European Journal of Humanities and Educational Advancements (EJHEA)
Available Online at: https://www.scholarzest.com
Vol. 5 No.02, February 2024
ISSN: 2660-5589

QUANTITATIVE STANDING, OUT-OF-THE PLACE, AND IRRESOLUTION IN JAMES JOYCE'S *A LITTLE CLOUD*, *AFTER THE RACE*, AND *EVELINE*

Zaid Tayyeh Mohammed
Zaid.82master@gmail.com

Article history:

Received: December 6th 2023
Accepted: January 6th 2024
Published: February 8th 2024

Abstract:

This paper takes into consideration three selected short stories of James Joyce's Dubliners, *A little Cloud*, *After the Race*, and *Eveline*. One aspect that unites these disparate stories in Dubliners is shared themes. All the stories are united by the idea that tales dramatize: *paralysis, corruption,* and *death*. In these tales characters fail to move ahead, instead they move outward and then retreat, or else circle endlessly. I tend to analyze how characters stand in the worldly pursuits and the watchful concern over how they stand is disturbing to their everyday life controls them; in order to maintain their standing, these characters must do what others approve of, praise, command and require, this is called other-directedness by *Martin Heidegger*. In A little Cloud, a clerk meets his successful friend and influenced by him fantasizes about succeeding himself. In *After the Race*, we witness how a 26-year-old Irishman named Jimmy, who is half-baked membership in the group, struggles to be part of a class which is not compatible with his. In *Eveline*, Eveline Hill, a 19-year-old woman who wants to embark on a journey out of Ireland, but she cannot move, she is fettered by conventions though. This study aims to show the reality by which these characters live is a social restriction, however, there is no evident resolution in each of these three stories, and the epiphany as a positive quality of these works contributes to this restrictedness.

Keywords: Paralysis , Corruption , Death , Epiphany , Other-directedness

INTRODUCTION

Dasein, Authentic and Inauthentic Self and the Paralysis

In German language, *Dasein* is the term used vernacularly for "existence", like the sentence "I am pleased with my existence" (*Ich bin mit meinem Dasein zufrieden*). Some philosophers preceding Heidegger have used the word *Dasein*, most importantly Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, with the meaning of human "existence" or "presence". It is extracted from *da-sein*, which literally means being-there/there-being, yet, Heidegger was pig-headed that this was not an appropriate translation of *Dasein*. This word for Heidegger was a kind of being preoccupied with and paying attention to the world we are in and live, yet always remaining aware of the potential element of that involvement, of the priority of the world to the self, and of the evolving nature of the self itself (Childers, 1995).

Its opposite was the act of losing one's individual meaning, destiny and lifespan in favor of a preoccupation in the public everyday world – the unknown, similar world of the They and the Them or Other-directedness (lemay 1994).

In accordance with Nietzsche's critique of the subject, as something that can be defined in accordance with consciousness, Heidegger distinguished Dasein from everyday consciousness in order to stress the critical significance "Being" has for our understanding and interpretation of the world.

"This entity which each of us is himself…we shall denote by the term "Dasein"" (Heidegger, trans. p.27) (Macquarrie & Robinson, 1967).

"[Dasein is] that entity which in its Being has this very Being as an issue…" (Heidegger, p.68)(ibid).

Heidegger intended to use the concept of *Dasein* to show the primitive nature of "Being" (*Sein*), seeing eye to eye with Nietzsche and Dilthey that *Dasein* is always a being preoccupied with the world: neither a subject, nor the objective world alone, however the solidification of Being-in-the-world. Thus, this ontological establishment of Heidegger's work opposes the Cartesian "abstract agent" in favor of practical preoccupation with one's environment. Dasein is revealed by projection into, and engagement with, a personal world – an unceasing procedure of preoccupation with the world as mediated through the projects of the self.

Heidegger regarded that language, everyday longing, logical systems, and common opinions makes *Dasein's* nature vague from itself. Authentic choice means turning away from the collective world of Them, to encounter *Dasein*, one's individuality, one's own restricted life-span, one's own being. So, Heidegger aspired the concept of *Dasein* to supply a stepping stone in the questioning of what it means to *be* – to have one's own being, one's own death, one's own truth(ibid).

