

An Analysis of Realistic Criticism in Joyce's Dubliners

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Abstract: Magnificent psychological changes, obscure logical construction have obviously brought up the important position of Joyce's stream-of-consciousness novels in the literary world. Most scholars have done a variety of research in this area. While in *Dubliners*, apart from trivial irrational descriptions, we can capture James Joyce's love for the nation and the era. Sobriety is the premise of love. Joyce once said his intention of that is to write moral and spiritual history of his country. This paper aims to remove the fog of the plot shrouded in the surface of the work in order to excavate the ideological connotation, that is, the essence of life, hidden in the following: national mental paralysis that pervades Dublin in the early 20th century, as well as its reflection in spirit, morality, society and politics.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to excavate the realistic criticism behind Joyce's writing, mainly through three aspects. Firstly, the exhibition of public life and social scene of the middle and lower classes of Ireland among the clues of the novel. The second aspect is social contradiction, which mainly includes social problems such as national famine, religious and capital collusion and so on. Finally, it is mainly about the ethnic contradiction, that is, the Irish Independence Movement under the colonization.

2. Display of Public Life under Colonial Industry

It is the time that one lives in more interesting than people themselves, once stressed by Honoré-deBalzac[1], "Napoleon" in the Literary World, perfectly coincides with James Joyce and his life. James Joyce was born in a middle-class family in Dublin James on February 2, 1882. His father had a firm belief in Nationalism and his mother was a devout Catholic. When Joyce was born, Ireland, a beautiful island country, has already been reduced to a British colony, causing continuous war and dire straits for citizens. From an early age, Joyce has received strict classical cultural and religious education at Catholic Jesuits and has outstanding academic performance. He even once wanted to be a priest. Since the 19th century, the Irish Renaissance, centered on Yeats, Mrs. Gregory and Singh, has been formed in Dublin. Joyce has been directly or indirectly affected by Irish National Independence Movement. What gave him a stronger influence, however, was the liberal thought that appeared in European literature at the end of the nineteenth century, which refreshed his view and let him doubt about religious beliefs. That situation of society and the tragedy of people's livelihood made him choose to speak for freedom and awakening. Before graduating from high school, he was determined to engage in literary creation, breaking with Dublin's vulgar and boring social life. So, most people call *Dubliners* as Joyce's liquidation and farewell to Irish life. But in fact, the lines of the novel are full of displays of Irish social status quo and people's livelihood.

The concentrated embodiment of the social status quo, that is, mental paralysis mainly reflected in the depiction of Irish expression, intercourse, activities, and dirty streets.

In Europe in the 20th century, streets were the best place to show the power of capital. As is mentioned in Walter Bendix Schoenflies Benjamin's[1] *The Arcades Project*[3], the arcade in Paris is an indoor street Glass roofs, marble promenade, buildings throughout the block, elegant commodity on both sides. the whole arcade becomes like a city, a micro-world. From an open space point of

view, just as Benjamin highlighted the rapid development of the commodity economy in Paris through arcade streets, Joyce demonstrated the loss of Irish national spirit and culture through the persistence of classical buildings, messy streets under religious oppression as well as the development of colonial industry in Dublin.

Spiritual life, like the body, must breathe in fresh substances and exhale harmful exhaust gases, written in *Eugenie Grandet* by Honoré-deBalzac. Ireland is a country with this strong religious complex, their lives are complete by religion, but also lost by religion. The fanatical belief in Catholicism virtually binds the lives of the Irish people. The bells of Catholicism are always ringing in the full text of *Dubliners*. In the square, in the bazaar, in the attic, by the river, the bells are everywhere. Joyce, like archaeologists, slowly used language to highlight Dublin's social environment filled with mental paralysis under religious oppression.

"That affected his mind" she said. After that he began to mope by himself, talking to no one and wandering about by himself. So, one night he was wanted for to go on a call and they couldn't find him anywhere... there he was, sitting up by himself in the dark in his confession-box, wide-awake and laughing-like softly to himself?" She stopped suddenly.

This appears in the first chapter, *The Sisters* of the novel when Eliza indirectly explained the cause of death with Father Flynn. From which we can see that the priest sealed himself in a dark space, filled with endless repentance and fear that the Grail was broken, and ended up depressed. The Grail here, is not just a simple thing. Its breakage directly leads to the end of life, which in fact satirizes the Irish nation's excessive dependence on religion, resulting in limited and fragile human spiritual support. Father Flynn's confessions, ostensibly the dark world of self-remorse after breaking the Holy Grail, is the pain of ordinary people caused by the deep-rooted religious culture of the Irish state;

If you think that the talon of religion extends only to its followers, then you are wrong. Religion attempts to infiltrate its inherent prejudices and rules into early education.

