YORK HANDBOOKS

STUDYING JAMES JOYCE

Harry Blamires

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GENERAL EDITOR:
Professor A.N. Jeffares
(*University of Stirling*)

STUDYING JAMES JOYCE

Harry Blamires
MA (OXFORD)
Former Head of the English Department,
King Alfred's College, Winchester

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Preface

This Handbook is designed for the student who would like to have some understanding of Joyce's total output – what exactly it consists of, from what personal and historical background it derives, how the various works relate to each other, and what their permanent literary significance is. While all Joyce's prose works are given due attention, there is appropriate emphasis on his most celebrated and most frequently studied books, *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Ulysses*. *Stephen Hero* and *Exiles* are more important for the light they throw on the author of these masterpieces than for their intrinsic qualities. As for *Finnegans Wake*, although detailed analysis of it would clearly be beyond the scope of this book, it is hoped that the general account given of it here in the context of the survey of Joyce's work as a whole will at least indicate what Joyce was about in that formidable work and will thus render it more accessible.

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Part 1

James Joyce and his background

Joyce's life

James Joyce was born at Rathgar, Dublin, on 2 February 1882. His father, John Joyce, had inherited property in his home town of Cork on his own father's death in 1870. John Joyce and his widowed mother moved to Dublin, where he eventually obtained a comfortable post as Collector of Rates for Dublin and, on the strength of it, married Mary Jane Murray, ten years his junior, in 1880. Between then and 1894 she bore him thirteen children of whom ten survived, four boys and six girls. Of these James, the second to be born but the first to survive, was the eldest. Next to him in age were a daughter and then another son, Stanislaus, three years younger than Joyce.

John Joyce's personality and conduct determined the character of much of James's early experience and left their mark on his books. He was a vital, larger-than-life, gifted, but reckless and irresponsible man with a fine tenor voice, a fluent tongue, and an inordinate thirst. As wit, raconteur, and ironic commentator on his kind, he revelled in admiration and entranced his eldest son. But he failed to live within his means and as successive children were born he gradually mortgaged his inherited properties one by one and finally disposed of them in 1894. Then, when he was still only forty-two, civic reorganisation rendered him redundant and he was left with a pension of little more than a quarter of his previous salary. He remained the same flamboyant wastrel and never faced the realities of life. He pictured himself as the victim of imaginary persecutors.

When James was five the family moved to a substantial house at Bray, a seaside resort thirteen miles south of Dublin, which an Irish rail magnate had tried unsuccessfully to turn into an Irish Brighton. This was to be the family home for five years until, after a year at a house in Blackrock, another resort five miles south of Dublin, mounting debts and increasing poverty drove John Joyce into the city and sent him moving from one rented house to another in a descending spiral of privation and squalor. The moonlight flit to escape rent-hungry landlords became one of the devices for survival adopted by the once well-to-do and still proud fast-talker. Fellow debtors supplied one another with references to expedite removal.

Sometimes the forsaken landlord was to discover that his banisters had been burned for firewood.

The effect of John Joyce's behaviour on his family could not but be grave. Most of his children seem to have disliked him. Stanislaus hated him. Certainly he made his wife suffer. He despised and mocked her relations. When he was drunk he abused her and once tried to strangle her. 'Die, and be damned to you,' he shouted at her in her last illness. But the man's often boisterous good-humour, his skill as a comic raconteur, his colourful colloquialisms, and his hilarious ironic shafts won and kept the affection of his eldest son. Thus, while Joyce's mother impinges on his work as little more than a stereotype of pious, long-suffering Irish womanhood, his father's persona bestrides pages of vital portraiture and dialogue in Joyce's major works.

John Joyce was still able to play the well-to-do gentleman in 1888 when James was six, and, clearly recognising his eldest son's potential, he sent him to a prestigious boarding school run by the Jesuits, Clongowes Wood College at Sallins in County Kildare. James warmed to the historical associations of the college buildings which included a restored mediaeval castle. He thought well of the college rector, Father Conmee, and he never ceased to be grateful for the intellectual disciplines which formed part of his education at the hands of the Jesuits.

