CSCanada
Studies in Literature and Language
Vol. 5, No. 2, 2012, pp. 63-69
DOI:10.3968/j.sll.1923156320120502.1926

ISSN 1923-1555[Print]
ISSN 1923-1563[Online]
www.cscanada.net
www.cscanada.org

Binary Oppositions and the Meaning of Joyce's *Dubliners*

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Received 19 June 2012; accepted 23 August 2012.

Abstract

James Joyce is known, by Robert Scholes, as the first structuralist. Each *Dubliners* story is a systematized combination of signs governed by rules that generate meaning within the context of Dublin. Saussure believes that meaning is generated through a system of structured differences in language. Differences in *Dubliners* appear in the form of binary oppositions from which Barthes believes meaning comes. What the structuralist Joyce does is fixing signifieds that appear in the form of binary oppositions in the structure of *Dubliners*. Self-negation and paralysis are the underlying themes as well as the main binary oppositions that crop up in the whole collection. Binary oppositions such as man vs. animal; silence vs. speech; liberation vs. promise and past vs. future that become fixed signifieds during the course of the action are also of crucial importance to unifying the whole collection. The interconnectedness of stories creates a system in which meaning is generated. This paper is an attempt to reveal the meanings generated in *Dubliners* through repeated binary oppositions.

Key words: James Joyce; *Dubliners*; Difference; Binary opposition; Passivity

Pyeaam Abbasi, Hussein Salimian (2012). Binary Oppositions and the Meaning of Joyce's *Dubliners*. *Studies in Literature and Language, 5*(2), 63-69. Available from: http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/j.sll.1923156320120502.1926 DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.sll.1923156320120502.1926

> My intention was to write a chapter in the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis.
>
> -- James Joyce

INTRODUCTION

Robert Scholes in his *Structuralism in Literature* (1975) refers to James Joyce as the first structuralist. In *Dubliners*, Joyce makes each story a systematized combination of signs governed by rules which generate the meaning within the context of Dublin and in comparison with the other stories of the collection. Each story by itself is of little importance and what the whole collection means can best be achieved by an analysis of how they are organized to mean so. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to reveal the underlying principles that structure the meanings existing in *Dubliners*.

According to Saussure (1857-1913), the Swiss linguist, "meaning is generated through a system of structured differences in language" (Baker, 1982, p.15). Barthes believes that "meaning comes from some initial binary oppositions or differentiation" (quoted. in Scholes, 1975, p.100-101). The organization of differences in the form of binaries is central to Joyce and the grammar underlying the stories, and the semantically-defined themes that carry Joyce's views apropos of Dublin and her inhabitants are generated from related dualities. In order to structurally understand the culture out of which certain concepts arise, the "system of relations of an underlying structure" (Baker, 1982, p.15) seems indispensable. Scholes states that system refers to "a complete and self-regulating entity that transforms its surface features while retaining its systematic structure" (1975, p.10). This means that signs have meanings just within systems and the meaning of each story as a text is determined by the system ruling the whole collection. System defines the semantic oppositions and the way signs, encased in a cultural frame, are combined and organized to generate meaning.

Like *Ulysses*, *Dubliners* is a map to the heart of the city Dublin however, in contrast to *Finnegans Wake* open to Post-Saussurian theories of play and parody, *Dubliners* has the potentiality to yield an underlying grammar revealing Joyce's views of Dublin and *Dubliners*. Therefore, contrary to Post-structuralists who defy stability of meaning, Joyce here stabilizes certain signifieds to create "meaningful entities" (McGowan, 2006, p.3). What seems noteworthy is that "whatever things mean, they will always come to mean by virtue of a set of underlying principles" (Ibid.). The same as structuralists who "usually begin their analysis by seeking general principles in individual works" (Rice & Waugh, 1996, p.23), Joyce seems to have realized that "all stories, events, and individuals were variations of other same few types" (Eagleton, 2005, p.182) meaning that Joyce has arranged cultural signs and binary oppositions in a way to generate a structural coherence as the basis of his prevalent myth concerning Dublin. *Dubliners* is a self-enclosed system of rules the study of which will be important to the aim of this paper. A close analysis of Joyce's language is, indeed, needed in order to detect the structures that generate the thought behind the meaning of *Dubliners*. By and large, language refers to a system of values that may culturally support or oppose one another. Language has the capability to provide dualities that give birth to ideas and carry meanings. The purpose, therefore, is to find an underlying structure concerning Joyce's theme and language that establishes meaning through certain dualities. The new perspectives on language and its structures go back to Saussure's exploration of the relationship between language and meaning. As a matter of fact, he believed that "in language there are only differences" (1960, p.120) and it was through disparate individual paroles that one could get to langue that produces meaning. Accordingly, every story here is taken as a parole and *Dubliners* makes use of a common structure or langue to render binary oppositions. For Saussure, language as a primary structure as well as a system of signs shapes and organizes the world, and structures the reality. In fact, all the linguistic signs of a language as "a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others" (Rice & Waugh, 1996, p.10) are interrelated and meaningful in the very context in which they are used. It is through language and Dublin's culture that Joyce shapes and reconstructs the disabled Dublin as well as *Dubliners*' mode of consciousness.

