

SOCIAL ISSUES IN JAMES JOYCE'S DUBLINERS: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This present paper deals with the highly social issues of paralysis and indecision, absence and loss of disillusionment and psyche of the child in Joyce Dubliners. The author observed the current society of clergy and their psyche commotion between the common men life as well as the circle of clergy. Thus to say, the story in Dubliners is to give the people of Dublin the opportunity of discovering the origin and effects of their alienation.

Keywords: Social issue

INTRODUCTION

Modernist writers are engaged in writing according to the nineteenth century style and content in fiction. James Joyce Dubliners is one of the landmark of that struggle. But it is difficult to analyze one, as the stories in the Dubliners can be read into two mutually exclusive levels. The first level is as straight forward realistic tales about the everyday failures and disappointments of the suffering children and also about the humiliated women and men who drink too much all of these issues are crushed into Dubliners. Joyce describes the second level as stories on a symbolic level which deals with universal human nature and the particular of life in the Dublin city.

James Augustine Joyce the son of middle-class Irish parents who was born in Dublin in 1882. He was educated at Jesuit schools and then at the University college, Dublin where he studied philosophy and language. Joyce moved to Paris for a year in 1902. There he began to write the lyric poems which was later put into a collection called Chamber music (1907) his first published work. He returned to Ireland in 1903 to see his dying mother and then to Zurich where he taught language at the Berlitz school.

Joyce is best known for his Ulysses (1922) which is a landmark novel perfected his stream of consciousness technique and combined nearly every literary device available in a modern retelling of The Odyssey. Other major works are Dubliners (1914) and A Portrait of the Artist as young Man (1916) an autobiographical novel, the story of a boy bewitched by words. Some hints of his frequently employed technique such as stream of consciousness, internal monologue and references to a character's psychic reality than to his external surrounding which is evident throughout this novel.

Ulysses (1922) is one of the most important work of modernist literature. It is the study of life and mind of Leopold and Mrs. Bloom during a single day. It is modeled The Odyssey of Homer, but it is set in Dublin slums. At the end of the book Molly Bloom lies awake in bed, and for 44 pages without punctuation Joyce records the "stream of consciousness" every thought she has is more rapid than normal sentence structure and expresses in her own words. It is an unpleasant passage, but undeniably real: this what thinking is like, and one had not possible to write it down. This method has been borrowed by innumerable modern novelists.

SPIRITUAL PARALYSIS OF DUBLINERS

Joyce's city Dublin is the heart of paralysis and all the citizens are its victims of the city. The paralysis of James Joyce's Dubliners is about moral, intellectual and spiritual. In every one of his fifteen short stories in Dubliners it seemed to be reading the annals of frustration – almost all the characters in this short story collection have a desires, face obstacles to it then ultimately relent and suddenly stop all act on. These kinds of moments of paralysis show the character's inability to change their lives and reserve the routines that restricts freedom of their own wishes.

In Dubliners the theme of the paralysis is introduced at the outset of actual paralysis of the old priest (Father Flynn) in the first short story "The Sisters". To the boy who tells the story, the word itself carries both a threat

and a kind of fascination. The successive stories mostly develop variations in this central theme, displaying the spiritual paralysis of the individual and the community.

In the second short story “An Encounter” Joyce gives the theme of disillusionment. The boy narrator wants a “real adventure”, but when he gets one, it threatens the innocence of the boy that made the “adventure” believable and enjoyable. The old man in the field of same short story provides an another example of paralysis, because when he speaks of young girls, it seems like that “he was repeating something learned by heart or that, magnetized by some words of his own speech, his mind was slowly circling round and round in the same orbit.” (Dubliners 23).

In the third short story “Araby” the boy is full of fantasies. He sees himself as a knight on a quest and he idealizes Mangan’s sister as a kind of Virgin Mary. His imagination is so permeated by Catholicism that (just as in the old courtly romances) he merges and confuses his material desires (for a girl and give something for the girl) with the spiritual yearning he is supposed to have.

