

An Introduction to Modernism in Literature

- Literary Modernism is a subset of a larger artistic movement called Modernism that embraces painting and music
- In the literary realm, it's basically responsible for some seriously weird literature produced roughly between the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II.

Modernism

a term typically associated with the twentieth-century reaction against realism and romanticism within the arts. It is a cultural movement which rebelled against Victorian morals

More generally, it is often used to refer to a twentieth-century belief in the virtues of science, technology and the planned management of social change.

Why????

- a response to a lot of the destruction and disruption caused by World War I (technology that was better than the warfare style it was designed for, trench warfare and poison gas)
- the city transforms
- It provoked a lot of artists, writers, and also painters and musicians, to really think that they need a new art to make sense of this new world

WWI: Trench War Fare and Poison Gas



What???

- *Doesn't usually make sense*
- *nonlinearity of plot or sequence of things – unexpected plots, puzzle*
- *irony and satire (verbal irony, situational irony, dramatic irony) - mismatch*
- *voices and the idea of stream of consciousness*
- *allusions*







Modernist literature

the literary expression of the tendencies of Modernism, especially High Modernism, Modernistic art and literature normally revolved around the idea of individualism, mistrust of institutions (government, religion), and the disbelief of any absolute truths.

- “As far as literature is concerned modernism reveals a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at man’s position and function in the universe and many experiments in form and style. It is particularly concerned with language and how to use it (representationally or otherwise) and with writing itself”
- (*Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory*).

Characteristics of Modernism in Literature

- *doesn't usually make sense*
- *different perspectives*
- *nonlinearity of plot or sequence of things*
– *unexpected plots, puzzle*
- *irony and satire (verbal irony, situational irony, dramatic irony) - mismatch*
- *voices and the idea of stream of consciousness*
- *allusions*

Perspectives

- Literature Exhibits Perspectivism
 - Meaning comes from the individual's perspective and is thus personalized;
 - A single story might be told from the perspective of several different people, with the assumption that the "truth" is somewhere in the middle

Characteristics of Modernism in Literature

- Inner psychological reality or “interiority” is represented: Stream of consciousness—portraying the character’s inner monologue
- Organized non-sequentially: Experience portrayed as allusive, discontinuous, using fragmentation and juxtaposition.
- Ambiguous endings—open endings which are seen as more representative of reality.

Main representatives

James Joyce

T.S. Eliot

Virginia Woolf

D.H. Lawrence

Samuel Beckett

Ezra Pound

Gertrude Stein

Katherine Mansfield

Ezra Pound

- Comes to London in 1908
- hangs out with Yeats and T.S. Eliot
- created artistic movements
- Short poems
- *The Cantos*, which is unfinished 800 page epic poem
- a Fascist in Italy



Voiticism



Imagism

- direct treatment of the “thing” as “thing” (an attempt at isolating a single image to reveal its essence)
- short
- use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
- As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.

In the Station of the Metro

*The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.*

Ezra Pound



Gertrude Stein



- American living in Paris
- difficult-to-understand poems, mostly characterized by wordplay as greater than meaning. She's more interested in how words sound
- A classic Steinian phrase is 'A *rose is a rose is a rose.*' "*There is no there there*"
- The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas
- Tender Buttons 1914

Tender Buttons

A RED STAMP.

If lilies are lily white if they exhaust noise
and distance and even dust, if they dusty
will dirt a surface that has no extreme
grace, if they do this and it is not
necessary it is not at all necessary if they
do this they need a catalogue.

Tender Buttons

MILK.

Climb up in sight climb in the whole utter
needles and a guess a whole guess is hanging.
Hanging hanging.

EGGS.

Kind height, kind in the right stomach with a
little sudden mill.

Cunning shawl, cunning shawl to be steady.

Katherine Mansfield

- from New Zealand
- a pretty bohemian lifestyle
- Anton Chekov
- *In a German Pension* (1911)
- *The Garden Party & Other Stories* (1922)
- *Bliss and Other Stories* (1923)
- died at the age of 34





Virginia
Woolf

1882–1941

Virginia Woolf

- She was born in 1882
- father - a historian/writer, involved in the art world; mother - a model for paintings
- mental illness
- self-educated
- married Leonard Woolf in 1912, they started their own printing press - the **Hogarth Press** - publishing arm of the **Bloomsbury Group** .

