

## James Joyce's *Dubliners*

English 9014A

September 18, 2012

## composition of the stories

12 stories written in 1904-05: "The Sisters," "Eveline," "After the Race" (all written in Dublin), "Clay," "The Boarding House," "Counterparts," "A Painful Case," "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," "An Encounter," "A Mother," "Araby," "Grace"

2 stories written in 1906: "Two Gallants," "A Little Cloud" (plus idea for one based on Alfred Hunter called "Ulysses" – never written)

1 story written in 1907: "The Dead"  
see also *Dubliners*, pp. xli-xlvi

## publishing history of *Dubliners*

1904: *Irish Homestead*: "The Sisters" (Aug 13), "Eveline" (Sept 10), "After the Race" (Dec 17)

1905: sends 12 stories to Grant Richards (London)

1906: Richards accepts book in February  
then (2 stories added) rejects it in September

1909: Maunsel & Co. (Dublin) accepts full book

1910: Maunsel pulls proofs but delays publication

1912: deal collapses; proofs destroyed

1905-14: 15+ publishers reject book (4 times)

1914: Grant Richards accepts *Dubliners* again  
and publishes it in June

Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand assassinated  
June 28, war (World War I) declared July 28

## the problem(s)? [also *Dubliners* 186-89]

names real business establishments:  
O'Neill's, Davy Byrne's, Scotch House, Mulligan's  
("Counterparts," pp. 68, 71, 72, 72)

refers to public figures:

–But after all now, said Mr Lyons argumentatively, King Edward's life, you know, is not the very . . . .

–Let bygones be bygones, said Mr Henchy. I admire the man personally. He's just an ordinary knockabout like you and me. He's fond of his glass of grog and he's a bit of a rake, perhaps, and he's a good sportsman. Damn it, can't we Irish play fair?

("Ivy Day in the Committee Room," p. 102)

"profanity":

but Jack kept shouting at him that if any fellow tried that sort of a game on with *his* sister he'd bloody well put his teeth down his throat, so he would. ("The Boarding House," p. 51)

–At dinner, you know. Then he has a bloody big bowl of cabbage before him on the table and a bloody big spoon like a shovel. . . .

("Grace," pp. 125-26)

## the problem(s)? - 2

"pornography":

A man with two establishments to keep up, of course he couldn't . . . ("Counterparts," p. 70)

Farrington said he wouldn't mind having the far one and began to smile at her but when Weathers offered to introduce her he said "No," he was only chaffing because he knew he had not money enough. She continued to cast bold glances at him and changed the position of her legs often and when she was going out she brushed against his chair and said "Pardon!" in a Cockney accent.

("Counterparts," early draft version) – published version:  
Farrington gazed admiringly at the plump arm which she moved very often and with much grace; and when, after a little time, she answered his gaze he admired still more her large dark brown eyes. The oblique staring expression in them fascinated him. She glanced at him once or twice and, when the party was leaving the room, she brushed against his chair and said *O, pardon!* in a London accent.  
("Counterparts," p. 73)

## arrangement of the stories

childhood: "The Sisters," "An Encounter," "Araby"

adolescence: "Eveline," "After the Race," ["Two Gallants,"] "The Boarding House"

mature life: ["A Little Cloud,"] "Counterparts," "Clay," "A Painful Case"

public life: "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," "A Mother," "Grace"

+ ["The Dead"]

(from a letter to brother Stanislaus Joyce,  
September 1905)

[brackets] = not mentioned; conceived and added later

***Dubliners: from Joyce's letters 1***

**"I call the series *Dubliners* to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city."**

**(letter to friend Constantine Curran,  
August 1904)**

***Dubliners: from Joyce's letters 2***

**"I think people might be willing to pay for the special odour of corruption which, I hope, floats over my stories."**

**(letter to publisher Grant Richards,  
October 15, 1905)**

***Dubliners: from Joyce's letters 3***

**"My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis."**

**(letter to publisher Grant Richards,  
May 5, 1906)**

***Dubliners: from Joyce's letters 4***

**"I have written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction that he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard."**

**(letter to publisher Grant Richards,  
May 5, 1906)**

***Dubliners: from Joyce's letters 5***

**"I seriously believe that you will retard the course of civilisation in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking-glass."**

**(letter to publisher Grant Richards,  
June 23, 1906)**

**epiphany (*Stephen Hero*, pp. 210-11) - 1**

He was passing through Eccles' St one evening, one misty evening all these thoughts dancing the dance of unrest in his brain when a trivial incident set him composing some ardent verses which he entitled a "Vilanelle of the Temptress." A young lady was standing on the steps of one of those brown brick houses which seem the very incarnation of Irish paralysis. A young gentleman was leaning on the rusty railings of the area. Stephen as he passed on his quest heard the following fragment of colloquy out of which he received an impression keen enough to afflict his sensitiveness very severely.

epiphany (*Stephen Hero*, pp. 210-11) - 2

The Young Lady – (drawing discreetly) . . . O,  
yes . . . I was . . . at the . . . cha . . . pel . . .

The Young Gentleman – (inaudibly) . . . I . . .  
(again inaudibly) . . . I . . .

The Young Lady – (softly) . . . O . . . but  
you're . . . ve . . . ry . . . wick . . . ed . . .

epiphany (*Stephen Hero*, pp. 210-11) - 3

This triviality made him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments. He told Cranly that the clock of the Ballast Office was capable of an epiphany. Cranly questioned the inscrutable dial of the Ballast Office with his no less inscrutable countenance: