

James Joyce (1882-1941)



James Joyce

- Born in Dublin (1882)
- Catholic Education (from the age of six to sixteen)
- But studying modern language at University College, Dublin
- Rejecting Catholic faith in favor of a literary mission → involving rebellion and exile

James Joyce

- Paris → Trieste (Italy) → Zurich (Swiss)
- Teaching English in the Continent
- Female companion → Nora Barnacle
- settling down in Paris (1920-1940) but forced to Zurich by the war, staying there to his death
- Always being the center of the literary circle while living in the Continent

James Joyce

- Suffering eye diseases and even brief blindness for periods.
- Drinking heavily
- Supported by a female benefactor → Harriet Shaw Weaver
- Although Joyce devoted himself to literature abroad, he paradoxically wrote only and always about Dublin.
- Publishing *Dubliners* in 1914 → sharp, realistic sketches of the “paralysis,” the people living in Dublin

James Joyce

- Dedicated to imaginative writing
- *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) → weaving his autobiography into work
- Having trouble publishing *Dubliners*, Joyce fought with English and Irish editors but accepted by an American firm.
- *Ulysses* (1922) and Joyce's serialization in an American magazine, *The Little Review* (March 1918-December 1920) → Banned (p.406)
- Finally released after the lifting of the ban by Judge John Woolsey's history-making decision in 1933

James Joyce

■ *Ulysses* (1922)

- ✓ An account of one day in the lives of Dubliners
- ✓ Limited number of events involving a limited number of people in a limited environment
- ✓ The episodes correspond to Homer's Greek epic *Odyssey*

■ *Finnegans Wake* (1939)

- ✓ 14 years to write
- ✓ Language → dense and multilayered, impenetrable to read
- ✓ *Ulysses*: symbolic aspect= realistic aspect

Finnegans Wake: symbolic aspect

- Joyce's writing techniques: organization, style, and narratives influenced following writers

The Dead

James Joyce



Introduction

- The story transcends its mimetic surfaces and moves towards an ambivalent paradoxical, yet unifying symbolism that makes it a prime example of modernist/postmodernist art.
- The structure for the story: brief chronology of events set in Dublin at the turn of the century → the evenings and early hours of a day and the next morning during the Epiphany festival.
- The complex series of images and allusion, unified through Gabriel's subjectivity, cluster around specific nationalistic, religious, cultural references suggesting motifs related to death or decay, and conversely, rebirth or resurrection.

The Archetypal Shape of Journey

- Gabriel and Gretta's journey to the party
- Discussions of past and projected journey
 - Miss Ivors's reference about a journey to the west of Ireland
 - Gabriel's ambivalent journey westward in the final paragraph (Norton 440)

The Dead

- The dead from the past: Gabriel's uncle, mother, and grandfather, and of course Michael Furey, etc.
- The rules of the religious order are mentioned—that the monks never speak, they get up at two in the morning, and they sleep in their own coffins. Both the Protestants (Mr. Browne) and the Catholics (Aunt Julia) cannot understand the spiritual meaning of it. Only Mary Jane offers an explanation for why the monks sleep in their coffins: “The coffin ... is to remind them of their last end” (Norton 426-427)

The Dead

- The encounter with the dead
 - His dead mother, Ellen Conroy: Ellen was concerned about the dignity of the family. It is evident that Ellen had a desire for her children to escape the position in which she found herself.
 - His grandfather Patrick Morkan: The action of the horse symbolizes the paralysis of Ireland, and Gabriel's imitation of it as he tells the story represents his own paralysis (Norton 430-431).
 - Michael Furey: the person from the realm of the dead who finally manages to make Gabriel aware of his own mortality and thus have more compassion for his fellow human beings. "Gabriel felt humiliated by the failure of his irony ..." (Norton 437-438).

The Dead

- Life-in-death and death-in-life: If one were to actually lose the ability to feel and live in the “solid world” as the dead have lost the ability, he/she would not come to have a greater appreciation for existence
- The snowing: The principal snow, the snowing may represent life, or life/death, depending on the context of the passage.

After-dinner Speech

- Gabriel's aunts and Mary Jane: "Three Graces of the Dublin musical world." → an allusion to the Judgment of Paris, a judgment of the fairest of three goddesses—Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. → The Three Fates, those whom Joyce calls "the aged sisters" in *Ulysses*, with Christian Grace.
- The Three Graces: goddesses of charm, beauty, nature, human creativity and fertility; together known as the Charites or Graces or Gratiae (Roman mythology)
- The Fates: a common motif in European polytheism, most frequently represented as weavers of a tapestry on a loom, with the tapestry dictating the destinies of human beings:
- Clotho the spinner, Lachesis the weaver, and Atropos the severer.

Hospitality and “Die for me” and the myth of Admetus and Alcestis

- Admetus: a sublime egoist, confident that all of his subjects would sacrifice their lives for the sake of their king. He must sacrifice his wife, Alcestis, in order to live. He is remarkably dedicated to the ancient law of **hospitality** (his unquestioning acceptance of the disguised Apollo into his household is what won him the favor of this god). Moreover, on the day of Alcestis’s funeral, he graciously receives Hercules as a guest, disguising his grief; in return for his hospitality, Hercules, when he learns the truth of situation, combats Death on Admetus’s behalf and returns a living Alcestis to him.
- The legend of Admetus, Apollo, and the Fates → Gabriel and Gretta in “The Dead.”: **The death of the lover for another’s sake, the extension of life by suspending the shears of Atropos, the egoism of the husband, the sacredness of the law of hospitality, and the promise of resurrection to those obedient to this law.**

Epiphany

- Epiphany: a Christian festivals, showing how God comes to His people and reveals His salvation to the world.
- The word Epiphany comes from the Greek word "epiphaneia", which means "appearance" or "manifestation". Every year this day falls on 6th January or in some countries, on the Sunday that falls between 2nd January and 8th January.
- In some region, the Epiphany celebrates the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. In some other region, this day refers to the visit of the magi (wise men) to the infant Jesus when God revealed himself to the world through the manifestation of Jesus. This day also celebrates Jesus' birth. The traditional color for Epiphany is white, which signifies peace, purity and holiness.
- Joyce's epiphany: a dramatic but fleeting moment of revelation about the self or the world. (Norton 406)

Grace

- Grace: the most important concept in the Bible, Christianity, and the world, expressed in the promises of God revealed in Scripture and embodied in Jesus Christ.
- Grace is the love of God shown to the unlovely; the peace of God given to the restless; the unmerited favor of God.
- A shorthand for what grace is - “mercy, not merit.” Grace is getting what you don’t deserve, and not getting what you do deserve. Christianity teaches that what we deserve is death with no hope of resurrection.
- Paul tells us, “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives” (Titus 2:11). Spiritual growth doesn’t happen overnight; we “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 2:18). Grace transforms our desires, motivations, and behavior.