Everyone's heart palpitated as Leo Dillon handed up the paper and everyone assumed an innocent face. Father Butler turned over the pages, frowning. "What is this rubbish?" he said.

This is a description that appears in Chapter 2, *An Encounter*. The reason why the priest was so angry was that American adventure stories were circulated among children. Here Adventure fiction here actually highlights the curiosity and exploratory desire of children, but in Catholic knowledge, they are branded with the imprint of barbaric literature. However, because of the forbidden fruit effect[4], children have become more eager to explore the fields. The field" in Chapter *An Encounter* is ostensibly a place for children to fly, but it is actually a contrast to the institutionalized buildings of the school. The depiction of the field, in fact, is intended to further illustrate that even children cannot escape the corrosion of religion on their spirit. Joyce is not so much writing this chapter as reflecting on his early education. Why did he who used to be an excellent student in a religious school or even pursue a clergy write such an article full of rebellious psychology? Even in the article, he showed the appreciation of sailors, a group representing freedom and casual but not favored by the society at that time. Because when Joyce entered the field of literary liberalism, he saw the rigidity and anachronism of religious system. No one should be educated by nature, and children's free thinking should be respected.

Besides, the expansion of colonial industry is another cause of national mental paralysis.

In chapter 3, *Araby*: We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of laborers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a come-all-you about O'Donovan Rosa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes.

The noisy and dirty streets were the result of the expansion of colonial industries and the enslavement of Irish labor. But sadly, people's response is self-hypnosis. What the author wants to criticize here is that the colonial industry, while turning the nation into a low-level labor force, has imperceptibly paralyzed their consciousness. In the literary works of Lu Xun, a famous Chinese writer, such a state of mind is also called Ah Q's spirit[5]--self-mockery, self-understanding,

self-intoxication and self-comfort with the method of spiritual victory. The root of this spirit lies in class oppression and class exploitation. Joyce clearly saw the subversion of the Irish nation under the expansion of English capital. He criticized the injustice of colonial industry coldly from a child's perspective.

Under the heavy pressure of these two mountains, that is colonial industry and religion's oppression, the people are not so numb as timid. Because those who dare to embrace the unknown and try to stick to themselves end in tragedy.

In Chapter 4, Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty.

It was Evelyn's inner struggle as she tried to elope with the sailor. It was clear that she longed for freedom and new life, but at the same time was held back by reality. She was eager to change but hesitated. This is the Dublin people's state of mind at that time, though complaining about the misfortune of life, citizens do not have the courage to change, to struggle but numbness and self-hypnotic. So here, what the author implies is that as long as Eveline moves forward, life is a brand-new look. The same as the Irish society.

In Chapter 11, The Painful Case, He had himself bought every article of furniture in the room: a black iron bedstead, an iron washstand, four cane chairs, a clothes-rack, a coal-scuttle, a fender and irons and a square Table on which lay a double desk.

Through that, we could easily tell that Mr. Duffy abhorred anything which betokened physical or mental disorder. Behind this approximate obsession of life is the irony of the chaos and paralysis of Ireland at that time. He had neither religious beliefs nor friends, even living in a house far from the crowd, and his ending was nothing more than a tragedy. Because he's out of place, all he got is loneliness. Of course, the author's purpose in portraying this character is to call for social tolerance for such people. We should respect, but not reversely discriminate against those who are still struggling in the mire and unwilling lose themselves under the collusion of religion and capital.

Public lives in Joyce's work, though different, is shrouded in a climate of despair and gloom. Dutch writer Geert Mak once said in In Euro[6] that to Dubliners, image preservation is a completely strange concept, they have long given up the struggle, everyone dressed in disheveled, walking heavily in the streets here. Ireland is one of the fastest-growing countries in the European Union, according to Brewer statistics, but I have paid no attention to the trace of growth. Life here will always require poetic, dreamy, romantic and nostalgic attitudes to endure this life and give it meaning, without which Dublin is just a large 19th century workman's house.

