

## SELF-DISCOVERY IN JAMES JOYCE'S THE DEAD

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### Abstract

"The Dead" is the last, longest and most famous story of James Joyce's *Dubliners*. This study deals with the processes of self-realization of Gabriel Conroy, the protagonist of this story, who is a pompous master of ceremonies at the Christmas party of his old aunts. A number of external factors, especially assaults and humiliations, are trying progressively to break down the walls of Gabriel's circle of his own egotism. Within this process of events, we will be in touch with the power of the dead over the living and the past over the present.

### Introduction

Kate and Julia Morkan, two elderly sisters who live with their spinster niece, are holding their annual Christmas dance. Their married nephew, Gabriel Conroy, sensitive professor and part-time book reviewer attends with his wife Gretta who has the habit on such occasions, delivers an after-dinner speech. At the party Gabriel meets a young Irish nationalist called Miss Ivors who accuses him of being a playful West Briton. Among the guests is a tenor, Bartell D'Arcy, who sings after the dinner a ballad that affects Gabriel's wife, Gretta, strangely. As the party is breaking up, Gabriel witnesses his wife listening to this song, but the intensity of her focus on the music causes him to feel both sentimental and lustful for her. In a hotel room later, while he is trying to approach her, she breaks into tears and tells him that the tenor's song had reminded her of a former young lover named

Michael Furey she had known when she lived in the country, and she believes that the young boy died for her. Gabriel is so much shocked to discover that he has misunderstood his wife's feelings. He realizes that she has never felt similarly passionate about their marriage. He feels that all his assumptions about his life feelings and love are in a moment torn down. And, as he is watching the snow continues to fall alike on the living and the dead, he undergoes on an epiphany, a moment of sublime understanding. He feels alone and profoundly mortal, but spiritually connected for the first time with others.

### Unity of Themes and Use of Symbolism

This story "The Dead", is the longest one among the other *Dubliners*. It reflects the real "ingenious insularity and hospitality" (Peake: 45) of Dublin city. Through such atmosphere, Joyce tries to build up a story with new qualities he had not done, but without weakening the sharpness of his criticism. "The Dead" reflects a dominant image of a dying city rather than a paralyzed one as in the most of Joyce's *Dubliners*. In spite of the atmospheric celebration of an annual party but one can feel the smell of death and graveyards everywhere from the title of the story to the lifeless relationship between Gabriel and his wife. In this sense, some critics stress that Joyce is representing symbolically a society of the "living dead". For instance, Bernard Benstock confirms that this story is mainly concerned with "those who remain alive, but fail to live: the disillusioned, the self-destructive, the blighted and wasted lives" while Hugh Kenner goes so far to describe "The Dead" as a "definition of living death" (quoted in Triggs:1).

Hence, the theme of death is very clear in this story in addition to the two main themes of moral paralysis and corruption. Joyce links these themes closely to most of

*Dubliners*. As paralysis often precedes death, and corruption could also be defined as resulting from a kind of spiritual or moral death, Joyce introduces the events of most of his stories in *Dubliners* as if they were linked together, for instance, death can be found in every story. In the first one "The Sisters" we witness the death of father Flynn and in "Araby" we have the death of the priest who was the last that lived in the house; while in "Eveline" the death of Eveline's mother, brother and friend are clear examples of the presence of death. In addition to the above mentioned evidence death can be easily noticed in the other stories, as for example, the death of Mrs. Mooney's father in "The Boarding House"; the death of Mrs. Sinico in "A Painful Case" ; the death of the nationalistic figure Charles Parnell in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room"; while in "Clay" the title itself symbolizes death.; and finally Michael Furey and the other inhabitants, of the churchyard where he lays buried, in "The Dead". Those are only the actual deaths in the book of *Dubliners*; added to the spiritual and moral deaths. But, though Joyce paints a severe picture of his hometown and its inhabitants, he blamed outside forces-- England and the church--rather than the Irish themselves.

Through reading most of Joyce's works, one can feel that there is an enhanced record of the author's own experiences, but perhaps "The Dead" can be considered as an autobiographical story. Gabriel Conroy, the protagonist of this story, can be identified with James Joyce. He is an intelligent, complex, literary man, college teacher, contributor of a literary column to the Dublin *Daily Express*, superior, European enthusiast, out of sympathy and critical of Ireland's nationalistic aspirations and

sensitive to its frustration- ('O, to tell the truth , ... I'm sick of my own country, sick of it! " (D: 187).<sup>(\*)</sup>

He has also married a beautiful girl of low education from the Galway the west of Ireland, the same town of Joyce's wife, Nora Barnacle. (Burgess: 43).