Heidegger also saw the question of *Dasein* as scaling beyond the domains disclosed by positive science or in the history of metaphysics. "Scientific research is not the only manner of Being which this entity can have, nor is it the one which lies closest. Moreover, Dasein itself has a special distinctiveness as compared with other entities[...] it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it". *Being and Time* stressed the ontological difference between entities and the being *of* entities: "Being is always the Being of an entity" Establishing this difference is the general motif running through *Being and Time* (ibid)

Some scholars disagree with this interpretation, however, arguing that for Heidegger "*Dasein*" denoted a structured awareness or an institutional "way of life". Others suggest that Heidegger's early insistence on the ontological priority of Dasein was muted in his post-war writings (Philips, 1998).

When Joyce at last published his collection of short stories Dubliners about eight years or so following its completion, he mentioned that his only purpose was to "write a chapter of the moral history of my country [choosing Dublin because] that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis (O'Neil, 85). What Joyce believed was that the people of Ireland have the capacity, but they didn't have true aspiration, to realize their very circumstance. Being trapped in a state of paralysis was the reason why they could not open their eyes to the very fettering situation.

In *A Little Cloud,* Eight years ago Little Chandler saw his friend Gallagher off at the North Wall. Gallagher went off to London, and after that has become a great journalist. Chandler is supposed meet him that night, and he's becoming more and more excited.

Chandler's paralysis is illustrated into remarkable contrast by Gallagher's remarkable career. As a matter of fact, the key to Gallagher's is that he has been leaving Ireland. Little Chandler can only be happy so much in his old friend's position. Mostly, Gallagher serves as a reminder of how trapped Little Chandler really is, other-directedness is quite limpid here. Chandler has ambiguous wishes of publishing his poetry, yet it soon becomes clear that Gallagher is not the man to aid it. Thus, what we see how Chandler is preoccupied with the world he is in, and his very existence comes to a particular meaning only because of the context he is in.

Chandler's psychic incarceration extends to his wondering about Gallagher's travels. He asks over and over again if Paris is a "moral city," as if that were a simple question, as if morality were something to be measured on a scale of one to ten. In fact, his provincial criterion for analyzing a city's morality uses Dublin as the example of an ethically upright town. This position is all the more amusing because of the last few stories we've read, in which we've been treated to a broad spectrum of cheating, manipulation, abuse, and unkindness.

Gallagher is not actually a charming person, either. He looks to delight in surprising Little Chandler, and he is sort of apathetic in his behavior toward little Chandler. While he has made the big move to London, which has enabled his career to go places it would never have gone in Dublin, obtaining worldliness does not always guarantee huge gains in kindness or compassion. What Heidegger considers as the They, or Them is much obvious in the way Little Chandler's mind is trapped.

However, Gallagher's off-putting character characteristics only make Chandler more loathsome. He feels that Gallagher is not worth the success he's had. And since he feels his incarceration all the more sharply, he takes it out on his child. We learn about the many things restraining Chandler: the furniture is still being paid for, and his wife decides how to decorate the house. The child's needs make it impossible for Chandler to make time to read. As he tries to read the Byron poem and the child cries, Chandler realizes that he will not be able to break free of his obligations. His abuse of his son, his one small moment of freedom, is followed by the natural negative consequences, including remorse. Moreover, the little outburst does not make Chandler any less trapped. Therefore, Paralysis resulting from Chandler's entrapment in Dublin cannot be solved by the thought of adopting a false image of success resulting from his viewing of Gallagher. This false notion will only lead to an existential Bad faith.

Existentialist philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir use the philosophical notion Bad faith (from French, *mauvaise foi*) describe the phenomenon where a human being under pressure from societal forces take up false values and disowns their internal liberty hence acting inauthentically. (*The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism* (1995) p. 103). It is closely related to the concepts of self-deception and resentment (ibid, 1995).

