

Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION

JOYCE : THE MAN AND THE WRITER

I

Gerald Gould appreciates Joyce's work and says,

"He has an original outlook, a special method, a complex reliance on his own powers of delineation and presentment."¹

James Joyce was born at Rathgar, Dublin, on February 2 1882. His parents were Irish Catholic. He was their eldest son. He was sent to Clongowes Wood College, a Jesuit boarding school. Here in 'the Eton of Ireland' he was happy. His father spent much of his money on drinking. He neglected his duties towards his family. He was working as a Tax Collector and, he, then, borrowed money from his office. Later, because of some changed laws, he lost his post. It resulted into the bad days for his family. This condition of his family influenced the mind of James as a school boy. His (Joyce's father)

"..... children survived infancy, and they became accustomed to conditions of increasing sordidness, subject to visit from debt collectors,

having household goods frequently in pawn, and often moving to another house, leaving the rent and tradesmen's bills unpaid."²

James then joined Belvedere College, a Jesuit grammar school in Dublin. When he left the school he had lost his Catholic faith. For his further education he went to University College, Dublin. He studied philosophy and languages. He was a voracious reader. He read widely there. During his stay there, he wrote an article on Ibsen which brought him a great success. It made him aware of the potentialities which he had with him. He decided to be a writer. It seems that Joyce was interested in theatre. Joyce attacked the Irish theatre for their catering to popular taste. Naturally the taste of the theatre that cultivated by them he disliked. Even during his student days, he never participated in any nationalistic activity. He kept himself aloof from such things. The split in his personality came to the surface at this time. He led a dissolute life. He got his B.A. degree in October, 1902. Then he never relaxed in the art of writing. He wrote verses and experimented with short passages. He called them as 'epiphanies'. He uses the word to suit his own purpose. He meant by it the moment when a thing is suddenly realised in all its full and unique significance.

To him epiphany means :

"a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether from some object, scene, event or memorable phase of the mind - the manifestation being out of proportion to the significance or strictly logical relevance of whatever produces it."³

Joyce left Dublin for Paris in order to become both a doctor and a writer. He began to read Ibsen at a time. He supported himself by writing. His mother was seriously ill. He visited her. She died on April 13, 1903.

Joyce loved a girl called Nora Barnacle. Later he married her. Then with her he moved to Trieste. He obtained a position in the Berlitz School, Pola, working in his spare time at his novel and short stories. Nora Barnacle found in him a good husband and a devoted father of their children.

Joyce's Chamber Music (1907) marks the beginning of his literary career. It is a collection of thirty-six poems. In 1909 he visited Ireland to try to publish Dubliners. But his efforts were in vain. The editor thought that Joyce's work was not suitable for his readers.

One of his former friends told him that he had shared Nora's affection in 1904. Joyce became upset. He was disturbed a lot. But another friend told him that it was not true. Still he lost his faith in her. He always felt that he has been deceived by her. And later it developed into a feeling that everyone has deceived him. He feels that they have betrayed him. Naturally the theme of betrayal runs through much of his later work.

In 1914 Joyce published his Dubliners. It is a collection of fifteen short stories. It deals with the technical revolution in the history of the short story in English.

When he went to Zurich in 1915, he faced many financial difficulties there. He suffered here greatly. Even then he kept up his spirits and continued working. He published novels also. The most important are : A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916), Ulysses (1922) and Finnegans Wake (1939). He uses the stream of consciousness technique or the interior monologue in his writings. He also wrote a play, Exiles (1911). His writing is very difficult to understand. His writings is rather revolutionary in the sense of technique. It is observed that his writing is :

"obscure, apparent and it has revolutionary techniques"⁴

There is consistency of theme in his writings. He reveals his own experiences in his writings.

"Nearly all Joyce's works are imaginative reconstruction of his own life and environment - Identification of the author with his fictional counterpart can mislead, a knowledge of his work."⁵

He focuses on the problems of the middle classes and dwells in the humour in the life of Dubliners. He has a gift of music. He is a major humorist and a realist. His deep study of the European literature has interested him a lot. He begins to show his interest both in the symbolists and the realists.

"his work began to show a synthesis of these two rival movements."⁶

His chronic eye disease troubled him a lot. He was worried over the mental health of his daughter. In fact, he was not happy at the end of his life. After the fall

of France in World War II in 1940, Joyce took his family to Zurich. He died there on January 13, 1941.