3. National Famine Provoked by Colonial Rule

Although Joyce's narrative angle is largely similar to Flaubert's cold perspective[], I don't think his writing principles are equally objective and indifferent. "Consciousness is the product of society, and social labor produces consciousness." [8]

Here is a famous historical saying: "if you are lucky enough to be Irish, you don't have to worry about anything. "Of course, the premise of all this is that there was no national famine in Ireland. Until 1845, the year the Great Famine began, potatoes were grown on 2 million acres on the island of Ireland, serving as rations and livestock feed for most of, many of Irish people. So, when Downy Mildew attacked potatoes one after another, causing the yield to fail, the people suffered from extinction. In the case of extreme material scarcity, the national spirit naturally lost its support. Poverty brought despair and sorrow. Most people struggled to survive famine, singing folk songs in beer houses every day. Drunken state prevails the whole Dubliners. In Chapter 7, The Boarding House, the author depicts a husband who is irrational because of alcoholism.

"He drank, plundered the till, ran headlong into debt. It was no use making him take the pledge: he was sure to break out again a few days after. By fighting his wife in the presence of customers and by buying bad meat he ruined his business. "

However, it would be superficial to blame all the paralysis of Irish national spirit on natural

disasters. In *Dubliners*, a large part of the description of urban barren is never isolated. In fact, what closely related to is a conspiracy of religious and capital, a conspiracy of a population-controlled massacre. In short, Colonial rule is the beginning of disaster.

Before gaining national independence, Ireland was the first British colony because of geographical and political relations. According to William Petty, "Britain occupies 3/4 of all land in Ireland, 5/6 of all houses, 9/10 of cities and fortification sites with walls, and 2/3 of foreign trade. 6/8 Irish people live like animals. In 1919, 80% of Ireland's population was Catholic, but the colonial government had banned Catholics from owning and renting land and persecuted Catholics. The persecuted lost their land, and large tracts of land fell into the hands of Protestant Britons. Because Irish believed in Catholicism but British colonial rulers believed in Protestantism, the conflict and struggle between religions led to the occupation of Irish land almost entirely by the British aristocrats. To survive, most of Irish became tenants of the British aristocrats, thus making them have no choice but to grow potatoes on pitiful land to keep going.

At the same time, religion did not play any role in redemption. On the contrary, rigid feudal doctrines dispel people's courage to face life, so that people can only numb to accept rather than struggle when facing suffering. But sadly, Religion lurks in every corner of Irish life like the beginning of the story, Father Flynn passes away of panic as the Grail was broken. What's more worse, the pureness of Catholicism itself is broken under the temptation of capital. The priest misinterpreted the doctrine and exploited the people at the bottom. Mr. Kernan, the character in Chapter 14, Grace came of Protestant stock and, though he had been converted to the Catholic faith at the time of his marriage, he had not been in the pale of the Church for twenty years. He was fond, moreover, of giving side-thrusts at Catholicism. But ironically, the people around him were always trying to persuade him to listen to the priests preach.

"He told his hearers that he was there that evening for no terrifying, no extravagant purpose; He came to speak to business men and he would speak to them in a businesslike way. If he might use the metaphor, he said, he was their spiritual accountant; and he wished each and every one of his hearers to open his books, the books of his spiritual life, and see if they tallied accurately with conscience."

In the original text, the priest used the guise of communicating with businessmen to stimulate people's desire for material and money, as an excuse for the accumulation of capital by any means. The hypocrisy of the church is exposed everywhere.

Marx was committed to revealing the relationship between religion and the development of productive forces in society. Marx repeatedly stated that religion has no autonomy. He stressed that Christianity itself has no history and continued to point out that "the different forms taken in different times are not 'the self-regulation of the religious spirit' and 'its continued development', but the reason for the complete experience, not in any way influenced by the spirit of religion." [9] It is precisely because Catholicism is subjugated to the social reality of capital operation without autonomy that the numbness of the Irish people is taken for granted. The rendering of the dominant position of capital can be seen everywhere in the original text.

"What we want in this country, as I said to old Ward, is capital. The King's coming here will mean an influx of money into this country. The citizens of Dublin will benefit by it. Look at all the money there is in the country if we only worked the old industries, the mills, the ship-building yards and factories. It's capital we want. "

As is mentioned in Chapter 8, *A Little Cloud*, Erich Fromm [10] pointed out in his *The Sane Society* [11] and Marcuse's [12] exposition of modern industrial society, that modern society is not a sound body, but a morbid one. Therefore, we should not regard deviations from the norms and standards of this society as abnormal phenomena, but as more normal and healthy phenomena than morbid social standards. Accordingly, they pointed out that western sociology must face up to the problem of "revaluation of value". That's what Joyce wanted to say. The Alienation and Materialization of the Irish Nation Caused by Colonial Rule and Capital Expansion must be resolved. If people are still immersed in the fervent pursuit of capital and money, the essence of human existence will cease to exist. The enslavement of nations by colonial industries will

eventually lead to the extinction of nations.

