

An Analytical View on the Themes of Dubliners

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Abstract

James Joyce's "Dubliners" published in 1914 comprising fifteen short stories exhibit the innovative skill of the writer. This collection was written at the time of the grim stagnation and paralysis connected with Irish Nationalist Movement, which sought cultural, political and economic liberation from the clutches of Great Britain. The stories centre round the characters of lower middle class – shopkeepers, tradesman, clerks, swindlers, bank officials, salesman etc. Dublin is presented as a prison in which characters are languished to suffer from poverty, dissatisfaction in job and loveless life. The population of Dublin was predominantly Catholic but the protestant minority composed the upper level of society on the pretext of having unquestionable loyalty to Britain.

Introduction

James Joyce's Dubliners contains fifteen portraits of life set in Dublin itself with correctness and precision that was innovative at time of the Book's writing Dubliners peeps into the homes, hearts and minds of people whose lives connect and intermingle through the shared space and spirit of Dublin. The subtle connections in the stories create a sense of shared experience and evoke a map of Dublin life that Joyce would employ in his later works of fiction: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses, and Finnegans Wake. Although the stories of the collection sketch daily situations, they present intricate dramas of life with simple plots. In Dubliners, he has not procured the techniques of mimetic narrative (feature of a Portrait) or stream – of – consciousness (ulysses) but he set at ease the way here for those technical break through.

The Stories of Dubliners are connected into a framework chronologically developing "Stages of man" for he has planned first three stories each to deal with younger protagonists and moves forward into stories gradually increasing in ages: adolescence, mature life, public life and married life respectively. The final story "The Dead" weaves together many of the previous themes of the book.

Objectives

To show spiritual as well as physical paralysis of the protagonists of "Dubliners".

To present the inabilities of the characters of the collection to free themselves from the imprisoned life of Dublin and move forward.

To highlight the negative impact of colonization and treachery of English brought out to the cultural, political and economic development of Ireland.

Paralysis

James Joyce opined, "my intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for me the centre of Paralysis." (James Joyce, letters, II 134) Ireland was ruled by Great Britain at the time and her cultural, political and economic development was controlled by the British. As a Second Nation, Ireland's progress was hindered which exerted paralyzing effect upon the citizens of country? In Dubliners, the character's paralysis is transmitted by their family life, catholicism, economic situations and their vulnerability to political forces. The paralysis is psychological also. The theme of paralysis is introduced in the very first story that runs to the last story in the collection. In the story "The Sisters", Spiritual paralysis becomes the cause of death of Father Flynn. His failure in complying with his responsibilities as a member of the Catholic Church, eventually lead him to death. Again the nameless boy, the narrator of the same story, illustrate his state of paralysis in his inability to verbalize his feeling about the death of Father Flynn with whom he had an intimacy; Poor Eveline in the story titled after her

name is too scared to leave Ireland and sees her lover as a possible source of danger: "All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He [Frank] was drawing her into them: he would drown her. "But her paralysis is going to cost her a certain and bright future and may force her to repeat her mother's sad life story. The main character in the story "Clay", Maria is also unable to move forward in her life. She has to devote her life in tedious work for little money. Her selection of clay in Hallow Eve game presents pathetic state of Maria's life, she is "dead in life." The drunkenness of the uncle in "Araby" has a paralyzing effect on the boy. The protagonists of "A Little Cloud", "The Dead" venture forward, but return home bereft of their paralyzing state of mind. Again corruption is closely related to paralysis as it is barrier to progress of Nation. Corruption is prevalent in Dubliners as paralysis. It could be defined as resulting from a kind of spiritual and moral death.

Defeat, Entrapment, Powerlessness, Stasis

The themes of defeat, entrapment, powerlessness and stasis are weaved together to show the helplessness and pathetic condition of the citizens of Dublin, Ireland. British Colonialization had brought oppression and indignation that handicapped the lives of the Dubliners. In many stories, characters are so trapped by their conditions that struggling seems pointless. In "Counterparts", for example, Farrington is allowed one moment of triumph when he publicly humiliates his tyrannical boss. But he is made to offer an "abject apology" to his superior at work and he certainly does so because he cannot take the risk of losing his job since so few are available. After this incident he becomes so frustrated that he gets violently drunk and wastes all the money in the evening. Finally he asserts his dominance at home by beating his son.