By penetrating into the heart of Dublin, Joyce wishes to explore a universal underlying theme to suit "all the cities of the world [and show the nature of modern life epiphanized through binary oppositions in *Dubliners*]. In the particular is contained the universal" (Jones, 1955, p.6). Joyce, in *Irish Homestead*, announced that he wrote *Dubliners* "to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which may consider a city" (quoted in Walzl, 1965, p.437). The work is abound with symbolic overtones running through realistic events and names as an exploration of the dynamics of the inner and outer world – social and individual aspects of Dublin life. By portraying the barren world of Dublin with her unconscious characters unable to decide, act and react in different situations, Joyce wanted to "criticize ... and unmask ... a culture that [he] despised because he considered it paralytic" (Letters I: 55). Though meaningful independently, there is common thread running through the whole collection making it a unified picture of Dublin. Stories of *Dubliners* are quite meaningful in a literary system in which Joyce questions already-established discourses of nationality, language, culture, politics, and Catholicism that are influential in pitiful, degraded life of Ireland. The reader is, accordingly, reminded of Stephen in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* where he believes that "artists must not be bound by any doctrine, influence, or political cause, since these are nets or obstacles, to freedom and to the creative process" (Campbell, 2000, p.651). *Dubliners* embodies themes such as quest for identity, paralysis, stasis, simony, alienation as well as deception and superstition all of which are made meaningful and effective through the binary oppositions that crop up in the stories. In "A Little Cloud", Little Chandler feels "how useless it was to struggle against fortune, this being the burden of wisdom which the ages had bequeathed to him" (Joyce, 1993, p.49). Lowe-Evans refers to "Dublin's moral turpitude" (1995, p.396) which fixes characters in a state of paralysis turning them into living dead compelled to suppress their natural passion to life wonderfully depicted in Eveline's dedication to "keep the home together as long as she could" (Joyce, 1993, p.25). This link between paralysis or inaction and both death and religion underpins all the stories in *Dubliners*. Characters face events which paralyze them from taking action or fulfilling their desires as though they experience a kind of life in death. Dublin is shown, through certain dualities, as "a world of stultification, absence and corruption" from which "the positive forces of ambition, energy, determination and revolutionary zeal are all excised" (Childs, 2000, p.202). Despite the fact that Waugh sees Dublin paralyzed by "church, colonialism, and petit-bourgeoisie greed" (1992, p.158), it is the restriction imposed by discourses of culture, family, nationalism, subservience, self-deception, language game and indecision that changes every Dubliner into a Prufrockian figure. Thus, certain cultural patterns are shaped out of the dualities which construct the universal grammar of Joyce's *Dubliners*.

