# THE LEADING MODERNIST WRITER James Joyce

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# 前 言

乔伊斯的小说创作代表了 20 世纪西方现代主义文学的最高成就,他的创作思想对现代小说的转型与重构产生了重要的影响。本书旨在全面阐述乔伊斯的现代主义思想,分析其形成的原因,并探讨其丰富的内涵与价值。通过对乔伊斯 4 部经典力作的考察,不仅论述了其现代主义思想在不同创作阶段的具体表现和引领作用,而且揭示了其小说艺术从现实主义转向现代主义继而又向后现代主义过渡的发展轨迹。

詹姆斯·乔伊斯 (James Joyce, 1882-1941) 是现代世界文 坛巨匠, 也是现代主义文学的代言人。如果说, 20 世纪西方文坛 没有发生那场声势浩大的现代主义运动,那么,人类在科学、技 术和经济等领域所取得的巨大成就无疑会使这一世纪的文学相形 见绌。如果说, 20 世纪没有出现乔伊斯这样一位文学大师, 那 么,就好比伟大的文艺复兴运动因为没有了莎士比亚而忽然变得 黯然失色。然而, 迄今为止, 国内外学者大都热衷于探讨乔伊斯 现代主义小说的人物形象、艺术形式和语言风格、而对他的现代 主义思想进行深入讨论与系统研究的文论却十分罕见。于是,乔 学界便出现了这样一种奇特的现象:人们虽然对这位文学大师的 艺术成就赞叹不已, 却对他的现代主义思想了解甚少。造成这种 现象的一个重要原因是, 乔伊斯既未像詹姆斯和伍尔夫那样发表 过大量有关小说创作的文论、也未像他们那样同爱德华时代的现 实主义作家公开论战。此外, 乔伊斯有关美学和文学的几篇文章 与零星日记大都写于他青年时代, 而当他驰骋文坛之后, 几乎从 未撰文表明自己的创作思想。这无疑给我们今天研究他的现代主 义思想和美学观念造成了一定的困难。然而, 作为西方现代主义

文学的杰出代表和举世公认的艺术家, 乔伊斯不会也不可能没有自己的审美原则和艺术主张。尽管他在成名之后对本人的创作思想一直守口如瓶, 但我们依然能通过他的创作实践和艺术革新来把握其现代主义思想的基本特征和发展轨迹。

应当指出,乔伊斯现代主义思想的发展轨迹集中体现在其4部经典力作之中。从他发表《都柏林人》(Dubliners, 1914)起到推出《芬尼根的苏醒》(Finnegans Wake, 1939)为止,他的创作思想与两次世界大战期间声势浩大的现代主义文学思潮一起涌动,而他的实验与革新在当时则起到了积极的引领作用。尽管乔伊斯并没有对现代主义文学运动发表任何纲领或宣言,但他在一个多元的、复杂的,甚至混乱无序的文化大潮中确立了自己的艺术目标,并大胆地超越了传统的文化心理和公众的审美习惯,以离经叛道的艺术手法表达了他对生活和世界的现代主义感受。引人注目的是,乔伊斯的4部小说充分展示了他40年艺术思想的发展轨迹。

综上所述, 乔伊斯的现代主义思想不仅与 20 世纪上半叶西方声势浩大的现代主义运动一起涌动, 而且在其 4 部小说的艺术特征和发展轨迹中得到了充分的展示。其现代主义思想的实质是一种自觉和坚定的革新精神, 一种多元文化时代的美学英雄主义。乔伊斯的创作思想将现代小说艺术推向了空前绝后、登峰造极的地步, 并且先后影响了现代主义与后现代主义两代作家, 对西方现代文学的两次变革与转型起到了推波助澜的作用。

参与本书编写工作的人员还有(按姓氏笔画):常丹丹,冯艳阳,宋佳,沈思思,赵莹和张海妮。

作 者 2011年9月

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# Chapter One

### Introduction

### 1. Why James Joyce

For many decades the "classic" reading of Joyce cast him as the exemplary denationalized high modernist, the "great writer" and revolutionary inventor who soared loftily above his many contexts, picking and choosing where he needed without ever fully engaging. Seen in this way, Joyce's art was conceived by a man largely indifferent to his surroundings and changing times.

This casting of Joyce at a remove from the changing Irish and European worlds in which he lived persisted and was cemented by the academy in the years following his death up to, at least, the 1970s and came at the partial expense of a thorough exploration of a vast variety of the contexts within which he was writing. They included, to name but a few, almost at random, the Ireland that formed him, the Ireland that formed itself in his absence, the Austro-Hungarian Italian city of Trieste, France and the French avant-garde, as well as the plays, operas and films that he attended, the newspapers, pamphlets and books that he read or leafed through.

In more recent years a vast body of excellent material has emerged on these and many other contextual areas offering a valuable contribution to our changing vision of Joyce's life and works and allowing us to see him a both the product of and an interested participant in a whole variety of worlds which provide the contexts and co-texts of his fictional output. The cost is perhaps that he seems to us today a little less original and God-like, a little more accidental in his actions and choices, a more human author, happy to lift and to cut-and-paste carefully sifted material from a huge variety of sources before making it indelibly his own, a writer who was very much of the world.

One could fill dozens of pages with book and article titles dealing with each of the major contexts of Joyce's writings but ultimately the effect would be bewildering. While making no claims for exhaustively, this volume gathers a series of original, cohesive and concise studies covering various significant contextual areas. Reviewing existing work in each of their fields of interest, these essays provide a series of overviews as well as closer case analyses of various Joycean contextual fields and often suggest directions for future research.

Today, one hundred years after Joyce was writing, it is important to reconstruct his principal contextual information — such as other fiction, politics, religion, ideology, popular culture, cinema, the visual arts, music. It is important to know, for example, what volumes he was using to study Aquinas when he was a young man, what the political situation in Ireland was when he left and how it changed when he was away in voluntary exile, what avant-garde movements he was aware of during his life on the con-tenant. The contexts that need to be illustrated today are perhaps very different from those that needed explaining fifty years ago or will need explaining one hundred years from now. One thinks, for example, of the daily practices of I-rish Catholicism, bread and butter to Joyce's contemporary Irish readers but a world apart from readers in today's post-Vatican Two and

perhaps even post-Catholic world. Things that would have been old hat to a "common reader" of Joyce even fifty years ago, such as Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*, today form part of a distant past, largely beyond recall, but one vitally important for an understanding of Joyce's use of Moore, and indeed of music, in his fiction.

During the years between the two world wars, for most of which he was living in Paris, James Joyce was an international symbol of modernity. The reputation of his novels, at that time unobtainable in the most countries where they were admired — ensured him that status. Even those who had read the novels were not quite certain where its modernity lay but one thing was certain. Considered as a product of technology it challenged comparison with the latest developments in engineering. Only specialists could understand how it was constructed. It was a triumph of remote expertise.

Yeats personifies the artist as seer: Joyce looks like an engineer. He has the inhuman look of a man whose glances are not to be returned, because his eyes are devoted to the examination of mechanisms. Indeed, his eyes are not even represented. The direction of his spectacle lenses tells us all we need to know about vision. They are not aimed outwards, at us, but focused intently downwards, as if upon some technical problem, laid out for solution on a drawing board or work bench. On the contrary, there is an air of comfort, almost of complacency, as of the star performer whose appreciation of the difficulty of his task serves only to enhance his sense of mastery.

This is the face of the master, whom a young man stopped in the street, requesting permission to kiss the hand that wrote so many excellent novels. It is not, however, the face of the man who advised against kissing that hand, because it had done other things too. James Joyce was not merely the vehicle of his art, and was capable of dis-

4 ...... The Leading Modernist Writer — James Joyce tinguishing his power as an artist from his weaknesses as a man.

This introduction comes out of the study of Joyce over the years and owes a great deal to a long and formidable line of critics. Throughout this introduction, it will also provide some possible ways to read Joyce's life and works, but these are by no means exhaustive or definitive. It has been the goal to pose suggestions about how you might read him. We have done our job if you find that you want to give it a first, second, or third try. The book also gives many suggestions for further exploration. Students and people who are interested in James Joyce will find this an accessible introduction to understanding and enjoying Joyce. The book is also a good choice for the people who want to broaden their understanding of the books and authors they enjoy.