II

Since the dawn of civilization people began to tell stories. Naturally it has varied subjects and methods to interpret the incidents. Basically the story meant for oral literature but later it became a part of written literature. The art of story telling is developed in centuries ago. The beginning of the short story may be traced into the old literatures like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bible. Now it has its own pattern. H.E. Bates, Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain tried to put some principles for the story. The process of development is still going on.

It is rather difficult to define a short story. It seems that no definition can embrace the complex form of the short story. A short story may not be short in length, sometimes it may run into many pages. Poe asserted that,

"the chief formal property of the short prose tale was unity of impression."⁷

But one thing is certain that it has its own techniques.
Brander Matthews declared that,

'a short story is almost null if it has no
plot"⁸

H.E. Bates says that the short story can be anything.
Anton Chekov says that it should neither beginning nor
end. H.G. Wells, thinks that a short story should be a
simple thing, and it should aim at producing one single
vivid effect. A.L. Bader is of the opinion that,

"plot is always basic in the modern
short story, and the narrative structure is
always derived from conflict, sequential action,
and resolution."⁹

Herbert Gold writes that,

"the story-teller must have a story to tell,
not merely some sweet prose to take out
for a walk."¹⁰

One can say story is nothing but a recital of events.
Gerald Prince tries to answer the meaning of an event in

his book A Grammar of Stories that,

"An event,, is a structural unit that can be summarized by a sentence of the simple kind which, in linguistic parlance, is the transform of less than two discrete elementary strings."¹¹

These events ultimately contribute to the short story. As it was the pattern of telling stories orally, the main element was to create interest in people. A short story has its origin in this tradition of story telling.

"Not until the OED supplement of 1933 did the term 'short story' itself, designating a particular kind of literary product, gain formal admittance into the vocabulary of English readers."¹²

According to Walter Allen the short story is,

"a manifestation of the romance. Its province was the extraordinary, its aim, if not to astonish, was at least to surprise, its purpose, to entertain."¹³

It seems that the short story is under the process of development. There must be a plot in the story. But it is certain that mere technical skill cannot make story great. It depends upon the writer to make it great. There must be a balance in a story. So that it can be a good short story. Further there should be conflict in a story. It becomes the important element in it. Though the masters like Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, James Joyce, Rudyard Kipling have used this form with originality and power. His stories are the outcome of his experiences.

*Example
sent.*

Maupassant, Poe are other two great masters of the modern short story. Infact some respect Maupassant as the father of the modern short story. Some give this honour to Poe. It was not until the beginning of the 19th century, however, that the short story as a distinct literary form began to attract the attention of serious writers in large numbers. And it resulted in publications of short fiction in Germany, the United States, Russia and France. E.T.W. Hoffmann, Jacob, Killhelm Grimm, Johann Ludwing and Tieck introduced the short stories. In the United States Irving, E.A. Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne published the short stories. At the sometime the two Russians Alexander Pushkin and Nikolai began to write the short stories about the

details of ordinary life. While Prosper Merimee, Honore de Balzac and Theophile Gautier continued the tradition of the short story in France.

Judith Leibowitz's Narrative Purpose in the Novella and Mary Doyle Springer's Forms of the Modern Novella express the need of certain norms for the two kinds of narration namely Novella or a short story. Further commenting on the need of it. Leibowitz's goes on to assert that,

"In general terms, this means that the novel's selectivity differs from the short story's because the novel's narrative task is elaboration. Whereas the short story's is limitation. And the novella's techniques of selection differ from the other two genres of fiction because its narrative purpose is compression ..."¹⁴

Poe has got important place in the history of the short story because a short story was potentially a superb art form for him. According to him coherence and design are important principles of short story. Further Poe asserts that writing a story is a conscious attempt of expression.

He believes that the writer of the short story first conceives the idea in his mind and then plans to achieve it or to express it in his writing.

The growth of short story in Europe reveals objectivity, realism and narrative sketch.

The modern short story writers have used different kind of subjects for their stories. They have used different kinds of technique.

The modern short story writers have changed their approach in writing a story. They describe characters from the point of psychology.

In the present century the short story has become the most important genre with its own technique. Writers have realised the importance of it. They know that,

"The short story is the most difficult and exacting of all prose forms, it can not be treated as a spare time occupation, and above all it must not be allowed to foster the illusion."¹⁵

The modern short story writers have realised that writing a short story is not a mean job, nor a spare time occupation. They realised the importance of the short story.

The short story in English describes local characters and dialect. The novelists like Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, George Meredith and Thomas Hardy began to publish short stories in the English magazines. They wrote about sentimental and domestic crises. These writers were influenced by American writers as Irving, Poe, Bret Harte and Ambrose Bierce. At the sametime the writers like R.L. Stevenson, Oscar Wilde began to write romances and fantasies. While Rudyard Kipling wrote the short stories about British colonial life. His stories became the models for modern English writers.