Major Works

- *The Voyage Out* 1915
- *Night and Day* 1919
- *Jacob's Room* 1922 - success ☺!
(more experimental. It's an indirect character study of Jacob)
- *Mrs. Dalloway* 1925 - breakthrough novel!!!!
- *To the Lighthouse* 1927 - even more experimental
- *Orlando* 1928
- *A Room of One's Own* 1929
- *The Waves* 1931 - extremely experimental
- *The Years* 1937
- *Between the Acts* 1941

Yellow and black, pink and snow white, shapes of all these colors, men, women, and children were spotted for a second upon the horizon, and then, seeing the breadth of yellow that lay upon the grass, they wavered and sought shade beneath the trees, dissolving like drops of water in the yellow and green atmosphere, staining it faintly with red and blue



Mrs. Dalloway, 1925

- a novel that takes place in a single day in June
- Characters: Clarissa Dalloway, her husband Richard, her daughter Elizabeth; Septimus Smith - a shell-shocked World War I veteran, Peter Walsh, who's an old friend of Clarissa's
- book is about their memories and their thoughts, a lot of the internal *narrative* of these characters
- death of SS seems to CD as a way of saying something or preserving some sort of independence, something that she and her friends haven't been able to do as they've gone through life

Style - free indirect discourse

- free indirect discourse (reads a little like stream of consciousness)
- a third person representation of a person's thoughts, but without the 'he said,' 'he thought', 'he considered' tags.
- 'He wondered why he hadn't thought to try Pepsi before. *How effervescent the bubbles, how lovely the taste!*' (instead of: 'He thought, *How effervescent the bubbles.*')
- 'Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning - fresh as if issued to children on a beach. *What a lark! What a plunge!*'

Style

- interweaving plot
- the style of the novel: indirect to direct, thoughts and description, all going on at once without really letting readers know the difference between the two - stylistic effect where we're always in the characters' thoughts and we're always out of the characters' thoughts.
- a meditation on **perspective** and **thoughts** - the characters are constantly thinking about what could have been in their pasts
- how people observe the same thing differently