There is also a saying in academia that, like the population control of the Jewish people, the famine in Ireland gave Britain the opportunity to carry out population control. In England in the 18th century, Malthus[13] published the famous demographic Theory. Causing a stir in Britain, Malthus believes that population growth is too fast, but the growth of food and crops to feed the population is extremely slow. So as the growth of food cannot meet the population growth, there is bound to be a famine or a war. Malthus stressed that we must quickly control the population growth rate, which starts with the birth rate. This call has naturally affected the British Government. British legislative departments have subsequently amended the law to reduce funding for the poor, because senior government officials believe that subsidizing the poor means subsidizing them to have more children, thus accumulating poverty and weakness. It will also lead to a sharp increase in the population. This is also the reason why at the height of the disaster, the Irish turned to the British for help, but the British refused on the grounds that the Irish were inferior. More ironically, Britain at the time was not unable to help, but did not want to rescue, during which time Britain hosted the World Expo and sent troops to China to create the Opium War. After the famine, many of the Irish people starved to death in the famine, half fled overseas, and the British achieved their goal of controlling the population through famine. Such migration is also widely described in *Dubliners*, in which Eveline's love with sailors is not so much a reflection of a girl's romance as a reflection of the desire of most Irish people at that time to deviate from the land and seek a new life. The image of a sailor is nothing more than a personification of national migration. What's more, through conversation in Chapter 5,

After *The Race*. The five young men had various tastes and their tongues had been loosened. Villona, with immense respect, began to discover to the mildly surprised Englishman the beauties of the English madrigal, deploring the loss of old instruments. Riviere, not wholly ingenuously, undertook to explain to Jimmy the triumph of the French mechanics. The resonant voice of the Hungarian was about to prevail in ridicule of the spurious lutes of the romantic painters.

Joyce criticized the persecution of religion against the whole society and the aggression of imperial capitalism. The Liberation and Independence of Ireland is imminent.

4. Marginalization of National Independence Movement under The collusion of Politics and Capital

After the havoc of the Irish famine, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, constitutional and autonomous movements were carried out one after another to strive for Ireland as an independent kingdom. But in Britain's heyday Victorian era, although the Irish struggle won great concessions from the British government, Ireland was still very far from true independence.

The temptation of capital has blinded people's eyes. It seizes the human desire for money, thus disintegrating the unity of the people within the nation. In Chapter 9 *Counterparts*,

He could remember the way in which Mr. Alleyne had hounded little Peake out of the office to make room for his own nephew. He felt savage and thirsty and revengeful, annoyed with himself and with everyone else... Alleyne had overheard him mimicking his North of Ireland accent to amuse Higgins and Miss Parker: that had been the beginning of it. He might have tried Higgins for the money, but sure Higgins never had anything for himself.

Obviously, it is not only external factors that hinder people from actively uniting to strive for their own rights. It is the temptation of capital that has made people forget history and lose their essence. Employers do not care about the living conditions of their compatriots, and even sacrifice the dignity of their compatriots as a chip to keep him in line with the aristocratic group.

In addition to the rampant colonial power, Irish government's accommodation to colonial life and corruption in the pursuit of assets are a major hidden danger of the independence movement. In Chapter *Ivy Day in the Committee Room*, *Ivy Day* is the anniversary of the death of the leader of the Irish National Independence Movement, Parnell. Ironically, it was on this day that a group of party election activists, in an office, talked about the darkness and hypocrisy of the current Irish political environment, which made Parnell's death even more tragic.

“Listen to me,” said Mr. Henchy. “Look at all the factories down by the quays there, idle! Look at all the money there is in the country if we only worked the old industries, the mills, the ship-building yards and factories.”

With such explicit language, Joyce fully exposed the corruption and darkness of the political environment at that time. The selection principle of government personnel tends to turn to capital force with absolute inclination. Joyce then focused on describing the festive routine of speeches explaining the national independence movement.