Of course "The Dead" is also "autobiographical" in the sense that Joyce based his characters on people he knew, his family, friends, and himself, .... Ellman believes that while Gretta is fairly obviously based on Nora Barnacle, and the Misses Morkan on Joyce's own great aunts, the character of Gabriel is actually a composite of Joyce himself, his father John Joyce, and a friend named Constantine Curran, whose brother was a priest like Gabriel's brother Constantine .... The fact that Gabriel is only partially autobiographical can explain both Joyce's sympathy for and detection of his character in "The Dead." (quoted in Triggs:2).

The scene of this story starts with the annual Christmas party of the Misses Morkan (Kate and Julia Morkan) two elderly sisters and old music teachers who live with their spinster niece. The highlight of the party centres on their married nephew, Gabriel Conroy, who used to deliver an after dinner speech, attends with his wife, but as the house is some way out of Dublin, they have booked a hotel room for the night. He is a favoured and admired guest, but he appears slightly pompous to impose on them his own attitudes and his own good opinion of himself. But, during the party, a number of frustrations will harsh his self-esteem which makes his impulse to retreat. Among the guests is a tenor, Bartell D'Arcy, who sings an impressive ballad that affects

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(\*) All quotations from "The Dead" in this paper are from the edition of Laurence, James: *Dubliners*, and will be referred to by (D) and page number in the text.

Gabriel's wife Gretta too much. It is also worth mentioning that in spite of the warm and musical atmosphere of the story's setting, holding in a vivacious lighted house which is an image of life, but what we will find is that almost every speech and every incident has an impact of the presence of death everywhere.

Accordingly, the sense of death can be found everywhere in the story, starting with the title itself which may mean as a plural or singular dead. Then the symbolic meaning of Lily's name, the housemaid, is associated with the flower of the graveyards. But, at the time Joyce wants to show the importance and the high social level of Misses Morkan through mentioning the details of the makeshift "ladies' dressing-room" (*D*:127), which indicate the extraordinary nature of the day's events, he also tries to show their old age through the mention of their brother's death "Pat" before thirty years, and taking his daughter Mary Jane to live with them, helping the reader to estimate their old age which is associated with death more than life.

Thus, in spite of the happy occasion of the story which is the annual dance party, the use of special words at the beginning of the story like 'dark, gaunt house on Usher's Island' or "Julia, though she was quite grey" (*D*: 127) this makes one feel that Joyce wants to portray an atmosphere of darkness, depressing, decay and sterile that spread over the events of the story from the beginning to the end. The reader also can feel that in spite of the atmosphere of happiness and familial relationships, there is a sense of uncertainty and tension since the two sisters Miss Kate and Miss Julia are too worried about the delaying of Gabriel and the arrival of the always drunken Mr. Freddy Malins.

Theme of death is also embodied in Gabriel's speech with Lily after he and his wife being greeted by her; Gabriel explained in a witty colloquial manner that they were late because his wife took "three mortal hours to dress herself." (*D*:128). The other important symbolic image which predominates the story from the

beginning till the end is the snow which seems to represent coldness, isolation, inhumanity, paralysis and death in contrast to the warmth of the indoors atmosphere; "He [Gabriel] stood on the mat, scraping the snow from his galoshes," (*D*: 128). Generally, most critics agreed that Joyce's use of snow in "The Dead" reflects the theme of paralysis. Hugh Kenner, for example, states that the "snow continued to fall and Ireland continued to be paralysed, in Joyce's mind, throughout his life." ( Kenner: 73).

Gabriel's galoshes are another symbolic image which was fashionable in Europe but very rare in Ireland at that time. Galoshes are also associated with coldness and death. "The flicking of snow from Gabriel's boots has also been seen by critics like Allen Tate (408) and Kenneth Burke (410) as an early suggestion of paralysis and death, the first appearance of snow symbolizes that death comes gradually to dominate the story." (quoted in Triggs: 6).

Anyhow, in this scene, Joyce tries to employ a mild irony against Gabriel's pride who appeared here as different; a man of higher level of culture, self-satisfaction; more strict of his opinion, more formal than the others and an imitator of Europe but he has trouble in acting naturally, therefore, he frequently fails.