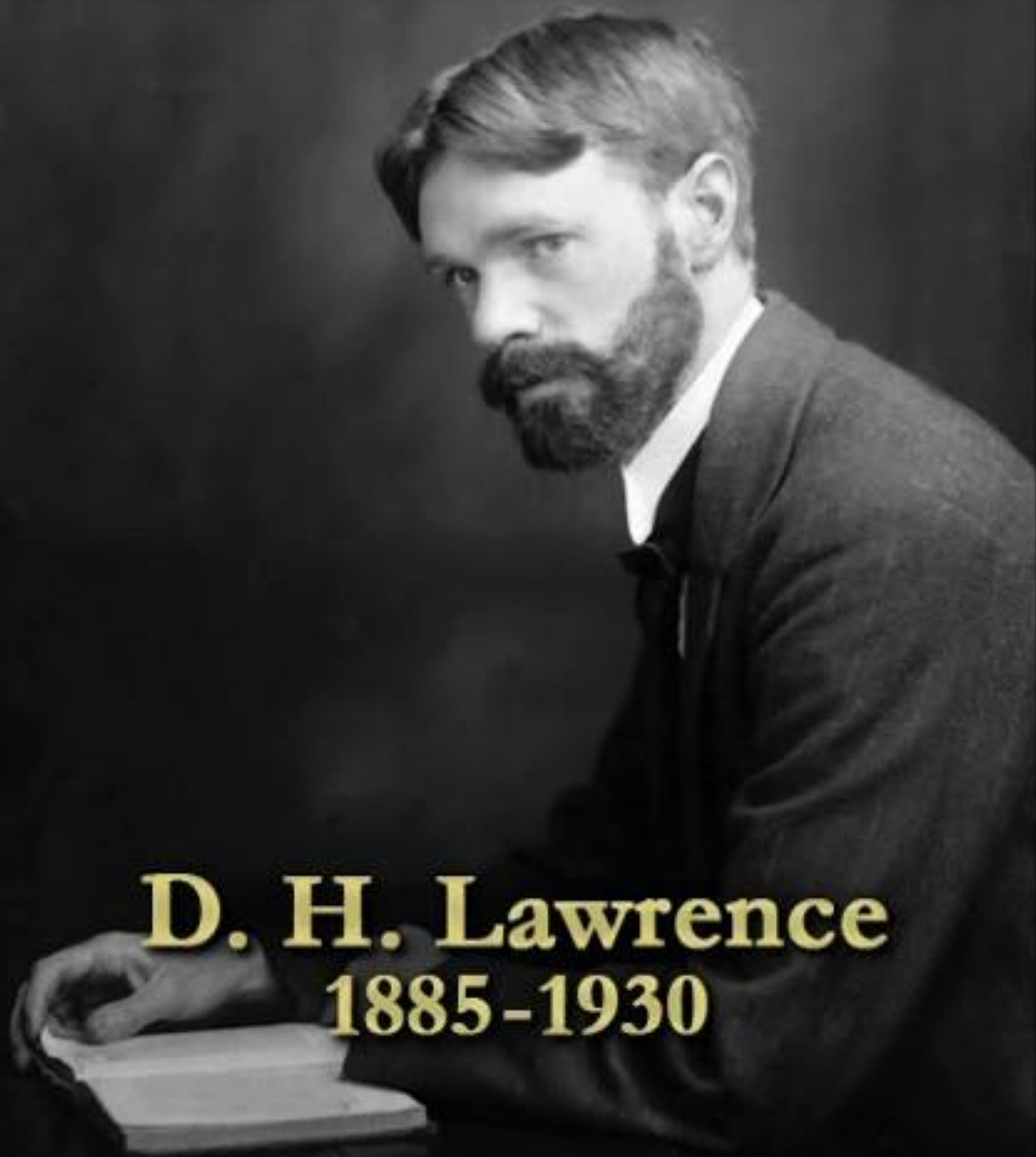
Summary

- **How is Virginia and Leonard Woolf's publishing house called?**
- **Virginia Woolf was a member of a bohemian group of artists, writers, and thinkers called...**
- **Though many of Virginia Woolf's works deal with women's issues, which is an essay specifically targeting inequality in access to education?**

- **In Virginia Woolf's novel, Orlando, the title character is an Elizabethan man who is transformed into...**
- **Who is Peter Walsh?**
- **Mrs. Dalloway takes place in a single:
Hour? Day? Month? Year?**

Which of the following is an example of free indirect discourse?

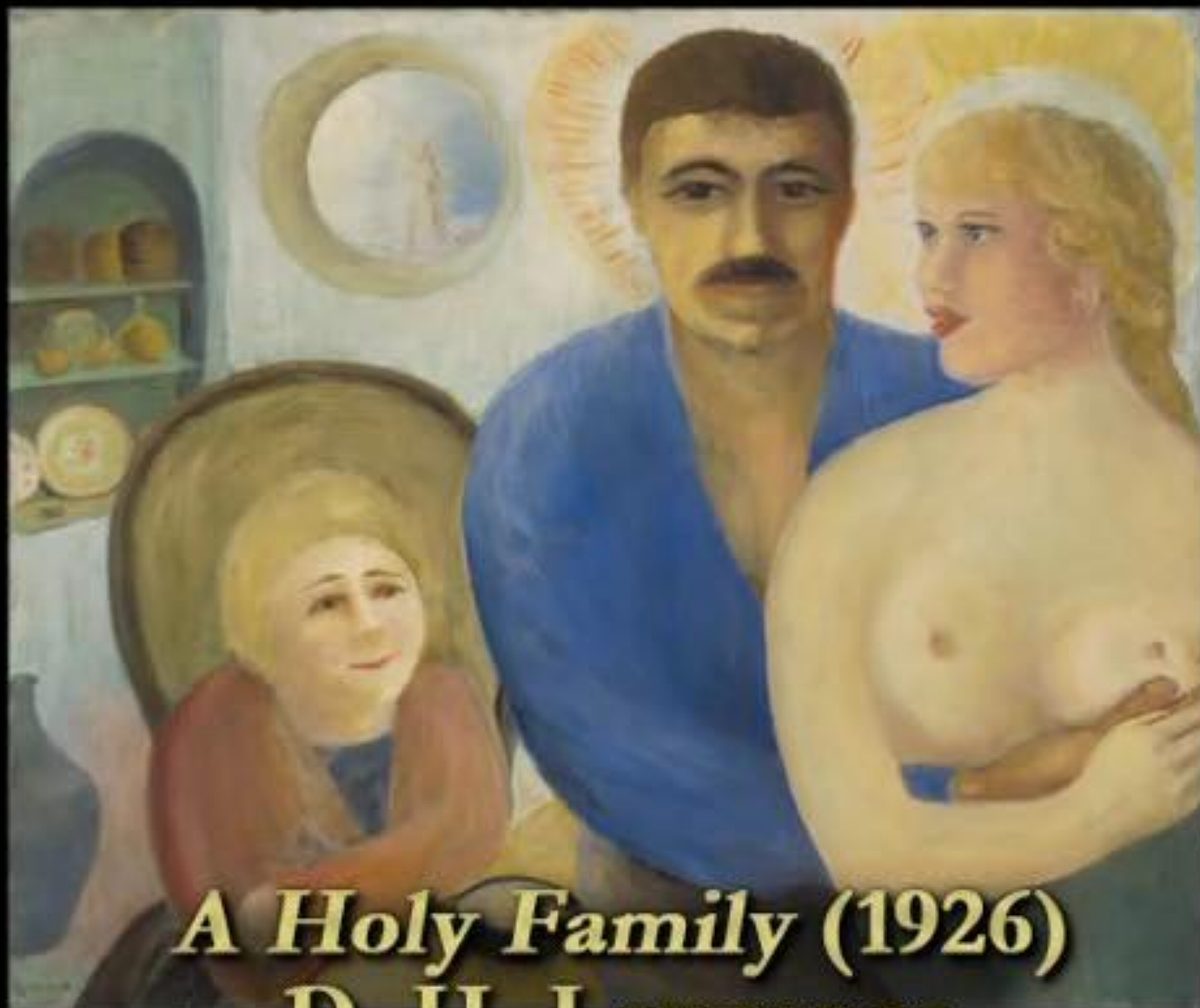
1. 'What a lark! What a plunge!'
2. 'Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria Street.'
3. 'Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.'
4. 'She stiffened a little on the kerb, waiting for Durtnall's van to pass.'
5. 'The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming.'



