

I gave an in class assignment to write your earliest memory. Please fax these in to our office. (Remember to label as In Class Writing Activity November 29.)

These notes are from Grade Saver, Classic Notes:

<http://www.gradesaver.com/ClassicNotes/Authors/about_james_joyce.html>.

Biography of James Joyce (1882-1941)

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce was born on February 2, 1882, just south of Dublin in a wealthy suburb called Rathgar. The Joyce family was initially well off as Dublin merchants with bloodlines that connected them to old Irish nobility in the country. James' father, John Joyce, was a fierce Irish Catholic patriot and his political and religious influences are most evident in Joyce's two key works: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses.

As a result of their steadily diminishing wealth and income, the Joyce family was repeatedly forced to move to more modest residences and John Joyce's habitual unemployment as well as his drinking and spending habits, made it difficult for the Joyces to retain their previous social standing. A young James Joyce was sent away to the renowned Clongowes School in 1888—a Jesuit institution that was regarded as the best preparatory school in Ireland. The Clongowes school figures prominently in Joyce's work, specifically in the story of his recurring character Stephen Dedalus. Joyce earned high marks both at the Clongowes School and at Belvedere College in Dublin where he continued. At this point in his life, it seemed evident that Joyce was to enter the priesthood, a decision that would have pleased his parents. As James Joyce made contact with various members of the "Irish Literary Renaissance," his interest in the priesthood waned. Indeed, Joyce became increasingly critical of Ireland and its conservative elements, especially the Church.

In opposition to his mother's wishes, Joyce left Ireland in 1902 to pursue a medical education in Paris, and did not return to Ireland until the following year upon news of his mother's debilitation and imminent death. After burying his mother, Joyce continued in Ireland, working as a schoolteacher at a boys' school, another autobiographical detail that recurs in the story of Stephen Dedalus. After barely spending a year in Dublin, Joyce returned to the Continent, drifting in and out of medical school in Paris before taking up residence in Zurich. It was during this period that Joyce began writing professionally.

In 1905, Joyce completed a collection of eight stories, entitled Dubliners, though it was not until 1913 that the volume was actually printed. During these frustrating and impoverished years, Joyce heavily relied upon the emotional support of Nora Barnacle, his unmarried Irish lover, as well as the financial support of his younger brother, Stanislaus Joyce. Both Nora and Stanislaus remained as protective, supporting figures for the duration of the writer's life. During the eight years between Dubliners' completion and publication, Joyce and Barnacle had two children, a son named Giorgio and a daughter named Lucia.

Joyce's next major work, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, appeared in serialized form in 1914 and 1915, before Joyce was "discovered" by Ezra Pound and the complete text was printed in New York in 1916, and in London in 1917. It was with the assistance of Pound, a prominent literary figure of the time, that Joyce came in contact with Harriet Shaw Weaver, who served as both editor and patron while Joyce wrote Ulysses.

When Ulysses was published in Paris in 1922, many immediately hailed the work as genius. With his

AP English Notes
November 29, 2004

inventive narrative style and engagement with multiple philosophical themes, Joyce had established himself as a leading Modernist. The novel charts the passage of one day (June, 16 1904) as depicted in the life of an Irish Jew named Leopold Bloom, who plays the role of a Ulysses by wandering through the streets of Dublin. Despite the fact that Joyce was writing in self-imposed exile, living in Paris, Zurich and Trieste while writing *Ulysses*, the novel is noted for the incredible amount of accuracy and detail regarding the physical and geographical features of Dublin.

Thematically similar to Joyce's previous works, *Ulysses* examines the relationship between the modern man and his myth and history, focusing on contemporary questions of Irish political and cultural independence, the effects of organized religion on the soul, and the cultural and moral decay produced economic development and heightened urbanization. While Joyce was writing the epic work, there was serious doubt as to whether *Ulysses* would be completed. Midway through his writing, Joyce suffered the first of eleven eye operations to salvage his ever-worsening eyesight. At one point, a disappointed Joyce cast the bulk of his manuscript into the fire, though Nora Barnacle immediately rescued it.

While *Ulysses* was hailed by some, the novel was banned from both the United Kingdom as well as the United States on obscenity charges. It was not until 1934, that Random House won a court battle that granted permission to print and distribute Joyce's *Ulysses* in the United States; two years later, the novel was legalized in Britain.

By that time, Joyce was approaching the end of his public career having concluded his work on a final novel entitled *Finnegan's Wake*. Considered to be far more baffling and convoluted than *Ulysses*, *Finnegan's Wake* was a critical failure, ostracizing Joyce from many of his former admirers. At the outbreak of World War II, Joyce remained in Paris until he was forced to move (first to Vichy and then to Switzerland). On January 13, 1941, James Joyce died of a stomach ulcer at the age of 58, and was buried in Zurich's Fluntern Cemetery. Though his prestige had faded towards the end of his life, Joyce regained literary stature in the decades following his death and *Ulysses* now stands as the definitive text of the Anglo-American modernist movement, marking Joyce's creative genius and premier abilities as a stylist of the English language.

We also began the novel today.

We began with Stephen Dedalus' earliest childhood, described to us in the terms a child would use: there are touches of baby talk. We also see the first learning processes dealing with the senses of touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. These first lines describe the beginning stages of knowledge: how the artist begins to perceive his world and process the information.