Much of this stage of Joyce's life is revealed in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*,* though he fictionalises himself as a rather serious, weak, timid, and retiring boy when in fact he was a cheerful and lively one, at home nicknamed 'Sunny Jim'. Much is revealed too of the embarrassment and disgust brought on by the family's rapid social decline, which meant that James had to be withdrawn from Clongowes in 1891. He stayed at home for a time, then spent some months at a Christian Brothers' school, but was rescued from this socially inferior institution by Father Conmee who met John Joyce one day in the street and kindly arranged for his boys to attend the well-known Jesuit day-school, Belvedere College, without paying fees. James worked hard here at first, winning exhibitions in 1894 and 1895. He was admitted to the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary and became prefect of it in September 1896. But at some point during that year a crucial experience came his way one night when, walking home from the theatre along the canal bank, he met a prostitute and was initiated into the sexual act. It was in November following this event that at the school retreat Father James A. Cullen's hell-fire sermons aroused in Joyce an acute sense of guilt and shame. He went to confession and in a new fervour of spiritual devotion subjected himself

*For convenience the title *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* will be abbreviated in this Handbook to *Portrait*.

to rigorous disciplines of prayer and mortification. But it was not long before he began to question the sincerity of his own repentance, to lose his faith in the Church, and to transfer to the sphere of artistic achievement that strong sense of vocation which the Jesuits would have directed to the priesthood. Joyce's academic and personal successes gave him undisputed leadership in the school in his penultimate year, but rebelliousness marred his final year at Belvedere, which he left in the summer of 1898. It was characteristic of his rashness that when he played the part of Dr Grimstone, the schoolmaster, in a school performance of Anstey's *Vice Versa*, he mimicked Father Henry, the rector, unmistakably.

Among friends he made at Belvedere were Richard and Eugene Sheehy, the sons of David Sheehy, a Member of Parliament, who lived in Belvedere Place and welcomed students at his home on Sunday evenings. There was singing, games were played, and Joyce became a regular guest much appreciated for his entertaining liveliness. The Sheehys had four daughters of whom the youngest, Mary, unsuspectingly became for some years the object of Joyce's secret devotion. It is probable that she was to some extent at least the model for the unidentifiable Emma Clery in *Stephen Hero* and the *Portrait*.

From 1898 to 1902 Joyce was at University College, Dublin, where he studied English, French and Italian. During these years the Joyces' movements from home to home accelerated and the unpaid debts accumulated. Meanwhile Joyce had already begun to write poetry and had excitedly discovered the plays of Ibsen. He read a paper on 'Drama and Life' to the Literary and Historical Society, and managed to get an article, 'Ibsen's New Drama', published in the *Fortnightly Review* of 1 April 1900. Ibsen himself wrote to William Archer expressing gratitude for the article and the message was conveyed to Joyce to give him his first real encouragement as the coming literary genius he aspired to be. It stimulated him moreover to more zealous study of languages and literature, and encouraged in him the sense of inheriting a European rather than a limitedly Irish culture. The fee for the article paid for a brief trip to London by Joyce and his father, and he was invited to lunch by Archer. As a result it was not long afterwards that he sent Archer his own play, *A Brilliant Career* (with a preliminary dedication 'To My Own Soul'), and Archer replied with a careful critique of the play's merits and failings, especially the latter. Joyce also wrote an article critical of the Irish literary scene, called 'The Day of the Rabblement', and, when the college magazine refused to publish it, he published it privately and sold copies himself. In 1902 he read a paper to the Literary and Historical Society on the Irish poet James Clarence Mangan (1803–49), and next day's *Freeman's Journal* called it 'the best paper ever read before the society'.

Among student friends close to Joyce during his time at University College two in particular left their mark on his work. John Francis Byrne, a handsome, tough countryman from Wicklow, impressed Joyce by his seeming indifference to much that preoccupied his fellow-students. He adopted an air of mysterious, taciturn superiority to what was going on around him, and their rarity seemed to endow his somewhat pedestrian utterances with wisdom and solemnity. Joyce made Byrne his confidant, apparently feeling that his detachment and unresponsiveness acted like the anonymous receptivity of the priest in the confessional. It was Byrne who provided the model for the character of Cranly in the *Portrait*. In contrast to Byrne, Vincent Cosgrave was a sharp-witted but lazy and self-indulgent fellow, coarse and unprincipled. He was also a fit companion on visits to the red-light district. Cosgrave was to become Lynch in the *Portrait* and *Ulysses*; and in *Ulysses* Lynch is essentially a betrayer. The origin of this identification lay in the fact that Cosgrave once stood aside with his hands in his pockets when Joyce was caught up in a fight in St Stephen's Green.

By 1902 Joyce was assiduously cultivating literary contacts. He made himself known to George Russell (known as AE, 1867–1935), who mentioned him to George Moore (1852–1933), wrote about him to Lady Gregory (1852–1932), and pressed W. B. Yeats (1865–1939) to meet him. Gossip had it that when the meeting actually took place Joyce told Yeats, 'We have met too late. You are too old for me to have any effect on you'. After taking his BA degree in 1902 Joyce at first intended to pursue medical studies, but family poverty made it impossible for him to do so in Dublin. He decided to go to Paris, with the apparent intention of studying medicine while supporting himself by teaching English. He wrote to Lady Gregory to announce his intention with characteristic self-dramatisation: 'I am going alone and friendless . . . I shall try myself against the powers of the world'. Lady Gregory induced E. V. Longworth, editor of the *Daily Express*, to send him books for reviewing and she gave him other letters of introduction. Indeed when Joyce left Ireland at the beginning of December 1902 Yeats invited him to breakfast with him after his overnight journey to London, met him at Euston Station, and looked after him for the day before he took the night ferry to Dieppe.

Though Joyce visited Dublin for three weeks at Christmas, he remained in Paris for over three months, studying, meeting people (among them J. M. Synge (1871–1909), the dramatist), writing poems, failing to get journalistic articles accepted, and begging cash from home and from Paris acquaintances to keep alive. But on 10 April 1903 he received a telegram reading 'Mother dying come home Father' and borrowed money from his pupil to journey home at once.

Back in Dublin Joyce had time on his hands and he cultivated the friendship of Oliver St John Gogarty (1878–1957), then a medical student, and destined to distinguish himself as surgeon, poet, and highly entertaining prose raconteur. Up to this point Joyce had been abstemious in his habits, but Gogarty determined to teach him to drink heavily, and succeeded. Gogarty was a brilliant conversationalist, skilled in mockery and in the manufacture of indecent limericks. He delighted in being outrageous. When Irish regiments returned to Dublin after the Boer War in 1900 he wrote a rhetorical verse tribute to them, which was duly printed in a leading social magazine, *Irish Society*, and then he flashed the news across Dublin that the capital letters at the beginning of each line should be read downwards. They ran 'The whores will be busy'.

As for the situation at home Joyce offended his family by rejecting his dying mother's request that he should go to confession and to communion, and by refusing to kneel in prayer with the rest of them at her bedside at the last, attitudes which the sturdy-minded, plain-spoken J. F. Byrne deplored. After his mother's death in August, Joyce wrote some book reviews for the *Daily Express*, made a few tentative moves towards earning money in Dublin, and finally left the family home in disgust when John Joyce sold the piano. Thereafter he moved between rented rooms and friends' houses, toyed with the idea of a singing career, worked briefly as a teacher at Clifton School, Dalkey, and finally had to face the problem of his future career when, one June day, he met and fell in love with Nora Barnacle, an auburn-haired girl from Galway who was at that time working at Finn's Hotel. Joyce and Nora took their first evening walk together on 16 June, and that day in 1904 became the day he made famous in literature for ever when he came to write *Ulysses*.