A crucial claim in existentialist mindset is that people are always free to make choices and guide their lives towards their own chosen goal or "project. The claim holds that people cannot flee from this freedom, even in influential contexts. For example, even an empire's colonized victims possess choices: to submit to rule, to negotiate, to commit suicide, to resist nonviolently, or to counter-attack.

Though external circumstances may restrict Chandler (this restriction from the outside is called facticity), they cannot compel him to follow one of the remaining courses over another. In this sense the Chandler still has some freedom of choice. For this reason, individuals select in *anguish*: they know that they must make a choice, and that it will have repercussions. For Sartre, to claim that one amongst many conscious possibilities takes inevitable precedence (for instance, "I cannot risk my life, because I must support my family") is to assume the role of an object

in the world, not a free agent, but merely at the mercy of circumstance (a *being-in-itself* that is only its own facticity, i.e., it "is" inside itself, and acts there as a limitation).[2]

Illustration of life with no quality, when the only thing actuating one's existence becomes the quantitative standing, is not enough to bring the story into an end, there is more to explicate and expatiate upon the inauthentic life one might face in accordance with the stories. Epiphany doesn't reveal any illuminating truth in this story, it baffles more and more.

Out-of-the Place in *After the Race*

The title of the story "After the Race" is the tale's first metaphor. "The race" refers not only to the automobile race but also to the race for empire played out by the great European powers in the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, this race was to some extent finished. The imperialist powers had profound victory over a remarkable portion of the world, with England and France having taken many of the choicest bits of territory.

Joyce depicts Ireland's position in the world succinctly with the indirect parallel between the automobile race and the race for Empire: in the automobile race, we see no car from Ireland. The Irish have no choice yet to cheer on the cars from France, as the French are fellow Catholics and a traditional Irish ally. However, historically, the French were abysmally unreliable allies for the Irish; the French Republic's support never brought Ireland an inch closer to liberty. However, the Irish, not having a place in the race (imperial or automobile), have slight choice but to cheer on the French.

As the title illustrates, we witness the world following the solidification of the great colonial empires. What place, then, does Ireland have in the world? What place does a young Irishman, the son of an upwardly mobile rich merchant, have in the cosmopolitan world of affluent international elites?

As Joyce shows it, wealthy Irish are naturally at a disadvantage when rubbing elbows with the elites of the continent or America. Joyce sati Jimmy's parents sort of without mercy. We learn that Jimmy's father is far less fascinated by the political good of his country than in preservation of his own fascinations. Although in his youth he was an advanced Nationalist, he quickly became more conservative. The family's ascent begins with this act of compromise. And their real wealth comes when he takes a police contract, supplying meat to the forces that upheld British rule. Young Jimmy, no matter how wealthy, is the citizen of a colony. His nation cannot walk as an equal among others, and his father has a role in keeping their country a colony.

The Doyle family's stress on riches is to some extent unsavory. They analyze Jimmy's friendships in accordance with his friends' wealth. Ségouin's legendary wealth is reason enough for Jimmy to make friend with him. Joyce takes on a wry tone when he tells us the Doyles' opinion of Villanova: "Villanova was entertaining also a brilliant pianist but unfortunately, very poor" (36). The crassness of their analysis stresses that the Doyles are not part of Ségouin's world. The Frenchman does not require to analyze people based on their money. He has a lot of it, and has never worked for it. The Doyles cannot say the same. In their eagerness to please their son's friends from the Continent, they only prove their provinciality. Their inability to preserve the affluent Frenchman's charm, ease, and pleasant detachment emphasizes the difference between their nouveau riche Irish background and Ségouin's old money.

Jimmy is less than magnificent. He is something of an amateur, a mediocre student without any remarkable qualities. He is assigned to an inferior position rather firmly to sidekick status among these men: never does Jimmy plan anything, though Dublin is his city. Ségouin is the one playing gamemaster and host. Jimmy's only along for the ride.

And Jimmy's evening costs him. Even though he is permitted to play with the affluent, he cannot afford their expenses. Though he has a great time early in the evening, he loses badly in the card game, and his heavy drinking will result in a throbbing headache.