BINARY OPPOSITIONS AND THE MEANING OF *DUBLINERS*

In contrast with Post-structuralists' interest in fluid

signifieds, the structuralist Joyce fixes the signifieds that appear in the form of binary oppositions in the structure of *Dubliners* where self-negation is the underlying theme. Joyce highly values life and self which *Dubliners* are forced to suppress. This is precisely the reason Joyce foregrounds the loss of coherence in Dublin. What is added to this as another underlying structure is the culturally constructed Catholicism that is influential in propagating passivity and offering promises of another world ruining "commitments to action in this world" (Smith, 1996, p.83). In actual fact, throughout *Dubliners*, religion is depicted as a fixture in Dublin life which leaves Dublin residents stuck with otherworldly rituals. Thus Joyce always wished a new value system in which earthly life was sanctified. A related duality in *Dubliners*, ironically, is the absence of otherworldly figures and presence of worldly priests who reinforce the ideology of contentment with status quo and resistance to change. Accordingly, Nietzsche, who influenced Joyce, believes that priests coax the populace to subservience by defining "truth" as "nothingness" and "negation" (1888, p.575). Therefore, one hardly comes across flight imagery in *Dubliners* associated with freedom, individuality, and self-expression in contrast with convention and subjectivity in the Althusserian sense of the term. What the binary oppositions that shortly will be referred to reveal, is ignorant dehumanized *Dubliners* who are no more than living dead and who are caught in "commodified commercial relations" (Waugh, 1992, p.159) as well as failed filial friendship. One prominent instance of the presence of a dead priest who paralyzes people even after death is the story with the effeminate title "The Sisters". Father Flynn's physical and spiritual paralysis is dramatized by the submissive sisters' ingenious smiles that are both uneducated and barred from marriage. Most of the characters talk and think ritualistically – reminder of exhausting rituals of death ceremony – and are filled with guilt-obsession. The death notice reads that the priest died on 1st of July 1895, reminding the reader of the defeat of the Catholic forces loyal to James II by Orange forces supporting William III which led to the establishment of English Protestantism – male dominating force – and oppression of the Catholic faith and Irish paralysis. The language in "The Sisters" is used to conceal the boy's guilt that is in a moral dilemma between fear and fascination. In the deep structure of the story marked by the gaps in the narrative, Joyce highlights how Catholicism had penetrated into the recess of the boy's psyche reducing him into a weak passive slave by uprooting passion and relating sex, power and sin. Uncertain characters as such conclude that "search for truth may yield only fictions" (Ferguson, 1982, p.16). In this story and in "An Encounter" in which the sailors symbolize freedom and happiness as opposed to convention, the idea of how children are ideologically constructed with the internalization of Catholic morality is reflected. More to the point, the old man whose name is never divulged, serves just fine as an embodiment of routine and implies that repetition exists even within strange new experiences. Any passion for life existing outside the priests' monopoly is taught a sin followed by punishment. Therefore, the imagination of the children who play hooky for a day does not equal the senses of guilt and punishment internalized in them. No wonder the end of the quest brought by darkness opposing light is frustration and penitence. Thus, the "green eyes" make an opposition between adventure, imagination and romanticism at the beginning, and degeneracy and corruption in Ireland at the end from which no escape is possible as the case is with Farrington, Eveline, Gabriel, Little Chandler, and Polly Mooney's husband.

The recurrent motif of living death is not an exception in "Araby" Ironically the charity bazaar in "Araby" is "Arabia, which is associated with the phoenix, symbol of the renewal of life" (Magalaner, 1959, p.87). The gloomy, grey, joyless, stagnant, dark, cold, and blind Dublin is both physically and spiritually paralyzed with her lingering drunk inhabitants. The mentioned characteristics stand in sharp opposition with the echoes of a romantic quest, though faint, associated with the power of imagination. The romantic quest as an emancipation is an escape from Dublin's harsh reality. However, the church bazaar announces the end of the boy's romance. Too much fascinated with the dream of fulfilling a holy quest, the boy finds Mangan's sister just part of the environment, and his own passion as blind as North Richmond street thus "the sheer spell of the fascination ... add[s] to despair" (Beck, 1969, p.104). The colour brown prevails to suggest paralyzed psyches such as the girl who, in his imagination, is a "brown-clad figure" (Joyce, 1993, p.19). The dualities permeate the work in which the boy cannot dispense himself with the guilt-obsession that blocks him of any Nietzschean growth into higher states. This causes the boy's loss of any sense of passion for life and the process of dehumanization changes him to a creature while a new binary opposition is created: man versus animal. Following this another binary opposition appears to mark the boy's silence (vs. expression) and inability in expressing himself that changes the story, as Ezra Pound says, to just "a vivid waiting" (quoted in Beck, 1969, p.96). What impedes Mangan's sister from going to Araby is "a retreat that week in her convent" (Joyce, 1993, p.18), a fact that shows the church to be a central symbol. Morrissey also refers to "the poetic antithesis between the Christian Brothers and the freed boys" (1982, p.51) to emphasize the underlying theme of church's insensitivity, ineffectuality as well as lack of spiritual beauty. If there is a mission it must be sought abroad and yet it is "thwarted ... by the Irish themselves ... the church and England" (Sexton, 2003, p.15) which are the causes of Ireland's paralysis as Joyce strongly believed. This brings us to the running theme in *Dubliners*: how Catholicism has robbed blind *Dubliners* of the will to live by making them paralyzed intellectually.

The "dreary, monotonous sentence structure" (Scholes, 1982, p.102) of "Eveline" gives birth to certain related binary oppositions that constitute the underlying structure of the story. Future versus past; unfamiliar vs. familiar; new vs. conventional; liberation vs. promise; language vs. loss of speech; cry vs. silence; activity vs. passivity; human vs. "a helpless animal" (Joyce, 1993, p.26); unvoice (of passion) vs. voice (of paralysis); sexed vs. unsexed; elopement vs. stay; adventurer vs. Dubliner (who "never decides, never escapes" (Scholes, 1982, p.102); change and becoming vs. being; and marriage vs. celibacy connoting "incompletion, frustration and isolation" (Ibid, p.91) are the major binary oppositions that appear in the story of Eveline for whom the question is to leave or not to leave, and who finally moves from the wish of escape with Frank to a fear of doing it.

The motionless Eveline whose only action is sitting by the window recollecting her mother's dreadful fate, imagines being away from Dublin in a distant exotic unknown place such as Buenos Ayres. What accompanies the thought is Frank (safety, protection, water, decision, sexual potency, emancipation, life, loves though life is much more important than love: "Escape! I must escape! Frank would save me. He would give me life, perhaps love, too" (Joyce, 1993, p.26). In opposition to Frank, lies Eveline's father (threat to safety, land, fruitlessness, obedience, celibacy, and impotency). The oppositions arise from the sentence when Eveline sees "the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay" (Ibid, p.26). Internalized in Eveline is the thought of leaving behind Catholicism and its teachings as being a great sin: "black mass." Scholes says "to 'lie in' is to be delivered of a child, to be fruitful, uncelibate, not to play the mother's role for the father" and continues that in this way she can send ... them [her father and mother] into the past." Eveline, this way, "accept[s] life and the danger of death" (1982, p.103). By accepting Frank and leaving the land behind, Eveline finds the chance to be redeemed of her straitening past. However, the bell of the ship connotes religious overtones reminding her of her Catholic and filial duties, and deepening her psychological crisis. Eveline is obsessed, in Nietzschean words, by "petty thoughts" and marked as a "helpless animal". She is indecisive, dehumanized and an animal with no power of speech and facial signs which is a denial of the relationship between world and self: "she set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition" (Joyce, 1993, p.26). The brown colour of Eveline's house dramatizes the bonds of habit and her decadence.

The dualities that crop up in "A Little Cloud" are courage versus timidity; superiority vs. inferiority; significance vs. littleness; and imaginary, dreamy, ideal, exotic world out of Dublin vs. the real drab life of Dublin. In contrast with Gallaher stands Thomas Chandler who is compelled to wear the mask of a passive, pious member of the society. Little Chandler, unable to bear the harsh surrounding, resorts to his own imaginary world to obtain a sense of identity. The same as the boy of "Araby" and Maria of "Clay", he is in a fantastic world that offers the possibility of subjectivity. Not once in the story does he pluck up the courage to set pen to paper, but he spends plenty of time imagining fame and indulging in poetic sentiments in this fantasy world wherein he has the chance to be a great poet. He imagines the critical appreciation of his reviewers and never his actual poems which is indicative of the covert operation of the restrictive function of Catholicism in creating ideologies and controlling individuals. By turning members into subjects, identity (ability to see, hear and think differently) is lost and according to French who believes "seeing and hearing" to be the requirements of "art", "the characteristic of Chandler Joyce points to throughout the story is his unwillingness to see [and] his revulsion at the real" (1978, p.457). Interrelated with the aforementioned binary emerges vitality versus circularity: at the end of the story, "Little Chandler felt his cheeks suffused with shame" with "tears of remorse" due to his so-called disloyal behavior, completing the circle of emotions, from doubt to assurance and back to doubt (Joyce, 1993, p.59).

As a writerly text, "Counterparts" requires an active reader to see into the sterile, passionless and convention-bound life of Farrington who like Lenehen, Maria and Corley leads an animalistic life. In the paralytic Dublin, the relationship that should include the wholeness of man and woman results in two passion-castrated individuals a far cry from union. Farrington turns into an irredeemable shameless savage expressing his aggressive fantasies – suppressed in society – by beating his child. As a copy machine, he is dehumanized, robbed of his creativity and identity suffering lack of self-glory and becoming "unnamed ... a Noman" (Benstock, 1988, p.537).