After the World War I Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence began to write short stories in English. And then afterwards the short story in England really flourished. At the sametime Irish short story began to appear on the screen of the short story. The writers like George Moore, James Joyce, O'Flaherty, O'Connor expressed the Irish genius in the English short story.

The Ireland's struggle for independence has influenced the writers in many ways. Much of the work of this time shows the influence of the Catholic Church. Some writers began to describe the struggle between the artist and the religion in their writings. Irish people fight against religious, moral and political tyranny. So Irish art is revolutionary. In this sense the Irish short story is different from the English short story. Joyce's stories reveal this aspect more clearly. He depicts Dublin of his time in his Dubliners. Joyce has comprehensively expressed his observation of the Irish life in his Dubliners :

"His Dubliners showed a remarkable ability to transmute the incidents of ordinary life into classic art through richness of imagery, objectivity and restraint."¹⁶

Thus richness of imagery, objectivity and restraint are important characteristics of Joyce's short story.

Dubliners appeared in 1914. As said in the casebook study,

"the stories in the volume, with their spareness and scrupulous meanness, marked a technical

revolution in the history of the short story in English ..."¹⁷

Joyce writes in his letter to Grant Richards on 5 May, 1906, regarding his intention : He says

"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."¹⁸

Thus he wrote stories in such a manner that childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life was revealed in them. In Dubliners Joyce depicts the paralysed society of his time. And in presentation of it James Joyce uses his own technique. It seems that he does not moralise nor expresses his authorial point of view. His selective words and detailed account of description stresses its significance. In writing Dubliners Joyce intended to write a moral history of his country. He chose Dublin purposefully because it was the centre of important activities then.

And, moreover, he observed the total demoralised society. He concentrates his mind on the morally, spiritually, intellectually paralysed city of Dublin. He is very minute in his descriptions. In fact, he presents the modern predicament of man in his Dubliners. Ezra Pound praises Dubliners and says that it is :

".... a clear hard prose. He deals with subjective things, but he presents them with such clarity of outline that he might be dealing with locomotives or with builders specifications."¹⁹

The first three stories belong to the period of childhood. They are 'The Sisters', 'An Encounter' and 'Araby'. The next seven stories are about people in their 'maturity' and last four stories deal with public life. Matthew Hodgart interpretes these stories, from a different point of view. It seems that these stories reveal the seven deadly sins in them. He tries to interpret the stories in his ethical framework as follows :

"..... 'After the race' (Pride), 'Two Gallants' (Avarice), 'The Boarding House' (Lechery),

'A Little Cloud' (Envy), 'Counterparts' (Anger), 'Clay' (Greed), and A Painful Case (Sloth)."²⁰

This ethical framework signifies the religious aspect of Joyce's stories. The biblical reference reveal here the fall of man and moral loss of life. Probably Joyce intends to present the sufferings of the modern man through his stories. It seems that he believes in the morality and ethical values and its importance in life. He was in that way, a religious writer.

James Joyce's stories have a new technique. His stories have a common thread of reality.

"Each one of the stories cries out against the frustration and squalor of the priest-ridden, pub besotted, culturally decomposing urban lower-middle-class living it depicts."²¹

Joyce uses symbols in abundance in his stories. Even the titles of the stories are very significant. For example Araby stands for something imaginary. It suggests Eastward adventures. The pattern Joyce employed in Araby certainly corresponds to his experience sometimes Joyce

signifies the characters in the story. It seems that, Dublin is presented as a girl in his narration. The way of Irish life and Irish freedom movement have created everlasting impact on Joyce. He has deliberately made use of this in his stories. Joyce uses many other devices in depicting the stories. His use of language is sufficiently proof of his masterly handling of the narrative. He is very economical in using the words. In some of his stories he attempted third person narrative technique. And in others he attempted first person narrative technique. Joyce's new technique ---- stream of consciousness technique is visible in all his stories.

James Joyce's Dubliners has created its own place in English literature. Joyce is very conscious while writing these stories. Though Dubliners consists fifteen short stories, the present dissertation aims at studying four representative stories of his different phases, from the thematic and technical point of view. Joyce's stories can be grouped in the following manner viz. childhood stories, stories about adolescence and some stories about matured life. Araby, Eveline, Clay and A Mother these four stories form a sufficient base for his techniques and themes His intention

of showing paralysed state of mind of the contemporary man is expressed at length in these stories.

Chapter - IINTRODUCTION

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