The fourth story “Eveline” the girl is faced with staying at home to care for her abusive, alcoholic father or running off with a sailor who promises marriage but it was just likely to sell her into prostitution this resembles that the character Eveline is paralyzed. She uses all the resources at her disposal – memory, imagination, reason and prayer but she cannot overcome her moment in this story. Hence she is also one of the paradigmatic case of Dublin paralysis.

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“The Sisters”

A young boy learns of the death of Father Flynn, who was the old priest who had befriended with the young boy. At Flynn’s meager wake, the boy overhears the talk of adults and realizes that the old man was regarded as pitiful and insane.

“An Encounter”

A young boy and his friend skip school for a day, by hoping to have a real adventure. But later in the afternoon, they meet a strange old man. The man quizzes the narrator and Mahony about the books they have read and also about their girl friends. After sometimes the boys find the strange man doing something. The narrator recalls his fright and how humbling it was to look to his friend for reassurance.

“Araby”

A young boy develops an idolatrous crush on his friend’s sister. He plans to buy her something at the town bazaar but arrives too late and feels like a fool.

“Eveline”

Eveline, a motherless girl of nineteen years old lives with her manic old father. A sailor has invited her to go away with him. On the evening of her decision, she alternately prays, fantasizes about her future life and counts her fears. When the time comes for her to leave, she is unable to move.

JAMES JOYCE’S DUBLINERS: A CRITICAL APPROACH

Dubliners can be seen both as a collection of short stories and a novel. Each of the characters in this collection of short stories have a separate histories of its protagonists composing in one essential history, that the soul of the people which has confessed and weakened its relation to the source of spiritual life and cannot restore it. In assuming the common themes in the Dubliners, it seems that the entire story collection was proceeded from the individual to the general and from youth to an approximation of maturity by degree. The character in these short stories comes from lower middle – class milieu and their world interpenetrate and explains each other from story to story.

This work seemed to merely a group of brilliant stories arranged in such a way as to develop effectively the imposed reality, which Joyce himself realized, but did not fully reveal, in describing the book as a chapter of the moral history of his country. The author has arranged the stories in a careful progression from childhood to maturity, broadening from private to public scope. Each story in this collection of Dubliners is an action defining amid different circumstances of degradation and difficulty in the environment, a frustration or defeat of a soul in a different state of strength or debility. Each state is related to the preceding by conventional associations or by casual connections or by both. The entire collection represents the whole course of moral deterioration ending in the death of the soul.

Hence Joyce’s schematic arrangements of virtues and sins in Dubliners conform the most usual order in the main. In the first three stories, the protagonists are assumed to be innocent, the theological virtues of faith, hope and love in the conventional order are successively displayed in suspension and finally in defeat. In the fourth story, Eveline fails in the cardinal virtue of fortitude and remains in Dublin. The next seven stories are devoted to seven deadly sins such as pride, covetousness, lust, envy, angry, gluttony and sloth all are portrayed successively in action, usually in association with other sins adjacent in the list. In the twelfth to the fourteen stories, deals with the subdivision of the cardinal virtue of justice, temperance and prudence. The fifteen and last story “The Dead” stands somewhat apart from the other fourteen stories and it functions as an epilogue,

which is summarizing and perhaps qualifying the principle themes of the entire collections. In this story no virtue or sin is given but the consequence of moral degeneration and the complete disintegration, death itself. Thus Dubliners is a rich complex of associated ideas and images. The structure of the novel is again not a scattered one. The unifying pattern of motions is manifested story by story and one controlling principle is a theme or common idea, the theme of “paralysis” or living death. Paralysis is moral and central and it also acts as a unifying factor to bring the fifteen stories under a common title.

CONCLUSION

Hence Joyce Dubliners deals with the highly social issues of paralysis and indecision, absence and loss of disillusionment and psyche of the child. The author observed the current society of clergy and their psyche commotion between the common men life as well as the circle of clergy. Thus the story in Dubliners is to give the people of Dublin the opportunity of discovering the origin and effects of their alienation.

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