

The Bloomsday Seminar 2021: Joyce and the Women

16 June 2021, 4pm

Studley Grounds, 121 Studley Park Road (enter via Walmer Street, Kew)

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In 2021, the Bloomsday Seminar participants will discuss the most influential among Joyce's real-world women, Mary Jane Joyce (née Murray, his mother) and Nora Barnacle (his partner and eventually his wife), and the fictional characters he modelled on them, Mary or May Dedalus and Molly Bloom.

Steve Carey



'The Making of *Love's Bitter Mystery*'

1904 is the year in which *Ulysses* is set, on Thursday 16th June - the same day the young James Joyce had his first date with Nora, the love of his life. Three months later, they left Ireland, never to live there again. That departure marked the end of a remarkable chapter in young Joyce's life, involving failed exile, the traumatic death of his mother and a growing gulf between his estimation of his own genius and the lack of evidence to justify that belief. Steve Carey argues that Joyce's mother's death, traumatic as it was, was instrumental to Joyce's development both as a man and as an artist.

Frances Devlin-Glass



Great sweet mothers and a carnal maid: why French feminists embraced James Joyce.

The real-life doings of James Joyce could, in our times, have condemned him to be 'cancelled'. Why, then, after the scarifying biographies, were the mothers of feminist literary theory so enamoured of James Joyce's fiction? Two influential readers of his novels – Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva (illustrious members of the 'Holy Trinity' of literary feminism) – were liberated by their reading of Joyce to think in new ways about how his fiction interrogates conventional understandings of sexuality and gender. This paper examines what they found to celebrate in his radical critique of sexuality: it charts Joyce's shift from austere critique of the systems that constitute sexuality in *Portrait* to 'warm full-blooded life' in *Ulysses* via the fictional characters of May Dedalus and Molly Bloom (literary recreations of his mother and partner).

Dr Steve Carey is, like Joyce, an ex-Catholic eldest son of a father from Dublin and a mother from the west of Ireland. He trained to become a priest, completed a D. Phil. at Oxford under Richard Ellmann, became a magazine editor and publisher, and is now a Business Adviser with The Network of Consulting Professionals. He is the author of *Love's Bitter Mystery*

Associate Professor Frances Devlin-Glass has been reading *Ulysses* with increasing intensity since 1968, and began teaching it and writing about it 1980. She was one of the founders of Bloomsday in Melbourne in 1994, and nearly three decades of preparing adaptations and original scripts for Bloomsday has taken her into some arcane Joyceana. An unrepentant addict, she finds sharing Joyce with students of all abilities (including second language learners) energising and informative because, in their encyclopaedic quality, Joyce's novels reveal their pleasures slowly.

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