'Goloshes!' said Mrs. Conroy. 'That's the latest. Whenever it's wet underfoot I must put on my galoshes. Tonight even, he wanted me to put them on, but I wouldn't. The next thing he'll buy me will be a diving suit.' Gabriel laughed nervously and patted his tie reassuring, while Aunt Kate nearly doubled herself, so heartily did she enjoy the joke. The smile soon faded from Aunt Julia's face and her mirthless eyes were directed towards her nephew's face. After a pause she asked:  
'And what are goloshes, Gabriel?'

'Goloshes, Julia!' exclaimed her sister. Goodness me, don't you know what goloshes are?

You wear them over your... over your boots, Gretta isn't it?'

"Yes," said Mrs Conroy. 'Guttapercha things. We both have a pair now. Gabriel says everyone wears them on the continent.' (D: 130-131)

Theme of death is embodied in the speech of the aunts when they say to Gretta that she must be "perished alive". This theme is also connected with the theme of paralysis which is embodied in their movement "Kate and Julia came toddling down the dark stairs at once. Both of them kissed Gabriel's wife, said she must be perished alive." (D: 128). In this sense William Chace says that in *Dubliners*: "Dublin is a city of the paralysed and dead and Joyce's characters speak lifeless language, spiritually inert" (Chace: 2). Paralysis is also represented in this story through the use of yellow and brown colours, in addition to the main images of symbolism of snow and ice, in the sense that if something is frozen, it is motionless-paralyzed.

## Assault and Humiliation

In fact through out the reading of *Dubliners* one can find that one of the most important characteristic of the Dubliners is that they are spiritually weak, they cannot communicate with each other and they even find difficulty in understanding each other. Thus, the first themes of assault and miscommunication are embodied in the scene of speech between Lily, the caretaker's daughter and the first character we see in the story, and Gabriel who is withdrawn into the circle of his own egotism. After Lily received him and his wife, he directly tries to make the environment as a special environment for himself, so he condescends to the young girl, saying that one of these days he

will be going to her wedding. Unexpectedly, Gabriel finds himself in a little confrontation with Lily who replies bitterly that:

"The men that is now is only all palaver and what they can get out of you."

Gabriel coloured, as if he felt he had made a mistake and, without looking at her, kicked off his goloshes and flicked actively with his muffler at his patent-leather shoes." (*D*: 129).

Though, it is a little incident, but, Lily's answer disturbs Gabriel's deeply. It is considered the first attempt to break down the circle of Gabriel's pride. And, on thinking over this incident he finds it as a failure on his part to make up the right tone, because it is thoughtless of him to ask a girl of her station if she still goes to school. In fact, this incident also reflects Gabriel's character which is not so far from the character of Mr. Duffy in "A Painful Case", in the sense that both of them are proud and lack real empathy with others. "Mr. Duffy's deadly sin is pride or, as Freud puts it, ego." (Tindall: Number: 59-15126). Hence, in Lily's answer one can think that Joyce wants to show a clear contrast, between the vain spirit of the young men nowadays and the fruitful one of the olds embodied in, Michael Furey, the sacrificed lover of Gretta. Jeffery Triggs also says that Lily's answer is significant in the sense that it introduces "the real or imagined superiority of the past to the present, of the dead to the feeble living, who are all words." (Triggs:6).

The second miscommunication and assault on Gabriel's arrogance is made by Miss Ivors, the Irish nationalist academic and colleague of Gabriel "a frank-mannered talkative young lady", (*D*: 135) who has tried to persuade him to join them going to Galway, an Islands off the west coast of Ireland, but Gabriel has made it plain that he has no intention to go there or of such a journey. Accordingly, she accuses him of being less than loyal to



Ireland. She attacks his individualism and asks what he is doing for his people and his country. She accuses him of being more loyal to West Britain than to Ireland, so she calls him a "West Briton!" because he writes literary reviews for *The Daily Express*. But, in spite of this exchange which is not wholly serious, it disturbs Gabriel and makes him unsure of himself. Hence, in spite of the embarrassed situation of Gabriel in front of the others, Miss Ivors continues to press on him to spend their summer holiday in the West, adding that "It would be splendid for Gretta too if she'd come. She's from Connacht [in the west], isn't she?' 'Her people are' said Gabriel shortly." (*D*: 136). So, Miss Ivor's provocative way has succeeded in making Gabriel very uncomfortable, putting him in a narrow corner until he comes out with, "...you know, Irish is not my language." (*D*: 136). Then, he is finally led to the confession that: " 'O, to tell you the truth,' retorted Gabriel suddenly, I'm sick of my own country, sick of it! " (*D*: 136-137). And here, once again Gabriel has failed socially because of his lack of empathy and insight into other people. "Critics often point out that Gabriel resembles James Joyce. He is a literary man and a college teacher and like Joyce, he is not keen to share the sympathy with the Irish nationalistic aspirations." (Persic: 5).