There were some rapid changes of residence in Joyce's last weeks in Ireland. He spent some time at his maternal uncle's house and even went home to his father for a few days. The temporary refuges briefly inhabited included the Martello tower at Sandycove, a defence bastion left over from Napoleonic days which Gogarty rented. But Joyce's stay in the tower soon became onerous to Gogarty who had no wish to get saddled with a semi-dependant. On Joyce's side the new commitment to Nora was a preoccupation, and the situation in the tower became uncomfortable. For his part Gogarty had no wish to earn hostility from a writer who might get satirical revenge in print. Moreover, as Stanislaus Joyce noted in his diary, Gogarty did not wish 'to forfeit the chance of shining with reflected light'. Joyce himself, however, 'determined that if Gogarty puts him out it will be done publicly'. Here then lay the genesis of another human study in betrayal. Joyce was to turn Gogarty into Buck Mulligan in *Ulysses*, a

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readily recognisable exercise in mockery which the future established surgeon, not surprisingly, could never forgive. Meanwhile Joyce was gradually making his final decision to leave Ireland, to take Nora with him, and to find a teaching post in a Berlitz school in Europe. So it was that Joyce and Nora left together in October 1904, the two of them embarking separately, since John Joyce knew nothing up to this point of Nora's part in his son's plans.

After a spell of teaching in Pola, Yugoslavia, Joyce found a post at the Berlitz school in Trieste in March 1905, and Trieste became the Joyces' home for the next ten years. Stanislaus, Joyce's brother, joined him in Trieste, also teaching at the Berlitz school. Nora gave birth to Giorgio in 1905 and to Lucia in 1907. For some months Joyce made a fruitless attempt to settle in a permanent post as a clerk in Rome in 1906; he made return visits to Ireland by himself in 1909 and 1910; and with Nora in 1912; and the family spent the summer in London in 1923; but Joyce spent the rest of his life largely in exile, moving to Zürich during the First World War, returning to Trieste in 1919, and moving to Paris in 1920.

Before leaving Ireland in October 1904, however, Joyce had written many of the poems later published as *Chamber Music* (1907). He had also made the crucial literary decision of his life in determining to write an autobiographical novel in which he would fully express his own frustrations as a rebel against Irish Catholicism, and his deep aspirations as an artist. The novel would also of course turn the spotlight of satire on many of those who had crossed his path. Joyce started work on this novel, *Stephen Hero*, in February 1904 and wrote hundreds of pages in the next few months. By 1906 he had written some 900 pages, twenty-five chapters, representing, he said, about half the intended book. In fact it did not get beyond that point. It is difficult to judge the unfinished novel fairly: the larger part was lost. The surviving manuscript begins at page 519 in the middle of Chapter XV. This is the text that was published posthumously as *Stephen Hero* in 1944. It is now regarded as something of a preliminary canter over the field which Joyce was to cover so expertly in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

The return visit to Ireland in the summer of 1909 proved crucial in its influence on Joyce's work. Lucia was now just two years old and Nora remained with her in Trieste while Joyce took little Giorgio, now four years old, to see his paternal grandfather in Dublin and Nora's people in Galway. The visit to Dublin was effective in finally reconciling John Joyce to his son's elopement, though not to his having settled so far from home. From the literary point of view Joyce's renewed contact in Dublin with his 'betrayers' was seminal. Gogarty, now comfortably settled in a smart house, did his best to be