As Saucer said culture has an unpredictable impact on human's thinking pattern, so is James Joyce. James Joyce, as a writer, living under the influence of the world as a whole at that time, has undergone many ups and downs brought about by the revolutionary shifts in style and sensibility that came to be grouped beneath the generic label of "literary modernism"

### 2. European Literary Modernism

Two writers who came to prominence in the second half of the nineteenth century had a particular impact upon the formation of his style and world view: Gustave Flaubert and Henrik Ibsen. Flaubert's influence may be detected in Joyce's use of free indirect style: a mode of narrative presentation that employs the formal structure of third-person narrative prose while retaining the characteristic inflections of a first-person voice. This narrative technique, which enabled

Joyce to switch swiftly and almost imperceptibly between different and often incommensurable points of view, was one of the devices he employed to create a crucial ironic distance between the impersonal authorial voice and the perceptions of his characters. Its effect was that the reader was no longer absolutely sure which perspective was being endorsed or satirized at any point of the text, and was no longer able to rely upon a single interpretative context (the author's implied beliefs and values) to establish the meaning of particular actions or statements. From Ibsen, Joyce took the conviction of an attitude as well as elements of a style. The force of life, Ibsen insisted, should not be subordinated to timeless religious and moral laws; the power and value of genuinely modern art was to discover the fundamental truths of human nature without recourse to any imposed law or value. These human truths were universal and potentially democratic: they exist to be discovered in the life of the ordinary citizen, whose mode of being is itself an epic subject worthy an epic treatment. Ibsen's influence upon Joyce is evident in his play Exiles, but it also extends to the thematic preoccupations and dramatic narrative style of A Portrait and Ulvsses.

### 3. Irish Literary and Cultural Revival

The first two decades of Joyce's life were synonymous with what has come to be known as the "Celtic Revival". This revival took several forms. One dominant strand, developing out of the recrudescence of Irish nationalism following the "Young Ireland" movement, and associated with figures such as Douglas Hyde and Charles Gavan Duffy, sought to create an image of Irish identity unconstrained by the cultural forms and stereotypes imposed upon it by the British imperial

inheritance. In 1893, Hyde established the Gaelic League in order to reassert the dignity of Irish language and literature and encourage its teaching in schools and colleges, and to popularize spherically Irish cultural practices such as dance, music and games. This project drew support from those nationalists who wished to De-Anglicizing Irish culture; Hyde's famous 1892 lecture "On the Necessity for De-Anglicizing the Irish People" expresses one of the league's primary political preoccupations. Other contemporary developments, like the Celtic Literary Society and the Gaelic Athletic Association, broadened and deepened this revivalist impulse. From the 1880s onwards Irish identity was reconceived by the revival in fairly specific terms as rural, anti-imperialist, Celtic, anti-metropolitan and Catholic. Accompanying this shift was a renewed attention to Irish cultural history, a flurry of interest in the development of the Celtic "race", and a newly self-confident assumption of the essential nobility of the Irish people.

The one element of revivalist thought that resonates within Joyce's work is its resolutely anti-colonial emphasis. Joyce was unswerving in his denunciation of the misery and deprivation inflicted upon Ireland by imperial British policy: each of his novels and a good deal of the political journalism he composed during his stay in Trieste registers the imprint of this attitude. However, in other respects Joyce was severely critical of what he took to be the antiquated and conservative cultural politics of revivalism, with its cast of pious and beneficent rural types and its infantile mythic reconfiguration of the Irish character. He reserved particular scorn for the authoritarianism and inflexibility of certain nationalist political positions and satirized them throughout his corpus, most notably in the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses*. A closer parallel to Joyce's own experience is to be found in the Irish literary (rather than merely "Celtic") revival of fin-de-

siècle Ireland. What makes the writers of the Irish Literary Revival significant to a reading of Joyce is that, like him, they enjoyed an imaginatively vital, but also culturally ambivalent relationship to Irish history and traditions. Figures like W. B. Yeats, John Millington Synge, Lady Augusta Gregory and Oscar Wilde were either Protestants whose birth and education forced them to inhabit an ambivalent position both within and outside an Irish cultural sphere determined largely by its opposition to British imperialism or a Catholic whose rejection of Irish social and moral conservatism led him to explore versions of "Irishness" from a position of cultural exile. The literary strategies and techniques these writers developed to express their particular perspectives upon modern Irish culture offer some intriguing similarities with aspects of Joyce's own writing practice.

