DOUBLING DUBLIN: JOYCE'S DISCOVERY OF A LANGUAGE SYSTEM THROUGH REPETITIONS IN DUBLINERS

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Introduction

Joyce started writing *Dubliners* to reveal the reality of Dublin life which, he thought, the Irish Revival Movement ignored. According to J. W. Foster, this reality is "the Catholic, English-speaking, democratic, petit-bourgeois world created by Daniel O'Connell in the nineteenth century." In other words, this is the world of materialism that was rapidly spreading all over Ireland then, and that Yeats was reacting against through his artistic creation. Yeats was pretty much regretful about the decline of Protestant landlords and dreamt of what D. Donoghue calls "the Platonic form of Ireland" where "peasant and landlord join in pride to crush the puny bourgeoisie."

Joyce believed that the construction of such an ideal or romantic view of Ireland would end in failure. In February 1907 when he was in Rome planning to write 'The Dead,' he learned of the Abbey riots. This incident seems to have slightly changed his attitude towards the revivalists in a favourable way, but still he showed his suspicion about Synge's knowledge of the Irish peasant in his letter, and as for Yeats, Joyce called him "a tiresome idiot" who is "quite out of touch with the Irish people." Joyce went on to say that the news of the riots discouraged him from writing 'The Dead.'

His naturalistic attack was two-pronged: he insisted on seeing the reality of O'Connellite Ireland and at the same time he denounced the nationalistic attitude of the revivalists who claimed Celtic identity. In his lecture about Ireland in Trieste, Joyce ridicules an Irish politician who "boasted that he was one of the ancient race and rebuked his opponent for being the descendant of a Cromwellian settler." Joyce says it is impossible to exclude all foreign descendants from the nation and that "to deny the name of patriot to all those who are not of Irish stock would be to deny it to almost all the heroes of the modern movement" (C.W. 162). Consequently, if the Irish Revival Movement was a process of myth-making, what Joyce intended in *Dubliners* can be called that of de-mythification. The Revivalists and Joyce had each chosen a geographic centre for these purposes. For the former, the west of Ireland was the spiritual centre of their myth-making. They tried to believe that there still remained both the primitive life of the peasant and Celtic Ireland in the west. The centre was alleged to be the place of mythic unity, full of dreams and imagination. Joyce on the other hand, chose Dublin as the centre of his creation, or what he calls "the centre of paralysis," so in his book he tried to present various aspects of the paralysis with as much accuracy as possible.

Given that a clear distinction is always handy to categorize literary works, critics compare the Irish revivalists and early Joyce in terms of romanticism vs. naturalism. The similar distinction can be applied to Joyce's own works: it has been considered proof of his genius that the author of the naturalistic novel should be also that of highly experimental works in the twentieth century. But as has been pointed out by Marxist criticism, if each view of society is itself deeply rooted in the society to be presented, it would be interesting to try to detect some ideological similarity between the revivalists and Joyce, and between *Dubliners* and his later works. By reading the letters Joyce wrote while he was writing *Dubliners*, we can see that although he was one of the followers of naturalism, he was not satisfied with his naturalistic contemporaries, such as Gissing and Moor. He was dissatisfied to remain a mere disciple of nineteenth-century naturalism,

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and furthermore, he was confronted with a methodological problem to solve: that of presenting the real Dublin. In the following argument, I will describe the problem and show how the problem affected the creation of his later works.

(I)

It seems that Joyce’s presentation of paralysis is deeply concerned with his repetitive technique. For my argument, I would like to take ‘Counterparts’ because this story seems to be the most remarkable example of this repetitive technique. The protagonist of the story is an office worker named Farrington whose job is to make “a faithful copy” of legal documents, a kind of repetition. He is a big, vulgar, and alchoholic man, not at all appropriate for this type of job, because he steals out from the office too often for a sip of beer in the pub. His paralysis is measured by the extent to which he can never finish copying the same sentence: “In no case shall the said Bernard Bodley be...” (D. 99). In his third try to copy it, knowing that he can never finish it in time, he becomes so desperate that he writes Bernard twice instead of Bernard Bodley.

As the title suggests, conflicts between two persons recur several times: between Farrington and Alleyne; Farrington and a young man; Farrington and his son; and between Farrington and his wife. Aside from the main structure being built on repetition, the mimicry of others’ words or way of speech presents yet another type of repetition. According to Farrington, the discord between himself and Alleyne started when “Alleyne had overheard him mimicking his North of Ireland accent” (D. 102). Alleyne also has a tendency to mock Farrington by mimicking his way of speech whenever the latter tries to make an excuse for his delinquency. Even after Farrington comes home completely depressed having wasted all his money, he cannot leave off his habit of mimicking people; this time he mimics his little son who was told by his mother to cook for his father when she was out to attend service. The last part of the story is the boy’s repetitive cry begging his father to stop beating him: “I’ll say a Hail Mary

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1 James Joyce, *Dubliners* (1967; London: Jonathan Cape, 1982). All my references to the novel are taken from this edition. Abbreviated D. in this thesis.
for you, pa, if you don’t beat me... I’ll say a Hail Mary...” (D. 109). Though the narrator of the story does not make any comment on this boy’s cry, we may well imagine that the boy is following his mother’s example: namely, the phrase Hail Mary has probably been uttered quite often by his mother when she “was bullied” (D. 108) by her husband, and her son may be just repeating her stock phrase to escape from his father’s violence. The irony of the whole story is that although Farrington can never manage his copying job, his life is completely taken up by repetitions. These repetitions we have just seen are those which occur within the story, and similar repetitions may be found elsewhere, for example in ‘An Encounter’ where a pervert repeats his weird story as if he is mesmerized by his own speech; in ‘Clay,’ where Maria sings the first verse twice, omitting the second; and in ‘The Dead,’ where we are told by Gabriel about Patrick Morkan’s horse, which mistook King Billy’s statue for the mill and began to repeat its daily routine, walking in a circle around the statue.

But let us turn to the different, but probably more important, type of repetition which occurs between ‘Counterparts’ and ‘Clay.’ When Farrington is accused by Alleyne of missing two letters to be copied, and when asked if he thinks his boss a fool, he utters a rather witty answer to the interrogator: “I don’t think, sir, he said, that that’s a fair question to put to me” (D. 101). This answer makes Alleyne lose face in front of his client and trigger his even more furious accusation against Farrington. Even though his situation in the office is aggravated because of this answer, Farrington cannot but boast of this incident to other people. It is actually repeated three times with exaggeration. The first hearer, Davy Byrne, says that “it was as smart a thing as ever he heard” (D. 103). The series of repetitions is in fact not much different from those we have analyzed above as repetition which occurs within a story. The more interesting repetition happens when we read ‘Clay’ after ‘Counterparts.’ When Maria, the protagonist of the story, visits Joe’s house, she has bought a plumcake for Mr and Mrs Donnelly, but somehow she has lost it and cannot find it. Joe tries to console her as she almost begins to cry: “But Joe said it didn’t matter and made her sit down by the fire. He was very nice with her. He told her all that went on in his office, repeating for her a smart answer which he had made to the
manager" (D. 115). This passage will inevitably make a careful reader think of Farrington in ‘Counterparts’ who reiterates his “smart answer” to his friends, and the repetition from one story to another is quite striking and uncanny because Joe and Farrington appear quite different in character: the former is a “good fellow” who tries to make a comfortable family atmosphere for Maria, while the latter is a vulgar drunken father who beats his little son. Nevertheless, this repetition has the effect of creating a slight suspicion in the reader’s mind about Joe’s character: Joe might also have latent vulgarity just like Farrington, which might be revealed sometime. We realize that this suspicion is not necessarily incidental when we remember the following words of Maria: “Only she hoped that Joe wouldn’t come in drunk. He was so different when he took any drink” (D. 111).

Let us take one more similar example of the repetition which can be noticed when we move from one story to another, this time from ‘The Sisters’ to ‘An Encounter.’ In ‘The Sisters,’ after seeing Father Flynn’s corpse, Flynn’s sister Eliza and the narrator’s aunt talk about their memories of the deceased. The sentence which is worth noticing here is Eliza’s: “The duties of the priesthood was too much for him” (D. 16).

As soon as the next story, ‘An Encounter,’ begins, we are told that Joe Dillon, who “played too fiercely” for the narrator and other children who “were younger and more timid,” took holy orders: “Everyone was incredulous when it was reported that he had a vocation for the priesthood. Nevertheless it was true” (D. 18). The phrase “a vocation for the priesthood” is not exactly the same as the phrase “the duties of the priesthood,” yet, it would be difficult to deny the repetitive tone between these two phrases. The latter phrase, at least, has the power to evoke in our mind the image of the dead priest of the preceding story. The effect of the comparison is reciprocal. Since we are given hardly any information about the dead priest’s childhood, we are free to fill in the blank with the information of Joe Dillon’s childhood, and, at the same time, we can imagine at least one possible fate for the boy’s future: a miserable death caused by the unbearable “duties of the priesthood.”

As far as these two stories are concerned, we can see another repetition between Father Flynn and the pervert. The priest, wearing his
priestly garments with their "green faded look," reveals "his big discoloured teeth," and in the narrator's dream tries to "confess something" to him. On the other hand, the pervert is "dressed in a suit of greenish-black" with "great gaps in his mouth between his yellow teeth," and talks to the narrator "as if he were unfolding some elaborate mystery." It might seem that the similarity between Flynn and the pervert is so obvious that pointing out these repetitive phrases is superfluous, but is this really the case? The fact is that the similarity between the two characters remains completely obscure, save for the repetition of these phrases and images.

Let us recapitulate the two types of repetitions we have seen so far. The first is the repetition that occurs only within a story; the second is the one that can be perceived between two or more stories. For the sake of convenience, I would like to call the first the Intra-Story Repetition and the second the Inter-Story Repetition. Both types of repetitions help produce the image of neurosis, but as is already clear, the Inter-Story Repetition plays the more significant role in producing the ubiquitous and inescapable image of paralysis which permeates every aspect of Dublin life. These two types will be well understood in the light of the dichotomy of repetition proposed by J. Hillis Miller in a theory of literary mimesis which he adopted from Deleuze.¹ The key concept of Miller's theory is whether mimesis presupposes a solid archetypal model or not. If the repetition is well grounded on some archetype, it is called a Platonic repetition, and if not, a Nietzschean repetition. The Platonic repetition has been the backbone of mimetic literature and nineteenth-century naturalism. The Intra-Story Repetition, in which the original form to be repeated seems traceable back to an original idea, can be categorized as Platonic repetition; whereas the Inter-Story Repetition seems to fall into the category of Nietzschean repetition. Although we can perceive repetitions between, say, Farrington and Joe, these are actually "unique, intrinsically different" (sic) (Miller, 6) from each other, and it is impossible to decide which repeats which. In other words, there is no original form to be repeated for either Farrington or Joe.

The problem, however, is not so simple. Even though the Inter-Story Repetition has no original form, the repetitive tone between

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Farrington and Joe seems to evoke inevitably something like an archetype between them. Actually, *Dubliners* can be seen as a catalogue of archetypes of paralyzed people: a violent drunken father, a manipulative mother, an exploited daughter, an isolated intellec-
sia, etc. The crucial point is that these archetypal images are pro-
ducts of repetitive presentation of particular individuals. The similar
problem is to be detected in the Intra-Story Repetition. There, the
original can be traced back in this type of repetition, nevertheless, it
is repetitions that give some words or sentences a status of the original
or archetype. If they are not repeated, neither can they be original.

Here we seem to be facing an ontological as well as phenomeno-
logical problem of repetitions. As for the Intra-Story Repetition,
the archetype can exist only when we presuppose its existence: as for
the Inter-Story Repetition, inspite of the nonexistence of archetype to
start with, something like archetype begins to be perceived by the
reader through the relationship of at least two verbal structures based
on their similarity and difference. Consequently, the dichotomy of
repetition seems to be reduced to a simple alternative judgement:
whether you put the archetype at the beginning or at the end.

(2)

The problem of repetition and archetype is also deeply concerned
with that of myth or, if I borrow the term adopted by Eric Gould,
*mythicity*:

Myths apparently derive their universal significance from the way in which
they try to reconstitute an original event or explain some fact about human
nature and its worldly or cosmic context. But in doing so, they neces-
sarily refer to some essential meaning which is absent until it appears as
a function of interpretation. . . . there can be no myth without an ontologi-
cal gap between event and meaning [sic]. A myth intends to be an adequate
symbolic representation by closing that gap, by aiming to be a tautology.¹

The idea that the original or essential meaning of a myth comes
to exist through a function of interpretation is essentially the same as
the idea that an archetype can exist only through repetitions. But
in this case, the concept of repetition should be extended to include

the function of interpretation. The aptness of this extension will be immediately recognized if we recall some examples of repetitions in *Dubliners*. Those verbal repetitions such as the mimicry in 'Counterparts' are always intended to present clearly some latent aspect of an original phrase by exaggeration and distortion. The aspect is never to be realized unless the phrase is repeated, and these repetitions inevitably imply some interpretation of the person who repeats it. According to Gould, that the ontological gap between event (or words) and meaning has an essential function in myth has been revealed in elsewhere Jungian archetypal theory. Jung created another myth by attributing a sacred origin of recurring images in artistic creation to the collective unconscious.

A similar tendency to treat an original as something beyond language can be seen also in the passage describing how Farrington's smart answer was produced. Let me quote the answer again with the context where it is placed:

... almost before he was aware of it, his tongue had found a felicitous moment:
—I don't think, sir, he said, that that's a fair question to put to me.
There was a pause in the very breathing of the clerks.
Everyone was astounded (the author of the witticism no less than his neighbours) . . . (D. 101).

Farrington was neither prepared for nor conscious of uttering the answer but it came out from somewhere unknown. The origin is in mystery. But when the narrator calls Farrington "the author of witticism," and mentions that Farrington himself was surprised by his own words, we seem to be confronted with rather a contemporary problem of literary criticism: it is language that produces the author, and since language is shared by the society, the authority of certain words cannot be attributed to any individual. Actually, the smartness of the answer is not intrinsic in the phrase. The phrase itself seems rather conventional and a cliché. It is Farrington who utters the phrase but it is possible to suppose that he just repeats a similar phrase he heard somewhere before. The adjective "fair" might be his pet word because he uses it again when he is beaten in the arm wrestling by a young counterpart: "Play fair" (D. 107).
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It is the interpretation of phrase that makes the phrase smart rather than the intrinsic value of the phrase. Furthermore, in order to keep the smartness of the answer, it must be repeated or interpreted again and again, and this process is actually carried out not only within the story but also beyond it, as we have seen above. In a nut shell, the originality of Farrington's smart answer is less important than its process of repetition.

The absence of archetype or origin and the myth-making based on this absence have already been pointed out as a key concept in understanding Joyce's later works. This is a drastic change from the early criticism of Joyce. One of the most famous early critics is T. S. Eliot, who attributed the mythical method to *Ulysses*. He said that allusion to the classics as archetype was the most efficient technique for contemporary authors to give order to the modern world. Most readers of *Ulysses*, however, have been well convinced that Eliot's view is naive because the allusion to classics seems to have engendered more confusion than order in the critical scene. M. Eliade, once regarded *Ulysses* as "nostalgia for the myth of eternal repetition... for the abolition of time." If we refer to the dichotomy of Miller again, it is obvious that the eternal repetition belongs to the Platonic repetition.

Probably it was Wolfgang Iser who first gave an analytical explanation to the confusion caused by the Homeric allusions in *Ulysses*:

One should not forget, when considering the Homeric parallel, that Joyce permeated his novel with just as many Shakespearean allusions as Homeric. And even if one tries to equate Shakespeare's presence in *Ulysses* with the return of the archetypes, nevertheless there is no denying the fact that Joyce was obviously more interested in the various manifestations of such archetypes than in merely establishing their return. (Iser, 201)

This statement makes an obvious counterargument against Eliade's remark on *Ulysses*. Iser's point is that the reading process of *Ulysses*

inevitably implies a selection of certain elements and the selection inevitably implies omission. Each reader, therefore, has to make his or her own *Ulysses* out of the network of words of the text. He also says, "the ‘archetype’ does not exist in itself, but must be brought into existence by a realization . . . . The archetype, then, can take on as many forms as there are forms of presentation" (Iser, 230). Consequently, he says, even Homer’s *Odyssey* is not the archetype, but only a manifestation of it. This argument is taken over by E. Gould who put the concept of the Platonic archetype completely into suspicion (E. Gould, 141). In other words, Homer’s *Odyssey* can exist only through interpretation or a repetition of it, and it goes without saying that Joyce’s *Ulysses* is one of the most remarkable repetitions of the classic.

(3)

After these analyses of repetitions, it seems quite interesting to recall Joyce’s intention for writing *Dubliners*:

My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis. I have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories are arranged in this order. (Letter II. 134)

When Joyce wrote this letter his original twelve stories of *Dubliners* had been already finished. About a year later the Abbey riot happened, at which time he again emphasized the importance of knowing the reality of the Irish people, and criticized the Irish revivalists for their myth-making. It seems that Joyce’s attitude is typically that of the author who espouses nineteenth-century naturalism, and therefore whose artistic presentation of Dublin should be categorized as the Platonic repetition in Miller’s dichotomy. But as we have seen above, if the difference between the Platonic repetition and the Nietzschean repetition is only whether you put the archetype at the beginning or at the end, and if the presence of archetype is wholly dependent on the process of repetition, Joyce’s naturalistic attitude confronts a difficult problem; namely, *Dubliners*, too, may be another
form of myth-making. When Joyce calls Dublin "the centre of paralysis," his stance is obviously logocentric. In that failure of any kind is likely to be attributed to paralysis, the word "paralysis" receives the status of having the final meaning. If so, Dubliners would share the same attitude towards language with the revivalists, to the extent that they both presuppose the centre or the transcendental significance for their works. Further, de-constructive criticism has revealed that whether it is romanticism or naturalism, as long as the artistic work is based on a language system presupposing transcendental significance, it can be called a myth-making.

Joyce probably realized this, though not in modern terms, as he wrote Dubliners. He changed his artistic stance in such a way that the novel still could be a presentation of some reality of Dublin life, and at the same time, could be something innovative and different from contemporary naturalistic novels. That shift in his artistic stance would be reflected in the process of rewriting and rearranging the order of the fifteen stories of Dubliners. Therefore I would like now to follow the rewriting and rearrangement process of those stories we have seen above, and then to analyze the final story, 'The Dead.'

First, 'Clay' and 'Counterparts.' In the original order of creation the two stories were fourth and sixth respectively, 'Boarding House' being written between them. In his letter of September 24th 1905, Joyce put 'Counterparts' immediately after 'Clay,' and together with 'A Painful Case' he called them the stories of mature life. The next reshuffle occurred when he told the publisher Grand Richards on 13 March 1906 to insert 'A Little Cloud,' another mature life story, between 'The Boarding House' and 'Counterparts.' Since 'The Boarding House' belongs to the group of stories of adolescence, 'Clay,' a story of mature life, must come automatically after 'Counterparts,' and this order had been fixed when Dubliners was finally published in 1914. What interests me most is not only that the orders of 'Clay' and 'Counterparts' were more frequently changed than other stories, but also the fact that their order was reversed.

Why was the original order 'Clay'-and-'Counterparts' reversed? Of course, when we think about the reason of rearrangement, we should analyze not only the two stories but also what effect the reversed order brought on other stories surrounding the two: namely 'A Little Cloud' placed before 'Counterparts' and 'A Painful Case'
placed after 'Clay.' The effect on the second pair is not so difficult to explain, because the two stories share the theme of sterile celibacy. The first pair, on the other hand, deal with family life, and what strikes me most is that the endings of the stories are rather similar to each other: a husband abuses his own child during his wife's absence. In a broader sense, then, repetition occurs between the stories within both pairs, because they produce some archetypal image in the reader.

Now let us go back to the first question: what effect is produced by reversing the order of 'Clay' and 'Counterparts'? I would like to approach this problem by considering the argument about "smart answer" in Chapter 1. Farrington's smart answer to his boss and the subsequent repetition of the answer in the pub make up the central part of 'Counterparts,' while Joe's smart answer is only briefly alluded to as a story within a story in 'Clay.' Therefore, if the original order of 'Clay' and 'Counterparts' had not been reversed, the uncanny effect produced by the repetition would have been less conspicuous than when it was reversed. In other words, by reversing the order of the two stories, Joyce drove into his own text a wedge which would reveal the language system, and consequently deconstruct his naturalistic stance.

A similar tendency to reveal the language system can be seen in the process of making the stories of childhood. For my argument, the fact is quite significant that the word "paralysis," which had not been used in the first version of 'The Sisters,' was put in the first paragraph of the story, together with other words such as gnomon and simony. Though the boy of 'The Sisters' does not know the meaning of those words, he is fascinated by the words and tries to find out the meanings. According to P. F. Herring, this attitude of the boy can be a model for a reader, who is also "enlisted as co-creator in the production of meanings" of the story.1 But Herring also points out that Joyce uses "uncertainty principle" in Dubliners, and that principle makes it impossible for both the boy and the reader to attain the final meaning, because the efforts to get the meanings of the words should be a process of myth-making. This gap between words and meanings is also revealed in 'An Encounter' and 'Araby.' The key word in the former story is "the Wild West" and in the lat-

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ter, needless to say, "Araby." Narrator boys are enchanted by the words and try to ascertain their meanings in vain. In each story a reader is also compelled to the similar pursuit of myth-making only to realize the absence of the final meanings. It is possible to say, after Herring, that "certain kinds of absence" present some reality of Dublin life, but such a revelation of the gap between word and meaning can be also a self-deconstruction.

(4)

In 'The Dead,' Joyce tried to present another aspect of Dublin life partly because he was told to do so by G. Richards. In his letter of September 25th 1906, he says: "Sometimes thinking of Ireland it seems to me that I have been unnecessarily harsh.... I have not reproduced its ingenuous insularity and its hospitality." But he quickly adds:

For were I to rewrite the book as G. R [ichards] suggests 'in another sense'... I am sure I should find again what you call the Holy Ghost sitting on the inkbottle and the perverse devil of my literary conscience sitting on the hump of my pen. (Letter II. 166)

This famous passage clearly shows Joyce's dilemma. He wants to present the Irish virtue such as hospitality, but his artistic conscience tells him to present the reality of Ireland. Now we can see his dilemma should be three-fold because to present reality in the way of the nineteenth-century naturalism would be no less a myth-making than the Irish Revival Movement.

In a way, Joyce presented the Irish hospitality in 'The Dead' by giving a cheerful picture of The Misses Morkans' party. Gabriel refers to the hospitality, calling it "a tradition that is unique as far as [his] experience goes...among the modern nation" (D. 231). But, as Gabriel himself admits, the word Irish hospitality is always accompanied by some negative connotation. In 'The Boarding House,' Mrs Mooney plans to blackmail Mr Doran into marrying her daughter by saying, "he had simply abused her hospitality" (D. 70), because he had an affair with her daughter and betrayed her trust in him. Obviously, it is Mrs Mooney who abuses the word in this case. In 'Counterparts,' Weathers, a young man from the Tivoli, says,
"The hospitality [is] too Irish" (D. 104) to Farrington and others who offer to stand many drinks to him. In spite of his complaint, Weather never actually rejects their offers, while Farrington believes that the hospitality should be returned somehow. When Weathers fails to do so, Farrington calls him "a sponge." Those examples show that the meaning of the word hospitality is protean, and at the same time functions as a mysterious word with the final value. Therefore, as soon as the word is referred to, all the characters are caught up in the process of myth-making, and in a way are paralyzed, as are the narrator boys in the first three stories.

Facing the three-fold dilemma, what Joyce really did in 'The Dead' was rather paradoxical. His strategy was to reveal the process of myth-making by presenting the Irish hospitality and Gabriel's acceptance of the west, the spiritual centre of Ireland. Though Gabriel somehow endures Miss Ivor's assault and succeeds in filling the role of a dependable and amiable nephew in the party, Gretta's story about her former lover Furey shatters Gabriel's confidence completely. After Gretta falls asleep, exhausted with excitement caused by her own story, Gabriel, left alone in the dark room, realizes that he has played a poor part as her husband in her life. This realization, however, does not evoke any repulsive feeling but only sympathy towards his wife, who has "no longer the face for which Michail Furey had braved death" (D. 254). That sympathy, he thinks, is his love towards her, and he feels "he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree" (D. 255), an image of Furey reconstructed by Gabriel, based on Gretta's story.

C. Rossman calls the whole passage summarized above "something of a Chinese-box puzzle." Recollecting her long dead lover's image, Gretta tells the story to Gabriel, who, in his turn, reconstructs the image. But in fact, what feeling Furey really had towards Gretta can never be ascertained either by Gretta or by Gabriel, much less by the reader. In other words, the final meaning or the core of the recollection is forever in the shade or even absent; but because of the absence, Gretta can make up her own story about Furey's love

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towards her, as does Gabriel. Obviously this is the typical process of myth-making.

One crucial aspect of the process is that the romantic love story took place in Galway, a town in the western Ireland. Since that area was the spiritual centre for the Irish revivalists, the centre of Gretta-Gabriel’s myth-making overlaps that of the Irish revivalists. As the origin of the repeated love story is forever lost, so is the spiritual centre of the Irish revivalists. Yeats could never reach his Platonic form of Ireland where "peasant and landlord join in pride," in spite of his repeated efforts at myth-making through his artistic creation. In this sense Gabriel’s decision to travel to the west can be an analogy of the myth-making of Irish revivalists. Joyce seems to have narrowly succeeded in presenting some reality of what the Irish revivalists did by comparing it to Gretta-Gabriel’s myth-making process, grounded on the absent centre.

Joyce’s strategy is thus paradoxical, because although it presents the reality of certain forms of Irish life, it also subverts the technique of the nineteenth-century naturalism by revealing the language system which supports it. Therefore, if *Dubliners* is a novel of naturalism, it could be so not in the sense of nineteenth-century naturalism which presupposes the transparency of language. Given that the centre of the language system is always absent, the ending of ‘The Dead’ is highly suggestive. Gabriel, who begins to sleep beside his wife, feels his identity "fading out into a grey impalpable world." The whole world begins to dissolve and dwindle. In a way, Gabriel, accepting his trip to the west is thrown into the absent or vacant centre of the language system where nothing can be differentiated: hence the snow falling "upon all the living and the dead," without any distinction. R. Ellmann interprets the meaning of the snow as a unity of people, whether living or dead, but some critics think that the snow covering everything suggests the final situation of paralyzed Ireland. The point, however, is probably not to decide which interpretation is correct here, because if Gabriel’s trip to the west is the one to the centre of the language system, neither origin nor final meaning can be attained there.

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Conclusion

In *Dubliners* Joyce succeeded in his original intention of presenting the reality of certain Dublin life at the turn of a century. The real significance of the work, however, should be attributed to the fact that the process of its creation was the portal of discovery for Joyce of his new artistic stance. He perhaps introduced repetition as a technique to give neurotic and comical effects to his stories, but since the problem of repetition has so much to do with the problem of semiology as well as semantics, he seems to become aware of the language system, which is to be analyzed in terms of modern literary theories.

The concept of the centre of a language system is highly paradoxical. When we pursue it, we must fall into repetition, the infinite process of differentiation and identification. But the centre is also vacant, where any kind of differentiation is impossible, as has been shown by the ending of *‘The Dead.’* Joyce fully developed this discovery in his later works. Many enigmas in *Ulysses*, such as “man in the macintosh”, seem to be deeply involved with the repetition of words and the reader’s recognition of the repetition. In a way, it is possible to say that there are as many meanings as there are repetitions to be recognized in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. 