D. H. Lawrence
1885-1930

D.H. Lawrence

- was born in 1885 in English coal-mining country. His father was a coal-miner.
- showed from pretty early on that he was a good writer
- ended up becoming a teacher in London
- got discovered by writer Ford Madox Ford. He starts publishing novels in the early 1910s.
- Frieda Weekley



A Holy Family (1926)

D. H. Lawrence

Sons and Lovers - first major book, published in 1913

- semi-autobiographical
- set in coal-mining country
- in coal-mining country a lot of oedipal issues (an unconscious sexual feeling of a son to his mother)
- his primary concerns in literature - relationships

Other novels

- *The Rainbow* (1915) is D.H. Lawrence's first brush with obscenity (a word or action that is sexually offensive).
- *Women in Love*, which is its sequel, comes out in 1920.
- *Lady Chatterly's Lover* (1928) - published in a heavily abridged form until 1960 (Obscene Publications Act passed in 1959)

Summary

- **Which D.H. Lawrence novel does Modern Library rank as #9 in its list of the 100 Best Books of the 20th Century?**
- **Which D.H. Lawrence novel was the subject of a famous obscenity trial in 1960?**



T. S.
Eliot

1888–1965

T.S. Eliot

- American, born in St. Louis, went to Harvard, spent some time in Boston
- become a British citizen later on in life and he lived in London from 1914 onward



Major Works

- *The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock*, 1915 - a meditative monologue presumably of J. Alfred Prufrock
- 1919 - critical essays '*Tradition in the Individual Talent*' - a controversial claim that poetry needs to be impersonal. You need to be able to interpret it without knowing anything about the author and his circumstances.
- '*The Waste Land.*' 1922 - the most famous work of Modernism
- '*The Hollow Men,*' a follow-up to '*The Waste Land.*' 1925

- in 1927 he converts to Anglicanism - his poetry and his plays after that start to be more religiously focused
- a poem '*Ash Wednesday*,' 1930
- a play '*Murder in the Cathedral*,' 1935
- final masterpiece '*Four Quartets*,' published from 1936 through 1942 - four poems '*Burnt Norton*,' '*East Coker*,' '*The Dry Salvages*' and '*Little Gidding*.'

- culmination of his career - the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948
- In 1957, he's 68 and he gets married to his 32-year-old secretary, whose name is Esme Valerie Fletcher
- He dies in 1965
- *'Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats'* got turned into the Andrew Lloyd Weber musical 'Cats.'