These techniques and strategies are clearly evident in the work of Yeats, Synge and Wilde. Up to the publication of In the Seven Woods (1904), Yeats' poetry was remarkable both for its reconfiguration of mythic archetypes and its insistent doubleness of perspective. Unable because of his religion and social background to identify him too closely with the Irish historical narrative of anti-colonialism, Yeats turned instead to a mythic reinvention of place. A similar impulse lay behind the stylistic experimentation of Syngean drama. In his effort to represent an order of Irish experience irreducible to the linguistic and cultural codes of metropolitan English, the Irish playwright John Millington Synge renounced naturalism and realism in favor of a vibrant new form of folk-speech. His literary remodeling of the dialect of the islands of Aran off the west Life and Contexts coast of Ireland created a synthetic literary idiom known as "Hiberno-English" that sought to evoke the traces of a past world while gesturing by its stylistic novelty to a mode of sensibility yet to come into being.

In this sense Synge's visionary re-creation of the Irish past provides a compelling analogue to Joyce's revolutionary rewriting of Homeric epic in *Ulysses* and his development of a synergetic mythic language in *Finnegans Wake*. For its entire vicissitudes, meanwhile, the example of Wilde offered Joyce a tantalizing glimpse of the creative possibilities afforded by exile.

### 4. About the Book

Joyce is widely considered to be one of the most important novelists of the 20th modernism to new territory in both the forms he developed for telling his stories and the subject matter he chose to write about. Although his literary output is relatively small in quantity, its impact on world literature has been powerful.

This book examines the life, works and critical reputation of James Joyce. The son of a dissolute Dublin election agent and rates collector who rose to become one of the brightest stars of European literary modernism, the composer of exquisite late Edwardian lyrics who subsequently created the radically new narrative styles of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, and the writer who exiled himself from his native Ireland in order ceaselessly to remake it in his imagination, Joyce's peripatetic career and complex reinvention of modern Western culture has made him a subject of enduring fascination and established him as perhaps the greatest and most enigmatic literary figure of the twentieth century. Simultaneously a defiantly parochial and fiercely international writer, Joyce's avant-garde artworks helped to create the climate of taste by which they would be judged. His systematic transformation of the nature and scope of the novel and his protracted struggle against the legal censorship and suppression of his work ex-

tended the possibilities of modern art and helped to redraw the boundaries between the claims of public morality and the rights of artistic expression for his own and succeeding generations.

Chapter One of this book offers a concise narrative of Joyce's life and literary career, places Joyce within multiple Irish, British and European contexts and provides a lively sense of the varied and changing world in which he lived, which formed him and from which he wrote. These essays perform a useful task in helping the reader to discover and understand the various contexts from which Joyce drew and assembled the elements that he then transformed in his fiction. They collectively show how Joyce was rooted in his times, how he is both a product and a critic of his multiple contexts and how important he remains to the developing context of literary, theoretical and cultural studies today.

From Chapter Two to Chapter Five provides a critical commentary upon four of Joyce's works. They are the Portrait, Dubliners, Ulysses and Finnegan Wake, and explore the style and significance of the four novels, looking at how Joyce's works were received through the filter of a series of critical paradigms that run the gamut of the most important twentieth-century theoretical schools. Thus, the reader will come to possess a renewed sense of how Joyce's works have been read over time and continue to be read today, of the critical schools that continue to shape our readings and interpretations, and of how Joyce has influenced these various critical schools, seeming so often to prefigure, generate and indeed anticipate the broad strokes of their approaches.

Chapter Six traces a historical overview of the critical reception of Joyce's work, from its earliest twentieth-century reviews to contemporary critical discussion, in order to explore how particular styles

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to further identify his position as the towering figure of modernist.

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