The underlying theme of "Clay" is self-delusion. The meaning of "Clay" is in line with the meaning of other stories as "Maria's spinsterhood and common humanity are echoed by and contrasted with the situations and qualities of other *Dubliners*" (Scholes, 1979, p.74). As a story of revelation, "Clay" may seem to have no plot and be about nothing really. However, the binary oppositions determine the reading strategies. The simple prose used in *Dubliners* is effective in revealing characters' views of their own situations. If Maria likes to be liked by everyone, the aware reader knows this does not happen. The language here is in harmony with Maria's character and mode of consciousness: simple, cliché and mean. Every Dubliner – Maria – seems a prisoner in the prison of Ireland – laundry. Caught in such a setting, Maria deludes herself by her compatibility to the ideal image of womanhood in Christianity. She is praised for her total subservience for keeping every thing tidy and making peace among quarrelling maidens. Maria likes attending All Saints' Day and as a member of the laundry regards

her co-workers as nice. The documentary *Sex in a Cold Climate* (1998) chronicles the history of women who entered the Magdalen asylums for having deviated from the norms of the Catholic Church. Not being a real member of the Catholic Church means being a pariah, an outcast and a prisoner in a laundry. Maria is prisoned inside too. She cannot let her past go and keeps attending the Masses which do not let her see into the future. By ignoring the second stanza, she tries to forget the past – a lost love perhaps – yet she fails. She is blind, alone and there seems to be no revelation on her part. She remains ignorant of what goes around – the words, the irony – symbolizing Ireland paralyzed by the colonel-looking gentleman of England. Maria deceives herself of having no desire for passion. She produces her famous laughter in three different occasions which validates its semiology to be of substantial significance. Two laughters happen during the tea and one at Joe's home. Being the centre of attention in each laughter, she laughs just to keep her position as a humble and subservient figure in an attempt to self-efface herself. The laughters are not Bakhtinian in the sense to be carnivalesque to disrupt the restrictive effects of the passive and self-negating ideologies. Laughters represent indifferences and are the means for hiding and repressing passion and love.

Accordingly, the theme of paralysis appears in the malleable clay which, becoming hard, cannot be shaped. None of the laundry members gets the ring, and Maria in her timidity accepts celibacy by choosing clay signifying the clay of her life. As a matter of fact every Dubliner is doomed to choose clay with its brown colour symbolizing mortality and signifying burial in clay. At the end Maria is teased about getting the prayer-book signifying "a life of chaste seclusion from the world" (Scholes, 1979, p.69). When drunken Joe calls for the missing corkscrew to open another bottle, he subconsciously attempts to drown his understanding of how lonely and barren Maria's existence is. Scholes believes that the duality of engagement and detachment makes the reader see Maria "with a double vision" i.e., "sympathetic and ironic" (Ibid, p.76) as it is the case with other characters of the collection finding no way out of the situation they are in.