Perversity and depravity exist through stasis in all the stories of Dubliners. Stasis for instance plays a negative impact on little Chandler of "A little Cloud." Unrecoverable vacuum is created because of unrequited love in the life of the Protagonists as shown in "Araby" and "The Dead".

Entrapment arising out of hesitation to proceed forward is dominant in the life of the characters of the Dubliners. The protagonists of "An Encounter", "Araby", the young women of Eveline and most of the characters are in some way imprisoned. The entrapment is often caused by a combination of circumstances: Poverty, social pressure, family situation etc.

Poverty

Most of the characters of Dubliners are on the verge of poverty. Poverty encompassed such a wide range that the characters fret about keeping even miserable jobs. For instance in "The Boarding House", Mr. Doran fails to avoid the trap of marrying Polly, although he knows the dread of such marriage in fear of losing his job in social disgrace. Maria in "Clay" veinlessly spends a good chunk of money of her salary for a humble treat to make her evening fruitful. Lenehan, the swindler in "Two Gallants" is pathetically aimless in want of a job. In "counterparts" Farrington is unable to resign from his job even though he has grown violently furious regarding his boss' dominant behaviour. We get glimpses of poverty in "ragged girls" and "ragged boys" of "An Encounter" and the "rough tribes from the cottages" in "Araby". Thus Joyce explores the negative affects poverty has on the character.

Isolation

The outcome of mundane routine of the Dubliners is isolation. In most of the times isolation is the result of unrequited love and self-deception. For example, in "A painful case" Mr. Duffy cowardly repels his own impulses by breaking his committed relationship with a sensitive woman Mrs. Sinico and ultimately finds himself in a sterile life. In "The Dead" Gretta Conroy has enraptured listening a song toward the last of the party. This makes her husband Gabriel Conroy to feel proud of his happy married life thinking her emotional outpouring is for none other but to him. But Gretta's confession to her husband about her first love makes the latter realize that he has little grasp on her life and his marriage lacks true love.

The Desire for Escape

The longings of the many of the characters for escape and adventure in other countries is one of the dominant themes of "Dubliners". The protagonists are however incapable of actualizing such longings. Bored with the drudgery of lessons, the school boy of "An Encounter" dreams of the American Wild West to escape from the Dublin tedium. When imaginary games fail to fulfill his

longings, he moves out to explore Dublin with his friend Mahony only to encounter fear. Little Chandler in "A Little Cloud" aspires to be a poet after hearing the exciting and envious account of Gallahar's Career in London and

Paris. He imagines freedom from his domestic restraints but feels ashamed about his thoughts and resumes his situation.

The Intersection of Life and Death

Death is another theme a natural consequence of Joyce's stages –of-life three. The stories of the collection focus on the meeting point between life and death. Conflict between the death and the living delineated in "The Sisters" and "A Painful Case", explicitly explore this meeting point showing what kind of aftershocks a death can bring for the living. Mr. Duffy for example in "A Painful Case" condemns himself for cutting his intimate relationship with Mrs. Sinico four years later when he learns about her accidental death (probably suicide), while the nameless narrator of "The Sisters" get confused how to expressed his feelings at the death of the priest. In the other stories like "Eveline", "Ivy Day in the committee Room" and the "The Dead", memories of deal haunt the living and color every action.

Betrayal and Colonialization

Deception, treachery mare almost every relationship in the stories of Dubliners. In "The Boarding House" Mrs. Mooney traps Mr. Doran, a successful clerk to marrying her unpolished daughter which he could not refuse to purse. In "Two Gallants", both the swindlers Lenahan and Corley suspect each other of cheating and scheming, though Lenahan assists the later to dupe innocent housemaids for their livelihood. Gabriell feels betrayed at his wife's intense recollection of a former lover.

The impact of British Colonialization is perceived by Joyce in "After the Race" in indirect way. Jimmy the protagonist of the story is thrilled with European sophistication and tries to bask in its reflected glory. In "Ivy Days in the committee Room" many Irish held the British responsible for the downfall of Charles Steward Parnell, the leader of the Irish Nationalist Movement. This movement failed when Parnell was betrayed by his own countrymen.