We are reminded by Jimmy's night of Dublin's provinciality. As this story shows it, part of Irish identity is a subsidiary status in comparison with the centers of world power. This status transfers to her people. The lack of power is a theme: All over the whole story, the Doyles play by the rules others have created. They can flourish and play, yet never on their own terms.

Irresolution in Eveline

However, again the theme of fleeing from something is what this story concentrates upon. Despite the young boy narrators of the former stories are too young to depart Ireland or do anything about their poverty, Eveline has been given an opportunity. However, in the end, the girl finds herself unable to go.

She has definitely every reason to depart. The illustration we have of her family life is less than heart-warming. We see that she has taken on an extraordinary part of the onus in preserving the family together, as her mother did before her. Her father, while the points he wins for not beating her, is a domineering and unfair man, who makes his daughter work and then keeps her wages. Rather than appreciate her sacrifices, he ridicules her. Unsavory characters in Joyce's works often lampoon the Irishman who departs Ireland, the most prevalent sentiment being that these expatriates are not grateful children of their country. Joyce, himself an expatriate, turns this insult around in

"Eveline": we see not an ungrateful child, but an ungrateful parent. Eveline's stifling family life becomes a metaphor for the trap that is Ireland.

Her mother provides the frightening instance of what it means to be a grateful child, and to do what is expected: we learn that she lived a life "of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness" (33). At the end of her life she is true Irish, babbling in Ireland's native language which nationalists had been attempting to reinvigorate. Yet, the phrase she utters repeatedly is probably nonsense; at best it is corrupt Gaelic. The meaninglessness of the phrase suggests, metaphorically, that the sacrifices have also been meaningless. Eveline's mother has earned nothing but madness.

The stages-of-life structure goes on. Eveline is adult, a young woman old enough to get married. Joyce gives us in succinct detail the horrible poverty and pressure of her situation. The weight of poverty and family responsibilities bear down on this young woman heavily; her financial circumstance is far worse than that of the three boy narrators of the former stories. She is trapped in a heinous condition, in charge of her brother and sister and the aging father who abuses her.

Paralysis is a prevalent theme in Dubliners, and poor Eveline finds herself incapable of move ahead. She lacks the courage and vigor to make that leap that will free her of her oppressive circumstance. She's too frightened to depart Ireland, and views 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" (34). But her paralysis will cost her. Rather than an indefinite yet promising future, she confronts a gloomy and dismal future that may well repeat her mother's sad life story.

CONCLUSION

Dubliners is a great work in its own way, comprised some of the most extraordinarily written short stories in the language. Joyce moves easily between curt, bare-bones narrative and careful detail. There is no stream-of-consciousness, as a matter of fact, protagonists, such as first-person narrators sometimes nearly keeps away from the narrative, leaving the reader alone with only the basic facts of the story. Even though some readers have complained that the autobiographical illustration is preoccupied with self-indulgence, in these stories we witness how Joyce proves his capability to enter the souls of people far removed from himself. His sharp understanding of character is everywhere, and is often shown with an outstanding conciseness and precision. His depiction of Dublin and its people is not always a praising one. Joyce never romanticizes poverty, and searches how need and social entrapment adversely degrades character. He views his hometown as a city split, actually against itself, and the atmosphere of defeat and decline scatters every story. He is often completely critical of Irish provinciality, the Catholic Church, and the Irish political climate of the time. But the collection is called Dubliners, not Dublin. Joyce does not merely write about conditions. The real power of Dubliners is Joyce's depiction of the strong characters who live and work in this distinctive and bleak city.

WORKS CITED:

- Childers, Joseph W. The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism. New York: Columbia UP, 1995. Print.
- LeMay, Eric, and Jennifer A. Pitts. Heidegger for Beginners. New York, NY: Writers and Readers Pub., 1994. Print.
- Heidegger, Martin, and John MACQUARRIE. Being and Time. Translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. (Reprinted.). Oxford: Blackwell, 1967. Print.
- Philips, Herman. Heidegger's Philosophy of Being a Critical Interpretation. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1998. Print.