It seems also that in Gabriel refusal as if he wants to separate his wife Gretta from her people, in spite of her enthusiasm about the idea of visiting Galway. What we find here is that in spite of his love to his wife, he is a little ashamed of her social background having come from the west of Ireland. That is why the idea of visiting the west makes him feel upset because such a place reminds him of his wife's past which he wishes to forget.

During most of the story, the west of Ireland is connected in Gabriel's mind with a dark and rather painful primitivism, an aspect of his country which

he has steadily abjured by going off to the continent. The west is savagery; to the east and south lie people who drink wine and wear galoshes" (Ellman:178).

Henceforth, as long as the west of Ireland is associated with Gretta's past and comes to be associated with the general past itself, so symbolically it is associated with death. Therefore, his journey to the west of Ireland can be connected, in an easy step, with the journey to death, which is traditionally associated with the west. Concerning the symbolic image of the west Peake states that

In Irish mythology the journey westward was to the Isles of the Blessed or of the Dead, the mythical islands out in the Atlantic sometimes identified with the Aran Isles. Miss Ivor's trip is to be to the Aran Isles literally, but it is for her a symbolic journey, expressing the background-looking nationalism and language revivalism which Gabriel has rejected. For Gabriel's mind, losing consciousness, the journey westward is an acquiescent drift towards 'that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead.' In refusing Miss Ivors he has refused to join in the past-seeking death-wish which seems to dominate his contemporaries in Ireland (Peake: 51).

In fact, the clash between Miss Ivors and Gabriel unfolds the image of the real personality of Gabriel who withdraws from direct confrontation whether with Lily at first or Miss Ivors who leaves the party before dinner. Ghiselin states that Miss Ivors' "refusal of supper is a rejection, symbolically, of communion in the house of the dead." (Ghiselin:58).But, at the end of a convulsive conversation, he feels that Miss Ivors has made a fool of him.

Of course the girl or woman, or whatever she was, was an enthusiast but there was a time for all things.

Perhaps he ought not to have answered her like that. But she had no right to call him a West Briton before people, even in joke. She had tried to make him ridiculous before people, heckling him and staring at him with her rabbit's eyes. (D: 137).

### Gabriel's Speech

After he has been upset by such assaults, he continues to think deeply within himself and wonders whether he ought or not to change the speech he has prepared for after dinner. So, while others appear cheerfully busy with food, drink, music and conversation, Gabriel seems obsessed over the speech he will make after dinner. He appears as if he were disconnected from the people around him, and instead of enjoying the familial, friendly and warm atmosphere he looks out of the window of the Morkans' drawing room and thinks "How pleasant it would be to walk out alone, first along by the river and then through the park! The snow would be lying on the branches of the trees and forming a bright cap on the top of the Wellington. How much more pleasant it would be there than at the supper-table! (D: 138).

So, he seems not only disconnected but he is even cut off from the sensual pleasures offered by a celebration of an annual gathering. It is true that he is distinguished by his high level of education, but he is alienated and suffering from a lack of emotional intelligence empathy and true sensitivity which will lead to his painful downfall at the climax of the story. Confirming Gabriel's lack of empathy Juan states that

A moment before his carving the goose, Gabriel assumes a willed distance from society by projecting his consciousness to external world. He feels oppressed by the demands of his environment. Faced by a circumstance with unknown threats in the

offing, Gabriel feels severely estranged. In contrast, the wintry world outside, an alienating and hostile force at the beginning, now offers a spacious and comfortable haven for Gabriel's spirit. (Juan: 224).

As a result, he decides to change his speech, a change in such a way as a kind of diplomatic counterattack against these assaults that have been made on his self-esteem.

At the dinner table, the conversation turns to praise great singers, singers of the past, those who are gone to the world of the dead. Then all the presents praise Aunt Julia to her distinguished sweet dish of pudding which is also considered to be a kind of praising the past generosity embodied in the image of her old age. "The pudding was of Aunt Julia's making and she received praises for it from all quarters. She herself said that it was not quite brown enough. 'Well, I hope, Miss Morkan', said Mr. Brown, 'that I'm brown enough for you because, you know, I'm brown.'" (D: 144). Through this conversation one can find how Joyce portrays themes of paralysis and sterility of his people through using the brown and yellow colours as he used to do in most of his stories. Then the conversation is followed by another one about the behaviour of the monks, who sleep in their coffins due to religious orders, in which Joyce portrays the most religious clergymen as no less than the living dead, as if they were lifeless among us, in an attempt to hold the Catholic church accountable for Ireland's failure to move forward into modernity, as he did in his previous stories. "He [Gabriel] was astonished to hear that the monks never spoke, got up at two in the morning and slept in their coffins.", .... "The coffin, 'said Mary Jane, 'is to remind them of their last end.'" (D: 144-145).

