reveals Stephen’s transition from the belief in God to a belief in aesthetic beauty.

- **Poetic language** expressions linked to sight and hearing, several musical devices.

- **Free direct speech (Yes…on)**

  *Ulysses*

  - Published in **1922.**
  - **Setting in time ➔** a single day, Thursday 16th June, 1904.
  - The setting in place : **Dublin.**
  - A detailed account of ordinary life on an ordinary day.
  - **The theme** is moral ◊ **human life means suffering but also struggling to seek the good.**

Characters

- **Leopold Bloom** = Joyce's common man; he **stands for the whole of mankind.**

- **Molly Bloom** = Leopold’s wife; she stands for flesh, **sensuality, fecundity.**

- **Stephen Dedalus** = **pure intellect;** he embodies every young man seeking maturity.

- **Odyssey** ◊ a structural framework for *Ulysses.*

- Characters and events arranged around Homeric model ◊
  
  **Leopold = Odysseus**
  
  **Molly = Penelope**
  
  **Stephen = Telemachus**

*Ulysses and Odyssey*

- **Ulysses** is divided into :
  
  **Telemachiad** (chapters 1-3)

  **Odyssey** (chapters 4-15)

  **Nostos** (chapters 16-18)

- It allowed the **parallel with the Odyssey** and provided the book with a symbolic meaning.

- **Homer’s myth ➔** used to express the **universal in the particular**

  - It created a new form of realism.

*Language ➔ Collage Technique*

*The language* = rich in puns, paradoxes, images, interruptions, symbols, slang expressions; different linguistic registers **to give voice to the unspoken activity of the mind.**
Brano The Funeral
Vedi su testo per contenuti

- Use of **interior monologue** ➔ 2 levels of narration.
  1st level: actions narrated from the outside // neutral point of view.
  2nd level: Leopold’s thoughts / Bloom’s point of view. The action takes place in his mind. There is no difference between past, present and future. Use of interior monologue (no extreme form in this passage)

- Ulysses and the use of **extreme interior monologue**.
- Molly’s thoughts are free to move backwards (“they called it on…”) and **forwards** in time (“shall I wear…”). – vedi brano su Lit &Lab (introduzione modernismo)
- Complete **absence of punctuation and introductions to people and events**, no reporting verbs… ➔ give voice to her flow of thoughts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Victorian novel</th>
<th>Ulysses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting in time and place</strong></td>
<td>Victorian towns (London); English countryside</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrative technique</strong></td>
<td>Third-person narrative technique</td>
<td>Stream-of-consciousness technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject matter</strong></td>
<td>Realistic, naturalistic</td>
<td>The character’s mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characters</strong></td>
<td>Present from the outside</td>
<td>Present from the inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>Realistic and concrete</td>
<td>Language of the mind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Finnegans Wake**

- beginning and end = **CIRCULAR STRUCTURE** It is the story of a night, a dream, a “night-maze”.
- It contains **the whole human history**, from creation to Judgment day in the guise of comic events linked to a family living in the western suburbs of Dublin
- As the **Finnegan** of an old Irish ballad, the father, **Earwicker**, goes to bed after drinking too much and is tormented by a series of dreams.
- No

**The title**
- It comes from an old Irish ballad, **Finnegan’s wake**.
- It is a pun = fin (French) + again = end and beginning.
- If the apostrophe is restored, **Finnegan’s Wake = the wake of Finnegan, Finnegan is awake again.**