Having "A Painful Case" in mind, Norris believes that "no where in Joyce's work is paralysis invoked more poignantly than in this subject's inability ... to be anything other than static, still, and silent" (2003, p.171). The theme of passivity, emptiness, and absence (opposed to presence) here is shown in the structure of a circling pattern concluding where it begins with Mr. Duffy alone. The pattern reflects in form the vicious circle Mr. Duffy revolves in and mimics the many routines that conspire his life and deny him true companionship. A binary opposition that appears again is that of man versus animal, for "man represents no progress beyond the animals ... is becoming like an animal ... he conforms to a definite, fixed type of existence ... the animal man will thus become set in a conventional form" (Jaspers, 1965, p.131). This dehumanized situation, then, affects marriage (man-woman relationship) that is central to "A Little Cloud", "Counterparts", "Clay" and "the Dead". "A Painful Case" is a signifier with two signifieds: it serves as an indicator pointing towards Mrs. Sinico and Mr. Duffy. Ironically enough Mr. Duffy's case is more painful because he lacks the courage of Mrs. Sinico by which she broke the border lines that deprived her of happiness and life. She is, like all other women in Dublin, imprisoned in a male-dominated ideology that leaves no room for freedom and power. Mr. Duffy, a living dead signifying a male-dominated social system becomes the cause of the death of the only figure brave enough to challenge the strict, harsh conventions imposed on women. She is crushed under a train – a phallic symbol – that comes from a place (Kingstown) "where a male sovereign makes the rules" (Lowe-Evans, 1995, p.397). In this social system the only figure able to carry Mr. Duffy's epiphanal moment onward must be removed. Epiphany refers to "intense moments of revelation, insight and wisdom." They "grow out of seemingly trivial events, but reveal deep truths about a situation" (Campbell, 2000, p.652). Therefore, the haunted-by-Catholic-ideologies, blind and non-insightful Mr. Duffy as a passionless fixed person has no way but to continue a dreary living in a constant state of self-deception. The colour brown appears again through which Mr. Duffy is connected to the horde of paralytic in the whole collection: "his face, which carried the entire tale of his years, was of the brown tint of Dublin streets" (Joyce, 1993, p.77). Accordingly the boy of "The Sisters" and "Araby", Little Chandler, Maria, Eveline, and Gabriel Conroy become living dead and this is precisely what Mr. Duffy supposes himself to be: "an outcast from life's feast" (Joyce, 1993, p.84). Thus, the underlying binary that appears in "The Dead" is life versus death which signifies that "only the dead are fruitful or potent in Joyce's wasteland" (Scholes, 1982, p.103) which, also, is an affirmative of what Magalaner and Kain mean by "impeding death" (1956, p.71) delaying. As the climax and the quintessence of *Dubliners*, "The dead" foregrounds a number of dualities such as sound and silence; passion and restraint; and vitality versus circularity permeating into the sinew of all the stories. Morkan's party is noteworthy which consists of annually deadening routines pursuing the same repetitive league which is on a par with the horse walking in circles in Gabriel's anecdote. Snow, which touches both the dead and the living in every corner of Ireland, symbolizes paralysis and unites them in frozen paralysis: "yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland" (Joyce, 1993, p.161). At the end the snowfall and Gretta's breathing mark silence that follows the sound of the clang of hall door bell. The picture of the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* is also there to highlight an antithesis to the passionless life of the characters as well as the colour brown in Miss Ivors's

eyes. Joyce believes that man is capable of constructing a bright future if only he perceives the desire and passion to live fully.

Gabriel decides to follow a new course in life however, he recounts a story about his grandfather's horse that ever walked in circles which is suggestive of, in Beck's words "little people in a limited, subservient cycle and not only thus caught but irreversibly conditioned" (1969, p.321).

CONCLUSION

Epiphanies do not happen to characters in "After the Race", "A Mother", and "Clay". Epiphanies as "key moments that arise in a realistic context ... consist[ing] of common facts or phrases ... acquir[ing] the value of a moral symbol" (Eco, 1986, p.25) indicate that the unconscious characters, caught in a repressive culture have lost visions and are haunted by limitations of living and dying. They seem incapable of finding their ways out towards a better future and intimate understanding of each other. Indirectly, Joyce turns our attention towards the social, spiritual or personal collapse of lingering characters who suffer moral uncertainty accompanied with lack of identity and self-glorification. Each character's quest, if there is any, is doomed to inertia making the paralytic paradigm of Ireland that is represented in the repetitions and cyclical patterns of the stories. Each story as the realization of the underlying structure of *Dubliners* introduces certain binary oppositions such as life vs. death; man vs. animal; future vs. past; voice vs. unvoice; action vs. inaction; presence vs. absence; overman vs. servant; passion vs. lifelessness; and art vs. history though Baker believes in "lifelessness of ... art" (1982, p.28) in stories like "Ivy Day in the Committee Room", "A Mother" and "Grace". These binary oppositions become fixed signifieds during the course of the action establishing the underlying grammar of the collection.

Joyce, through the interconnected simple-structured stories of *Dubliners*, constructs a complicated net of meanings. The interconnectedness of the stories creates a system in which meaning is generated. The differences and dualities are so structured in this system that the grammar of the stories reveals the decadence and corruption of Dublin life and "the corruption and paralysis of modern time" (Parrinder, 1984, p.43). Each story is a Barthesian writerly text and in the collection, Joyce structures dualities in a way to represent the grammar of Dublin consciousness and the related themes. A final point can be Joyce's optimism hidden within the overuse of such an image as snow – suggestive of paralysis – that never lasts forever.

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