

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Although born and educated in Ireland, James Augustine Joyce (1882-1942) spent the latter half of his life in self-imposed exile. His life was a unique mix of hardships and accomplishments: he was the eldest son of a family of fifteen, five of his siblings died in infancy, his parents suffered financial setbacks when James was nine, he lost most of his vision after contracting glaucoma and wore an eyepatch late in his life, his daughter Lucia Anna suffered from schizophrenia, his works were rejected and banned because of their explicit personal and sexual detail.

Yet, his perseverance produced a breakthrough in fiction—his short story "The Dead," which was added to the collection *Dubliners* in 1914, has been called the finest example of short story form; his novel *Ulysses* (1922) pioneered a radical form, the internal monologue; and his last work, *Finnegans Wake* (1939), describes the realm of dreams in a complex, often baffling series of allusions and puns. Ultimately, James Joyce was heralded as one of the finest literary craftsmen of the twentieth century.

He earned a meager income from his writing career and subsisted from gifts and a series of jobs, including teaching and reviewing. In 1903, upon his return to Dublin to his dying mother, he formed a liaison with Nora Barnacle and lived with her first in Pola, Italy, and later in Trieste, where his two children, George and Lucia Anna, were born. Having broken with Catholicism, Joyce refused to marry Nora. After the beginning of World War I, the family moved to Zurich, Switzerland, where Joyce composed *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).

In 1920, the Joyce family moved to Paris, where the American owner of a small bookstore published *Ulysses*. The book soared to fame, achieving a place among the works of true literary genius. To protect the family's inheritance, the Joyces were married in 1931 and moved to Zurich at the beginning of World War II. Both James and Nora are buried on the outskirts of Zurich. A statue of Joyce in relaxed, seated pose marks the gravesite. The monument depicts him with one leg crossed over the opposite knee; he sports a jaunty pipe.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Joyce's first novel, drawn from his notebook entries in *Giacomo Joyce*, describes the sensitivity and perception of a child who develops into an author. The settings are

consistent with Joyce's own experiences—early education at Clongowes Wood College, a Jesuit boy's school; brief periods of time at home in Dublin with his family; Belvedere College, another Jesuit institution; and eventually University College. Using these five chapters as a springboard, Joyce pursues the development of Stephen Dedalus, the main character, in the first portion of *Ulysses*.

The discontent that permeates Stephen's existence begins early in his formative years, follows him through the years of his family's domestic adjustment to a series of progressively meaner living quarters, smolders during his prep school days, when Stephen's talents are receiving recognition for the first time, and erupts into fullscale rebellion against the petty, meaningless rules and traditions of society when he enters the university. An overlay of references to the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus adds richness to the already saturated texture of his writing.

Joyce sets out to probe the inner feelings and unexpressed emotions that characterize the early life of a creative spirit. Although the book contains obvious biographical parallels, it cannot be taken strictly as autobiography. Rather, it reflects a major attempt by an author to delineate the growth cycle of a genius.

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