He dreamed (alas, etwas but a dream!) Of Liberty: but as he strove To clutch that idol, treachery Sundered him from the thing he loved. Shame on the coward, caitiff hands That smote their Lord or with a kiss Betrayed him to the rabble-rout Of fawning priests no friends of his. May everlasting shame consume The memory of those who tried To befoul and smear the exalted name Of one who spurned them in his pride. He fell as fall the mighty ones, Nobly undaunted to the last, And death has now united him With Erin’s heroes of the past. No sound of strife disturb his sleep! Calmly he rests: no human pain Or high ambition spurs him now The peaks of glory to attain. They had their way: they laid him low. But Erin, list, his spirit may Rise, like the Phoenix from the flames, When breaks the dawning of the day, The day that brings us Freedom’s reign.

However, such passionate and sincere speeches bring only about the same perfunctory politicians. The power of capital has infiltrated invisibly into the operation mechanism of the government, which is the cancer of the national movement and must be removed.

At the same time, Catholicism has brought reverse discrimination within the Irish nation, which is different from the reverse discrimination among blacks in the context of migration. Behind the reverse discrimination in Ireland is the struggle between Protestantism and the old religion, a fight between the hypocrisy of Catholicism and national liberation. According to Geert Mak's *In Europa*, The Catholic Church regards demonstrations as a symbol of discrimination and insult. The liberation movement rose into a civil war. Absurdly, Catholics are even eager for the British colonial government to rescue them from the unrest. This fully exposes the weakness and unreliability of religion. Marxist view of nationality points out that only in the process of solving general social problems can ethnic problems be solved. The first step of Irish national liberation should start with the social problems under the collusion of capital and religion.

Above all three aspects, in *Dubliners*, Joyce attacked the current paralysis of Dublin in obscure words, Government paralysis, religious paralysis, life paralysis, emotional paralysis, psychological paralysis, mental paralysis. He later wrote in *Ulysses*[14], History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake. From which we could tell the sad history of the Irish nation is a lingering shadow in his works. He wanted to awaken the national consciousness of Dublin, even all Irish, on his own. He has been running away from Ireland all his life and traveling all over Europe, but in fact, he has never given up his love for Ireland as a nation. Whether in the autobiographical novel *The Self-Portrait of the Young Artist*, which depicts the character's psychology and the world around him with a large number of inner monologues, the representative novel *Ulysses*, which expresses the loneliness and pessimism of people in modern society, or the later novel *Finnegan's Watch*, which expresses the ultimate thinking of human existence and destiny through dreams, Joyce's reflections on the Irish National Religious Feelings and the History of Ethnic Pain are ubiquitous. *Dubliners* are the only stream-of-consciousness novel with obvious realistic critical significance, it is because of this, the shadow of *Dubliners* can be seen more or less in his subsequent novels.

References

[1] Honoré•deBalzac, (May 20, 1799-Aug 18, 1850), French novelist, known as “the Father of Modern French Fiction” , Balzac tried to generalize the whole picture of French capitalist society in the first half of the 19th century in the comedy of the world, and wrote the novel into a history of French capitalist society. His meticulous portrayal of the life of the characters is actually a revelation of the times.

[2] Walter Bendix Schoenflies Benjamin, (July 15, 1892-September 27, 1940, aged 48), Jewish

scholar. The Arcades Project, published by Belknap Press of Harvard University Press in 2002-3-25(in German, Das Passagen-Werk) is a monumental ruin, meticulously constructed over the course of 13 years - “the theatre,” as the author called it, “of all my struggles and all my ideas.” Focusing on the arcades of 19th century Paris - glass-roofed rows of shops that were early centers of consumerism.

[3] Eugenie Grandet, written by Balzac, published by Larousse in 01,2000, is the spare, classical story of a girl whose life is blighted by her father's hysterical greed and his most magnificent tale of early nineteenth-century French provincial life.

[4] The forbidden fruit effect, written in Sections 2 and 3 of the Old Testament Genesis, also known as the Adam and Eve effect, and the more prohibited things are, the more people have to get them. This kind of rebellious phenomenon caused by unilateral prohibition and concealment.

[5] Ah Q' spirit, the spiritual victory method of this character Ah Q in The True Story of Ah Q, written by Lu Xun, translated by George Kin Leung, published by CP in 1926. To reject heresy and the “surrender” revolution, the abdominal libel policy is the most important phenomenon of the spiritual victory law.