**Dr. S. CHOUCHANE**

**3rd Year Literature Module**

**Academic Year: 2024/2025**

**Modernist Aspects in James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)**

Many aspects of modernism depicted in this novel had a great influence upon the development of the modernist movement itself and turned Joyce into a prominent modernist writer.

The novel is one of the most significant examples of a Kunstlerroman (an artist‘s Bildungsroman) in English literature in which we see the development of an artist in his questioning and rebellion against the Catholic and Irish conventions of his upbringing.

1. **Fragmentariness** (non-linear narratives): The chronological order of the events being sometimes rearranged to follow the inner life of the characters. (bildungsoram, kuntleroman)
2. **Form vs. Content:** James Joyce favors form over content and stresses the all importance of form and style. The novel needs close reading due to the complexity of both language and style.(for elite)
* The style evolves throughout all its five chapters. The complexity of language gradually increases in all these stages of evolution.
* He breaks down the barriers between senses: Ex: the smell of evening, the soft grey silence.
* He brilliantly violates the rules of the **language** and combines nouns and adjectives to create new words. example: jeweleyed (sexually aggressive)
1. **Many Climaxes: No end to the text**, no problem solved.
2. **Hero**: reflects his own experience of life not life itself.
* following Stephen‘s unrestrained conscious thought. This is an essential technique of modernism as it creates a psychic reality which has little to do with the true reality.
* He is withdrawn, reflexive, ineffectual, introverted, and eccentric.
* He is not resourceful, industrious.
1. **Stream of consciousness + interior monologue:** The text explores the character’s inner state of consciousness.
2. **Epiphany**: (the moment in which a character suddenly sees the transcendent truth of a situation): the text is known with its different epiphanies.
3. **The Role of the Reader:**
* The reader’s task is to discover the potential **meanings** **of the epiphanic moments**.
* The final pages of the novel represent Stephen‘s diary for the period before leaving to Paris and it is the **reader who decides whether Stephen will succeed or not**. Like Icarus, the son of Daedalus, he may fall into the sea with melted wings.
* “Blanks” or “gaps” that the reader fills by discovering potential meanings. It is especially instructive for readers of *A Portrait,* seeking clues to that book (Aesthetic blanks)
1. **Narration**: 3rd person omniscient. In the end, there is a close identification between the narrator and Stephen (1st person) (author and hero and no omniscient narrator to comment on the action)
2. **The use of Myth**: the myth of Daedalus, the name of the hero in Greek mythology, is an architect and inventor becoming trapped in a labyrinth of his own construction. He creates wings of feathers and wax for his son (Icarus) and for himself, in order to escape. They fly away but Icarus tries to fly higher and finally, as he flies too close to the sun, the wax melts and he falls into the sea
3. **Irony and Imagery**