Conclusion

The stories of the Dubliners yield insight into entrapment, frustration and psychological paralysis. Like Russain nineteenth century writer Anton Checkov, Joyce's stories, although seem to be apparently plotless pierce deep into the untrodden aspects of human life. Joyce was the first to see such stories as epiphanic and the geographical and themetical link make them a single work of transcendental art. He considers Dublin, Ireland as a place of contamination, deterioration, perversity and depravity. These characteristics knit the stories together into a web of place time and meaning. Each successive story gains in momentum and weight by virtue of following those that comes before.

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6. Asstt. Prof & HoD, Economics Dalgoma Anchalik college Matia, Goalpara
7. "Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms from all sources including inter-alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and ecological complexes of which they are a part." - The Convention of Biological Diversity (1992)

Introduction

8. Norman Myers introduced the term 'biodiversity' in 1988. "Areas which exhibit high richness as well as high species endemism are termed as hotspots of biodiversity." "Biodiversity refers to the variety and variability among all groups of living organisms and the ecosystem complexes in which they occur." Similarly, a biodiversity hotspot is a biogeography region with a significant reservoir of biodiversity that is under threat from humans.
9. Biodiversity satisfies the needs of the human beings. Contrary to this, the hotspots of biodiversity are facing serious threats in several ways. In an estimate, noted ecologist E.O. Wilson puts the figure of extinction at 10,000 species per year or 27 per day. There are many factors working adversely leading to serious challenges to the biodiversity. Therefore, the conservation of biodiversity has been the prime sector of interests today for the state planners, researchers and conscious people.
10. There are 25 such hot spots of biodiversity on a global level out of which two are in present India, namely the Eastern Himalayas and Western Ghats. The North Eastern states, including Assam fall under biodiversity hot spots of the Eastern Himalayas. They display an ultra-varied topography that forest species diversity and endemism. Numerous deep and semi-isolated valleys in Sikkim are extremely rich in endemic plant species. The forest cover of Eastern Himalayas has dwindled to about 1/3rd of its original cover. The recent studies have shown that North East India along with its some contiguous areas of foreign countries is an active centre of organic evaluation and is considered to be the cradle of flowering plants. Out of the world's recorded flora, 30% are endemic to India of which 35,000 are in the Himalayas.
11. lying between 22-30 degree N latitude and 89-97 degree E longitude, and sprawling over 2,62,379 sq. km., Northeast India represents the transition zone between the Indian, Indo-Malayan and Indo-Chinese biogeography regions and a meeting place of the Himalayan Mountains and Peninsular India.
12. India is a country, which ranks in one of the 12-mega diversity countries in the world. As per records, 47,000 species of plants and 81,000 species of animals which is about 7% and 6.5% respectively of global flora and fauna.
13. Threats to Biodiversity
14. As per the theory of evolution, extinction or elimination of species is a natural process. However, the rate of loss of species in geologic past has been a slow process. Nevertheless, the process of extinction has become particularly fast in the recent years of human civilization. Biodiversity satisfies the needs of the human beings. Contrary to this, the hotspots of biodiversity are facing serious threats in several ways. The threat to biodiversity has not been a matter of single day or few years. Loss of habitat or habitat fragmentation, massive poaching for illegal trading of wildlife products, increasing man-wildlife conflicts are the major causes and issues related to the threat to biodiversity. This has been happening in spite of the fact known to all that forests cover the earth like a blanket and produce innumerable material goods, but also provide several environmental services, which are essential for human life.
15. A biodiversity hotspot is a biogeography region with a significant reservoir of biodiversity that is under threat from humans. To qualify as a biodiversity hotspot on Myers 2000 edition of the hotspot-map, a region must meet two strict criteria: (i) it must contain at least 0.5% or 1,500 species of vascular plants as endemics, and (ii) it has to have lost at least 70% of its primary vegetation. Around the world, at least 25 areas qualify under this definition, with nine others possible candidates. These sites support nearly 60% of the world's plant, bird, mammal, reptile, and amphibian species, with a very high share of endemic species.
16. Goalpara Forest Division
17. Goalpara Forest Division lies within the civil district of Goalpara. The forests covered by this division lie within the geographical limits of 25.50` N to 26.15` N latitudes and 89.45` E to 91.15` longitudes. There are four forest ranges in the division, namely Rangjuli, Krishnai (Central), Goalpara and Lakhipur Forest Ranges.
18. There are total 89 numbers of Reserve and Proposed Reserve Forests (RF and PRF) in the district and Forest Division of Goalpara, covering more than 32,000 hectares of land territory. The survey done to prepare the working plans for the division during the year 1981-82 to 1991-92 estimated 123 species of Trees, 48 species of Shrubs Herbs etc and 29 species of Climbers in the plants category found in the
19. Goalpara division of forest. Regarding the composition of the crop, the descriptions of the different types of forests in areas covered by this division may be placed as follows:
20. Eastern Hill Sal Forests - Khasi Hill Sal
21. Eastern Moist Plains Sal Forests