friendly and hospitable, but Joyce was at first hostile and then not more than coolly courteous. As for Cosgrave, he produced a personal crisis for Joyce through sheer malice and vanity. He told Joyce that he had been secretly meeting Nora on alternate evenings at the very same time that she had been first going out with Joyce himself – and when on these alternate evenings she was supposedly on duty. Joyce was devastated. He wrote to Nora acutely painful and passionate letters with agonised talk of broken faith. He was rescued from desolation and despair by his friend Byrne, now living at 7 Eccles Street, the house that was to be the home of the Blooms in *Ulysses*. When Byrne heard Joyce's story he realised at once that Cosgrave was lying, and possibly conspiring with Gogarty to ruin Joyce. The truth of the whole matter had in fact long been known to Stanislaus but not communicated to Joyce until this crisis. The fact was that Cosgrave had tried to win Nora's affection back in 1904 and had been rebuffed. Joyce therefore soon had cause to feel ashamed of his mistrust, and to picture himself as even more unworthy of Nora's innocence and fidelity. He poured out his soul to her in letters to that effect.

The traumatic experience was further intensified by Joyce's subsequent visit to Galway, where he was able to talk of Nora, to visit her old haunts, and even to look into the bedroom in which she had slept as a girl. Much of the emotion focused on the experience of presumed betrayal and infidelity was to surface later in the play *Exiles*, and, more obliquely, in *Ulysses*.

The early years of exile were years of struggle, financial and literary. To some extent the financial struggle was of Joyce's own making. Improvident with money, absurdly extravagant in spending it when it came his way, an inveterate borrower, often drinking heavily, over-fond of eating out, he was frequently bailed out by Stanislaus. It was only in 1917 that he was rescued from grosser financial worries by the generosity of Harriet Shaw Weaver who began to supply him with a regular income. The literary struggle was also acutely frustrating, as the long story of Joyce's efforts to get his book of short stories, *Dubliners*, into print shows. Joyce had started work on this book too during the crucial months in Dublin in 1904. In July of that year George Russell, who had seen Joyce's manuscript of *Stephen Hero*, asked him to write a short story for his journal *The Irish Homestead*. Joyce wrote 'The Sisters' and it appeared as 'Our Weekly Story' in the issue of 13 August 1904. Two further stories, 'Eveline' and 'After the Race', appeared in *The Irish Homestead* in September and December respectively. All three were tales of let-down, of disenchantment. 'I call the stories *Dubliners* to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city', he wrote. He sent the collection to the publisher Grant Richards in December 1905.

Although Grant Richards was quick to accept *Dubliners*, troubles arose when the printers objected to some of the language they were asked to set up in type, and he began to press for alterations. Joyce was obdurate and Grant Richards backed out of the deal for a time. The book was not actually published until 1914. However, the sad tale of delays was not all loss, for Joyce continued to work on the collection after first submitting it to Grant Richards in 1905. Several stories were retouched and the finest of all, 'The Dead', was added as late as 1907. It must be admitted that Joyce was not an easy writer for publishers to handle. When Grant Richards asked him to emend a passage in *Dubliners* about Edward VII and Queen Victoria which was offensive to royalty and which read 'Here's this chap come to the throne after his old mother's keeping him out of it till the man was grey', Joyce obliged by altering 'his old mother' to 'his bloody old bitch of a mother'.

The year 1914, which finally saw the publication of *Dubliners*, saw also the serialisation of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in the London journal, *Egoist*. No one can doubt Joyce's wisdom in abandoning *Stephen Hero*, which he later denigrated as 'a schoolboy's production'. In the *Portrait* there is a new economy. The focus is shifted. Instead of a masked autobiographical record we have an artistically shaped novel, a novel of growing up in Dublin at the end of the nineteenth century. Its hero, Stephen Dedalus, in moving from infancy to young manhood, has experiences which match Joyce's own. This is what makes the book an 'autobiographical' novel. It is not an autobiography, not even a 'fictional autobiography', because it is not written in the first person. Moreover Stephen Dedalus is not a direct self-portrait. Joyce has certainly given a record of the environment in which he was brought up, people he knew have been drawn upon in his portrayal of other characters, but certain facets of their personalities were exaggerated or played down so as to meet the artistic needs of the novelist. Similarly, certain aspects of Joyce's own character were intensified and others ignored in order to create in Stephen a hero who is 'the artist' of the book's title.

