

JAMES JOYCE (1882-1941)

The life

James Joyce was born in Dublin in 1882.

His interest was for a broader European culture. His attitude contrasted greatly with that of his literary contemporaries, like Yeats, who wanted to rediscover the Irish Celtic identity in order to create a national conscience. Joyce, on the contrary, believed that the way was by showing a realistic portrait of Ireland's life.

He left Ireland and moved to the Continent. He lived in Trieste for ten years. He died in Zurich in 1941.

Joyce's narrative

One of his most important works is *Dubliners*, a collection of short stories all about Dublin and Dublin's life.

The poet Ezra Pound was an enthusiast about this work and helped Joyce print *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, his semi-autobiographical novel.

Dubliners and *A portrait* had established him as a writer and alleviated his financial difficulties.

His great masterpiece is *Ulysses*. This book was strongly criticized and after being declared obscene and banned in Britain and America, was published in Paris.

Dublin

Though Joyce lived in Europe he set all his works in Ireland and mostly in the city of **Dublin**. His effort was to give a realistic portrait of the life of ordinary people doing ordinary things and living ordinary lives.

The rebellion against the Church

Though he was well-trained (educato) by the Jesuits he challenged (sfidò) Catholicism. His hostility toward the Church was the revolt against the official doctrine and a provincial Church which had taken possession of Irish minds.

A subjective perception of time

The facts are always explored from different points of view simultaneously.

Joyce cares a lot for the details and the inner world (mondo interiore) of the character (dei personaggi).

The portrait of the character is based on introspection rather than on description. Time is not perceived as objective but as subjective (soggettivo).

Thus the accurate description of Dublin is not strictly derived from external reality, but from the characters' mind (dalla mente dei personaggi).

The impersonality of the artist

Joyce believed (influenced by French authors Flaubert and Baudelaire and also Eliot) in the **impersonality of the artist**. The artist's task was to render life objectively. This necessarily led to the isolation and detachment of the artist from society.

Furthermore, the artist ought to be invisible in his works, in the sense that he must not express his own viewpoint.

The writings of Joyce make frequent use of interior monologue, both direct and indirect and the **epiphany** (the peaks [picchi] of intensity in the narration are called by the writer: "epiphanies").

Joyce makes frequent use of puns (giochi di parole).