22. oist Mixed Deciduous Forests

23. Secondary Moist Bamboo Brakes and

24. Secondary Euphorbiaceous Scrubs Wildlife of Goalpara Forest Division

25. n the year 1981 the Chief Conservator of Forest, Assam prepared an outline of the future management of the Forests of the Goalpara Division. Accordingly, the then Working Plan Officer, Lower Assam Circle, Gauhati did his job per excellence. In the chapter of suggestions, it was clearly stated, 'Although there is no Wildlife Sanctuary in this Division, yet there are places where rich Wildlife species like Hoolock, Assamese macaque, Clouded leopard, Sloth bear, etc can be seen. Tracks and signs of some larger animals and varieties of deer species, i.e. Hog deer, barking deer, etc. and occasional Sambar are also met with. The Division is also rich in Aves- fauna. Every year a large number of species like Myna, parakeet, etc used to be exported to various places from the Dhupdhara and Krishnai area. It was also cautioned, 'The greatest adverse factor operating on the Wildlife is the shrinkage of suitable habitats for the Wildlife due to rapid expansion of human habitations as cultivations. The repercussion of such shrinkage of habitat has been felt and should be preserved for the Wildlife Management and further disturbance of such area should not be allowed under any circumstances'.
26. The wildlife specialists are in the opinion that availability of the three things, e.g. food; shelter and water are the basic things upon which the wildlife creates habitats. Goalpara Forest Division in comparison to the recent past has a handful of flora and fauna. This happens because of indiscriminate felling of forest trees, forest firings, and the opening of lands at fast rate, wiping out all big game in the process.
27. n spite of all obstacles, some areas still provide congenial atmosphere to the animals, like wild elephant, bear, leopard, barking deer, hog deer, etc. In addition, small animal (previously known as game) species, like jungle cat, porcupine, civets, mongoose, Assamese macaque, rhesus macaque, etc. birds commonly found in the forests are jungle fowl, common green pigeon, spotted dove, ring dove, common myna, king fishers, parakeets, woodpeckers, heron etc. Some common non-game birds like jungle crow, rolex, yellow oriole, bulbul, babbler, owl, koel, sparrow, and cuckoo, etc. are of common occurrence. Among the reptiles on the land, the most important are the various species of snakes and serpents, Cobra, Krait and Viper's, can all be seen. The only reptile 'Python' is very rare occurrence and it is a protected species. In streams, a large variety of small and medium sized fish along with small sized water snails and crabs are extensively found.
28. auses of Biodiversity Degradation
29. Biodiversity of the district requires special attention for conservation, as it is encountering severe threats due to deforestation, urbanization, road construction, construction of embankments, small-scale rubber plantation and indiscriminate application of agro-chemicals. It needs no mention that both the plant and animal species have been decreasing rapidly in Goalpara Forest Division. So, some of them are vulnerable, some rare, some endangered and others are extinct. Several numbers of cases including human activities are associated directly or indirectly with the menace of biodiversity shrinkage.
30. oss of Habitat: Forests and grasslands, landmasses, oceans, rivers, lakes, wetlands, etc are the breeding grounds of flora and fauna. Due to various reasons, landmasses are shrunken; accordingly, there is a manifold decrease in the plant species. When forests and grasslands are lost due to their habitats, the wild lives are bound to be decreased. On the other hand, due to massive pollution in oceans, uprising of riverbeds, shrinkages of wetlands, the marine and water borne species of animals and birds are facing lots of hardship in these days.
31. n Goalpara Forest Division, deforestation and degradation have been experienced due to ill practices of agriculture, massive encroachment, over-grazing, human-wildlife conflict, forest fires, and illegal extraction of forest products, commercial plantations, replacement of indigenous species with exotics, uncoordinated infrastructure development and immigration.
32. Now there is not a plot of closed forest (all open) in the district. Up to 1999, there was 147 sq km area of dense forests in Goalpara Forest Division until 1999. Regretfully, this little area of pride was vanished from the division by 2003. The total forest area of Goalpara Forest Division is 38344 hec, which is 20.8 per cent of total geographic area of the division. Nevertheless, the trend of the same is definitely decreasing. It is far most from 33.3 per cent, i.e. the national norms of forests.
33. Table -1: Total geographical and forest area of Goalpara District