Joyce's alter ego is Stephen Daedalus in *Stephen Hero* and Stephen Dedalus in the *Portrait*. He bears the names of the first Christian martyr and of the arch-artificer of classical legend. Saint Stephen's ardour in preaching and healing provoked such hostility that he was hauled up before the Sanhedrin, and when he boldly stood his ground, extolling Christ's authority over that of the Temple, he was stoned to death. Thus St Stephen provided Joyce with an image of himself as the heroic martyr, inspired with a prophetic mission, who is persecuted and condemned by institutionalised powers incapable of recognising his greatness. Daedalus, on the other hand, the great Athenian

craftsman, constructed the labyrinth at Crete in which the monstrous Minotaur was confined. When he found himself imprisoned in his own maze, Daedalus fabricated wings for himself and his son Icarus from wax and feathers, so that they could escape by flight. Unfortunately Icarus flew too near the sun, the wax melted, and he was drowned. As the maker of a labyrinth and as one who escaped by flight, Daedalus provided Joyce with another congenial symbol.

Once *Dubliners* and the *Portrait* were in print Joyce became known, and after the family's move to Paris in 1920 life became easier in that Joyce had established himself and found himself a literary celebrity. But two more personal worries continued to trouble him. He himself suffered from deteriorating eyesight and underwent several operations; and his daughter Lucia suffered increasingly from schizophrenia. She was to die in a Northampton mental hospital in 1982.

The generosity of Miss Weaver's patronage, however, enabled Joyce to concentrate on *Ulysses*. Its composition occupied him for seven years between 1914 and 1921. Episodes began to be published serially in the *Little Review* in March 1918, and the completed book was published in Paris by Shakespeare and Co in 1922. Joyce had long been fascinated by the figure of Ulysses, or Odysseus, and for his epic portrayal of Dublin in June 1904 he chose to represent this hero of antiquity in the person of Leopold Bloom, a modest advertising agent. Penelope is his wife Molly Bloom. The agonies of Odysseus's ten years' wanderings and separation from his wife are transmuted into the personal and commercial frustrations of Bloom, who goes about his daily business in Dublin while his beloved wife entertains her lover at home. Stephen Dedalus, Joyce's alter ego in the *Portrait*, cut off physically and psychologically from home and friends, fatherland and church, is in search of spiritual fatherhood, and thus parallels Telemachus, Odysseus's son who goes out to find his father. The realistic details of the work as a portrait of Dublin city, Dublin's personalities, and Dublin life are unmatched in literature. Yet this is but half the story of the book's significance. For structural parallels with Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and even Milton add layers of rich meaning to the documentary of twentieth-century life, and a system of symbols ties the whole fabric together. Moreover, the archetypal patterning thus achieved is further enriched by highly innovatory experiments in matching style to substance.

Serial publication ensured that *Ulysses* was highly acclaimed in literary circles long before it was generally available in book form. Influential writers such as Ezra Pound (1885–1972) and T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) recognised the magnitude of Joyce's achievement from the start. Hence the circle of admirers that gathered round Joyce in his Paris days. After the immense artistic achievement of *Ulysses* Joyce's

decision to devote what turned out to be seventeen years to the composition of *Finnegans Wake* dismayed many of his admirers, Miss Weaver among them, for stylistic experimentation in this massive work is carried to a point at which only the fervent enthusiast will take the trouble to work out even a minimum of the meanings that the compressed text holds. Joyce's devotion to the task was characteristic. The man who was absurdly careless of money and over-fond of playing the wild Irishman through long nights of drinking, telling tales, singing, dancing, and joking, would at the same time be recording scraps of conversation and odd verbal usage and storing them for use in that side of his life in which he worked at his manuscripts with a patient and disciplined effort that only the toughest of moral fibres could sustain.