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, *1915*

- first big break poem
- American poem (Boston?)
- theme of being old
- Plot - What happens in this poem is we follow around the speaker or narrator as he wanders around town. He also wanders through his memories.
- It's really a non-linear plot; just his thoughts as he goes.

*Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells*

Style

- this poem is written in **free verse**, since it doesn't have any set length or set rhyme scheme. At the same time, it has half-rhymes and internal rhymes even though there's no real structure

*And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea*

- a non-linear plot
- repetitive phrases:

*...in the room the women come and go,
talking of Michelangelo.*

*...I have known them all already, known them
all.*

...that's not what I meant at all

- Reference to Prince Hamlet (an allusion):

*No! I am not Prince Hamlet,
nor was meant to be.*

mood and tone of regret

I grow old...I grow old...

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?

I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach

I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each

I do not think that they will sing to me

- *'I've measured out my life in coffee spoons.'*
- it's about looking back and assessing
- describe unremarkable life

James
Joyce

1882–1941



James Joyce

- had long-lasting impact in literature
- particularly famous for starting the technique known as **stream of consciousness**

Ulysses:

a quarter after what an unearthly hour I suppose they're just getting up in China now combing out their pigtails for the day well soon have the nuns ringing the angelus they've nobody coming in to spoil their sleep except an odd priest or two for his night office or the alarmclock next door at cockshout clattering the brain out of itself let me see if I can doze off 1 2 3 4 5 what kind of flowers are those they invented like the stars the wallpaper in Lombard street was much nicer the apron he gave me was like that something only I only wore it twice better lower this lamp and try again so that I can get up early

James Joyce

- Irish author
- the oldest of 10 surviving children
- boarding school,
- local school, college in Dublin,
- heads off to Paris, medical school,
- Mother is dying - comes home, stays in Dublin, starts to work on *Portrait*
- in 1904, on June he meets his future wife Nora Barnacle

James Joyce

- a short-story collection *Dubliners* (1914)
- *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* 1916
- starts working on *Ulysses*, which starts getting published serially - in installments (1918)
- *Ulysses* gets published in its final book form in 1922
- *Finnegans Wake* 1939

Finnegans Wake

- experimental & unreadable !!!
- lots of words from foreign languages
- the beginning of the book and the end of the book are the same sentence, but in a circle. The beginning of the book is:
 - *'riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.'*
- And the end of the book: *'End here. Us then. Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a long the riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.'*

Dubliners - 1914

- a short-story collection (15 stories) about people living in Dublin:
 - 3 – about childhood,
 - 4 – adolescence,
 - 4 – mature life,
 - 3 – public life,
 - The Dead* – summary
- JJ intended these short stories to be “a chapter in the moral history of Ireland”
- JJ recreated the short story, moving its action & focus from external to internal events
- the most famous stories - '*Araby*' and '*The Dead*.'

epiphany

- (comes from the Christian church year commemorating the visit of the Wise Man – January 6);
- an experience of sudden and striking realization
- indicates a sudden revelation or discovery, usually unexpected, that allows the protagonist or reader to see smth in a new way

**"Gazing up into the darkness I
saw myself as a creature driven
and derided by vanity; and my
eyes burned with anguish and
anger."**

(Joyce, "Araby")



westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns.

Bildungsroman

- **novel of formation, novel of education, or coming-of-age story,**
- a literary genre that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist from youth to adulthood and in which, therefore, character change is extremely important
- ***Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

- Stephen Dedalus - an alter-ego of young Joyce
- abandons the idea that he needs to be strictly realistic. He starts to get a little more interested in representing Stephen's consciousness

Part I

- **Childhood**

- this very young child stage is represented in language
- *Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo.*

- **Part II**

Sexual Awakening - his first sexual experience with a prostitute

- **Part III**

Religious Torment - Stephen going in for a confession

- **Part IV**

Discipline – **not** indulging in pleasures - to be a priest? - thinks about his name and his father - his destiny as an artist

- **Part V**

University - the diary - a dedication to his father
Old father, old artificer, stand me forever in good stead

Ulysses

- June 16th
- Stephen Dedalus - in Dublin, working as a schoolteacher
- Chapter 4 - Leopold Bloom '*Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls.*'