Sl No	Particulars	Total Area (in Hec)
1	Total Geographical Area	184262
2	Total forest Area	38344

34. Table – II: District wise forest cover in 2007 (Area in Sq Km)

District	Geographical Area	Very Dense Forest	Mod Dense Forest	Open Forest	Total	% of G.A.
Goalpara	1824	1	70	265	336	18.42

35. Source: India State of Forest Report 2009 (Assam Chap)
36. Poaching: Due to traditional food habits of local people, particularly, tribal people, a regular and massive poaching are being taken place in every nook and corner of the forests and hills of the district. Moreover, illegal trade of wildlife products by killing prohibited endangered animals is another threat to animals in the district.
37. an-wildlife conflicts: Increasing human-wildlife conflicts in the district has been paused one of the main causes of wildlife loss. There were a good number of cases of human-wildlife conflicts few years back. In these days, man-elephant conflict alone has been creating a menace in the area. At least 50 human lives were killed in the last 10 years by wild elephants. Nevertheless, the agonized people also killed a good number of elephants. A good number of vultures were killed due to food poisoning at Solmari near Goalpara. Food poisoning was due to taking carcasses having been treated with medicine.
38. Anthropogenic factor: Whatsoever it is related to illegal felling of trees, excessive forest exploitation, forest fire, negative agricultural practices, encroachments of forest lands and wetlands, illegal fishing practices, poaching of animals and avian lives or anything like these, are due to the fragile deeds of human beings only.
39. Resource mismanagement: Increased tourism without proper regulation has led to pollution and environmental degradation. Religious destinations are also hot destinations for medicinal plant trade, which has threatened plant life in the area.
40. ate change: Several Himalayan glaciers are melting. Climate change may significantly affect the temperatures, rainfalls and water tables.
41. Suggestions and Conclusion
42. The solutions presented to address such threats tend to be generalized and often inappropriate, while only dealing with the symptoms rather than the causes of biodiversity loss. There is further a need to be understood about root causes of biodiversity loss in order to formulate appropriate interventions.
43. Biodiversity of the division requires special attention for conservation. Various remedial and protective measures for the same may be suggested in this regard. Public-private initiatives must be there in research and development. In an end, all these require a strong environmental policy of the government.
44. The Working Plan of Goalpara Forest Division (1981-82 to 1991-92) suggested long back, 'The repercussion of such shrinkage of habitat has been felt and should be preserved for the Wildlife Management and further disturbance of such area should not be allowed under any circumstances.' However, for the same, nothing has been done for the last 30 years, by which in turn, the fate of forests and wildlife of Goalpara Division are left for further deterioration.
45. A wildlife division should be accompanied with forest territorial division in Goalpara. Further, Ajagar Hill Reserve Forest (42.40 Sq Km), as demanded by AID-R, an NGO from Goalpara, should be declared protected area as the wild elephant habitation, concurrently with adjoining Meghalaya state.
46. an-wildlife conflicts should be minimized following some urgent and useful prepared guidelines and action plans on the part of Governments, NGOs and individuals.
47. With the increasing amount development being planned, there is a need to develop appropriate models and standards for environmental and social impact assessment. However, most of such assessments are found to be weak or biased. This gap needs to be urgently addressed.
48. As a conservative measure, some feasibility assessments, if environmental service payments can work in specific situations, need to be undertaken. Of course, this will require developing approaches and methodologies for undertaking economic valuation of biodiversity and forest resources.
49. There is great potential for developing and enhancing forest-based livelihoods in many parts of northeast India. However, this requires, in addition to the appropriate policy instruments, a strong scientific basis for determining harvesting and extraction levels, value addition, marketing, and benefit sharing. Hence, the working procedure of the Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) should be made proper and fruitful in the line of conservation of forests and wildlife.
50. There should be concrete and willful forest policies of the government, so that it is possible to develop and conserve flora and fauna. Above all, Govt.'s positive initiatives are necessary for doing all these.

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