

James Joyce (1882-1942)

Life He was born in Ireland into a middle-class family. In his childhood Jesuits (for the education) Irish nationalists (Joyce's father was a support of Parnell: leader of the Irish Home Rule movement) Love he had a relationship with Nora Barnacle and they married only after the birth of their 1st child. Travels he went several times to Paris, but he went also to Croatia, to Italy, to Zurich (during the World War I). He was a cosmopolitan writer (a citizen of the world). Personality before the meeting with Nora Barnacle he abandoned himself to the dissolute life (he became also an alcohol addict). Features and Themes. Artist it had to be "invisible" in his work (he must not express his own point of view). He had only to report the thought and the experience of his characters. Relationship with Ireland Joyce rejected Irish life, and he accused the Irish people to be passive. He loved and hated Dublin because he was born here, but it was a city characterized by the Passivity (it wasn't opened to the novelties). Influences Freudian Psychoanalysis, literary traditions of all Europe, realism and symbolism. Language he created a new kind of dream language (mixture of existing words, inventive words and non-existent words). He used the interior monologue: characterized by lack of punctuation, onomatopoeic words, puns. He was the forerunner of existentialism and of the theatre of the absurd. Comparison with Swift both were Irish men, both opposed England and accused the Irish people to be passive. Comparison with Wilde both abandoned themselves to the dissolute life (Wilde because was homosexual, Joyce because was an alcohol addict). Works 2 Phases: 1) Joyce used a realistic technique, he included a lot of details and used a language spoke by common people. The Dubliners a collection of 15 short stories written in 1905 (only "The Death" was written in 1907) and published only in 1914 (because was accused of immorality). In this work Joyce analyzed Dublin's life (centre of paralysis). It is divided in 4 sections that represent the ages of man: 1. Childhood 2. Adolescence 3. Maturity 4. Public Life 5. plus and Epilogue. He used the Epiphany: it is the moment of insight, a sudden revelation (the moment in a story when a sudden spiritual awakening is experienced or when a common object assumed a mysterious meaning). The Death: The story can be divided in 2 parts 1. The protagonist Gabriel Conroy, a school teacher and a critic, goes to the party of his aunts Kate and Julia Morkan where he is applauded by everyone and he leaves this party self-satisfied. 2. The protagonist returns with his wife Gretta to their hotel and he discovers that she is weeping because for an old Irish song that she has heard in the party she has remembered a boy who was in love with her that has died for her sake. So Gabriel realizes the futility of his own life. Themes: paralysis (inability to act), love, the contrast between life and death, existentialism, religiosity. Title: Joyce said that the dead bodies are more alive than the Irish living person. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man talks about the growth to maturity of a young Irishman and his dedication to art. The protagonist is Stephen Dedalus and alter ego of Joyce. 2) He began to experiment new form of writing like the direct interior monologue. Ulysses At 1st was submitted to censorship and was published far away from England. Story: he talks about 1 day (June 16, 1904) of the life of 3 Dubliners and is divided in 3 parts 1. In this part the protagonist is Stephen Dedalus (who represents Ulysses' son Telemachus) a young man with intellectual ambitions, the enemy of his own country and a martyr to art. His name is taken from the 1st Christian martyr (who had preached the Gospel to the Jews and had insulted them) in fact Stephen Dedalus wants to preach the Gospel of art to the Irishman. His surname derives from the legendary Greek artificer. 2. This part is dominated by Leopold Bloom, a middle-aged man, who wanders around Dublin as Ulysses had wandered around the Mediterranean and he had some adventures. 3. This part is dominated by Leopold's wife, Molly Bloom (Ulysses's Penelope). The novel begins with Stephen Dedalus who is forced to wander the streets of Dublin in search of a father and a home. He meets Leopold Bloom who adopts him. At home is Molly Bloom who is waiting for the wanderers as Penelope but she isn't so faithful as Ulysses's wife.

Parallel with Odyssey: the story is divided in 18 sections and each one corresponds to one of the episodes of the Odyssey (he wanted to underline that Bloom is the modern Ulysses, anti-hero, who represents all mankind). - Telemachus: reflects the theme of the 1st book of the Odyssey in which Ulysses' son is forced to live with his mother's suitors who maltreat him, so he seeks news of his father. In this section Stephen is evicted from the tower on the Irish coast by his companions. The colours are white and Gold and the symbol is Heir. - Nestor: the counterpart of Nestor (the wise king in the Odyssey) is Mr Deasy, the headmaster of Stephen's School. The Art is history, the colour is brown, the symbol is Horse. - Hades: there is Bloom's meditation on death, while in the Odyssey Ulysses visits the underworld and speaks with the souls of the dead. The art is Philosophy and the colour is green. - Circe: Stephen and Bloom visited a brothel and they finally escape from total degradation. The organ is genitals, the art is Botany and the symbol Eucharist. - Penelope: represents the goal of the wanderings of Bloom and Stephen.

There is the Molly's monologue. She lies on the bed near his husband and reflects on her past and present. Joyce represented Molly's thoughts with the interior monologue. The organ is the flesh, the symbol the Earth. Structure: is peculiar, Joyce divided the novel in chapters with titles, scenes, organs, hours, art, colours and symbols that the reader had to understand. Characters: - Stephen Dedalus is pure intellect and embodies every young man seeking maturity. - Molly Bloom stands for flesh, since she identifies herself totally with her sensual nature and fecundity. She is both the origin of man's experience (the mother) and its objective (the lover).

- Leopold Bloom he represents all mankind. He is the alienated man and artist. Leopold and Stephen are complementary characters: they exist in mutual need (the artist aims to raise the common man from effeminality to permanents and the common man exists as the artist's inexhaustible material. Themes: travel of the humanity (it's the story of a travel but the protagonist remains always in Dublin) and the relationship between Molly, Leopold and son (that Leopold wanted to have but he couldn't). Finnegans Wake talks about one night of the life of the Dubliner H.C. Earwicker, that represents all mankind.