Such paradox is the mark of Joyce as writer and as man. He loved Nora from the moment when, as he put it, she sauntered into his life in a Dublin street. She was quite incapable of sharing his literary and intellectual interests. She was totally uninterested in the work that exacted year after year a mountainous price in its toll upon his mental and moral resources. Yet Joyce's dependence upon her and his devotion to her were central to his achievement. He was deeply attached too to his impossible father, and overcome with remorse that he had not visited him more when John Joyce died in 1931. Joyce's own last years were darkened by Lucia's deteriorating mental condition. The Second World War drove the family back from Paris to Zürich, and Joyce died there in January 1941 after surgery on a duodenal ulcer. He was buried there, and so was Nora when she died ten years later.

Joyce's Dublin

Whatever and wherever Joyce wrote it was the Dublin of his youth and young manhood that provided the central substance of his work. He was fond of claiming that if Dublin were destroyed it could be reconstructed from his books. It is evident that since the Joyce family had at least sixteen different addresses before Joyce left Ireland and since the home itself was not an attractive one to linger in there was every incentive for Joyce as a child and as a student to roam the streets and become familiar with the oddest corners of the city. As a capital city Dublin had impressive public places, dignified architecture, and a fine cultural life, yet it was small enough for there to be a sense of community at its centre, for the inhabitants to know one another, and for the city's characters to be a matter of interest to all. At its heart it was lived in as well as worked in. Its people had common contemporary subjects for their conversation and many of them a common stock of historical knowledge to draw on or fantasise about.

Dublin is an ancient city. Scandinavian invaders had made it their base in the ninth century and Danish power was not finally overthrown until the Irish king Brian Boru broke it at the battle of Clontarf in 1014. It was during the reign of Henry II in the twelfth century that English forces first invaded Ireland and took Dublin, and the chequered story of Anglo-Irish political relationships from that time has been summed up in the phrase, 'England never wholly victorious nor Ireland thoroughly subdued'. No doubt the eighteenth century was an age of some cultural splendour in Dublin. Much of the finest public and domestic architecture dates from this period prior to the Act of Union (1800) when Ireland had its own parliament. It is not surprising that in Joyce's youth the splendour of eighteenth-century Dublin was looked back upon with nostalgia. It was 'the seventh city of Christendom' Gogarty would remind its citizens. And Joyce was wont to insist upon its current dignity as 'the second city of the British Empire'.

Joyce's love–hate relationship with his native city was of intense significance to him as a writer. He may have shaken the city's dust from his feet in 1904, disgusted with its paralytic decay and angry with its cramping conventions, but he knew the city inside out and his work reveals how much he admired its dignity, its humanity, its sheer comprehensiveness and comprehensibility. These qualities made it appropriate as the locus of an epic on the scale of the *Odyssey*. Dublin could be Everyman's city, the archetypal 'womancity' like the New Jerusalem. 'If I can get to the heart of Dublin, I can get to the heart of every city in the world', he said. 'In the particular is contained the universal.'

The fact that Dublin had been the seat of government and the home of the aristocracy in the eighteenth century but had declined from this status in the nineteenth century determined the physical peculiarity of the city in which Joyce was brought up. The public face of a capital city was evident, many of the fine squares and terraces of the capital's hey-day were evident too, but encroaching upon them were slums, seedy tenements, and signs of dereliction as bad as any in western Europe. The area immediately north of the Liffey, between Marlborough Street in the west and Amiens Street in the east (which Joyce called 'Nighttown') contained a large number of brothels. Popularly known as 'Monto', the notorious area included Montgomery Street, Talbot Street and Mecklenburg Street. This once fashionable area had been taken over by British regiments in the mid-nineteenth century, girls poured in, and prostitution flourished. The brothels remained when the military departed. Thus central Dublin contained, within easy walking distance, such magnificent buildings as those of Trinity College, the old Parliament House (taken over by the Bank of

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