Poetry, even when apparently most fantastic, is always a revolt against artifice, a revolt, in a sense, against actuality.

James Joyce (1882-1941)
1. Life

- A rebel among rebels.
- Contrast with Yeats and the other literary contemporaries who tried to rediscover the Irish Celtic identity.
1. Life

- 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**.
2. 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.
2. The most important features of Joyce’s works

- 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**
3. The evolution of Joyce’s style

1.

Realism
Disciplined prose
Different points of view
Free-direct speech

Dubliners
3. The evolution of Joyce’s style

2.

Third-person narration

Minimal dialogue

Language and prose used to portray the protagonist’s state of mind

Free-direct speech

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
3. The evolution of Joyce’s style

3.

Interior monologue with two levels of narration

Extreme interior monologue

Ulysses
4. Dublin

- 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.
4. Dublin

- 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.**
5. Dubliners

- Published in 1914 on the newspaper *The Irish Homestead* by Joyce with the pseudonym *Stephen Dedalus*.

- *Dubliners* are described as *afflicted people*.

- All the stories are set in *Dublin* “*The city seemed to me the centre of paralysis*”, Joyce stated.
6. *Dubliners*: structure and style

- The stories present human situations
- They are arranged into **4 groups**: 
  - **Childhood**
    - The Sisters
    - An Encounter
    - Araby
  - **Adolescence**
    - After the Race
    - The Boarding House
    - Eveline
    - Two Gallants
  - **Mature life**
    - A Little Cloud
    - Clay
    - Counterparts
    - A Painful Case
  - **Public life**
    - Ivy Day in the Committee Room
    - A Mother
    - Grace

**DUBLIN**
Paralysis / Escape

Only Connect ... New Directions
7. *Dubliners*: narrative technique 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.
7. *Dubliners*: narrative technique and themes

- **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.
8. *Dubliners*: epiphany

Joyce’s aim is 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.
9. *Dubliners*: paralysis

- The main theme of *Dubliners*: paralysis

  - **Physical paralysis**
    - caused by external forces
  
  - **Moral paralysis**
    - linked to religion, politics and culture
9. *Dubliners*: paralysis

- The climax of the stories is the coming to awareness by the characters of their own paralysis.

- Alternative to paralysis = escape which always leads to failure.
10. *Dubliners: The Sisters*

**Characters:**

- A boy.
- The adult world: the boy’s uncle and aunt; Old Cotter; the dead priest, and his sisters, Eliza and Nannie.

*Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin*
10. *Dubliners: The Sisters*

**Setting** the boy’s house; the priest’s house and a street next to the priest’s house.

**Atmosphere** suffocating, dark oppressive linked to paralysis/death; bright, airy linked to life.
10. *Dubliners: The Sisters*

**Structure** → priest’s life described through dialogues and flashbacks.

**Narration** → the first person narrator is combined with free direct speech.
10. Dubliners: The Sisters

**Language**  
simple childish and adult linguistic registers

**Symbolism**  
the priest’s physical features = madness = decay = paralysis = death

**Epiphany**  
“it was the chalice he broke”  
excessive influence and intrusion of the Church
11. *Dubliners: Eveline*

- **Characters:**
  - *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
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.
11. *Dubliners: Eveline*

**Structure and style**

- **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.
The protagonists: Gabriel Conroy, an embodiment of Joyce himself, and Gretta, his wife.

Epiphany: the song *The Lass of Aughrim*, reminds Gretta of a young man, Michael Furey, who died for her when he was seventeen years old. Gabriel understands he is deader than Michael Furey in Gretta’s mind.

Symbols: the snow, Gabriel’s journey to the west.