The silence came now and all the presents kept quiet waiting for Gabriel's speech. He pushed his chair and stood up, but he appeared unsettled. It seems that he was still under the impact of the previous two assaults in addition to the other

negative characteristics of his personality. He smiled nervously and his fingers were trembling on the tablecloth. He looked outside from the window and he saw some people standing in the snow looking at the lighted windows and listening to the music. In this scene, one can feel that Joyce presents Gabriel in an unenviable situation to the level that he imagined the outside atmosphere more pure and friendly than the atmosphere of the party where he was. However, Gabriel started his speech, trying to do the best to make it as a kind of a familial and domestic talking about hospitality, humanity, humour and the virtues of the older generation and how he was proud of his grandfathers. But, he criticized the new generation saying "I fear that this new generation, educated or hyper-educated as it is, will lack those qualities of humanity, of hospitality, of kindly humour which belonged to an older day." (D: 164).

Thus, again we feel how the past and death dominate the whole atmosphere of their annual dance party, as it is very obvious in all Gabriel's speech. "... 'there are always in gatherings such as this sadder thoughts that will recur to our minds: thoughts of the past, of youth, of changes, of absent faces that we miss here tonight." (D: 147). Even in his attempt of praising his Aunts, Gabriel describes them as "... -the Three Graces of the Dublin musical world." (D: 147) which is an allusion to the myth of the three sister goddesses who have certain mysterious forces of the classical world, and control over pleasure, charm, and beauty in human life and in nature, but their language is not ours because they are not human beings so they are a source of fear and death. (Lytle: 202).

At the end of the party someone brings up an old family joke about Old Johnny, the horse of Gabriel's grandfather. This horse is used to work in the old gentleman's glue factory "Walking round and round in order to drive the mill." (D: 149). One day Gabriel's grandfather hitched up his carriage to Old

Johnny and led him out into the city. Upon reaching a famous statue of King William III (1650-1702), the Protestant Champion, however, the horse could not be made to proceed onward, instead plodding dumbly in an endless circle around the statue, as if it could not break the habit of the treadmill. Gabriel acts this out, circling the front hall of the Morkans' house in his galoshes, to the delight of all. From a literary and symbolic point of view, what we find here is that though it is an old family joke, it is also connected with past, death and paralysis; in the sense, that in spite of the usual and conventional meaning of the circle which is a symbol of life with positive connotations, as in wedding rings, but in *Dubliners* its meaning is different. It means an undefeatable lack of progress, growth and development which is associated with paralysis, as in most of Joyce's stories; characters are used to circling around themselves, no matter how far they go but they would return to where they came from with empty hands.

### Processes of Self-discovery

The party ends and the guests are in the hall preparing themselves to leave. Through these moments, and while Gabriel is waiting for Gretta to get ready, he sees her standing in the shadow at the end of the stairs, listening to a man's voice singing in a nearby room, "as if she were a symbol of something." (*D*: 151). Gabriel picks up such a scene only as a subject for art. He even constructs a poetic title, "*Distant Music*" mostly because such a music is used to be distant to him. It is the music of passions and understanding that he has never heard. But, for Gretta this music is on the spot and directly evoking the memory of a young man, she had known years before, who had sung that song and who had died in the brilliance of his passionate love for her. Litz explains that "The scene is really a "symbol of

something" a symbol of Gabriel's separation from Gretta's secret life" (Litz: 57), while Lytle asserts that "She is the symbol of life and love, into whom the Grace of the Holy Ghost is about to descend. This is the mystery of the awakening which leads to salvation." (Lytle: 206).

In other words, the verses of that song, for Gretta, are associated with her immobility, the deeper grief of her past emotional state, and death; and such a distant music is specifically belonged to a distance in time, while for Gabriel, it is on the contrast. He takes the music and its strange effect on her for his own positively. Suddenly he desires her, thinking of their long intimate relationship together. So, he longed to be alone with her, but unfortunately, he doesn't know that his long, wide and warm passionate imagination is going to betray and humiliate him as he was humiliated before.

....Gabriel watched his wife, who did not join in the conversation. She was standing right under the dusty fanlight and the flame of gas lit up the rich bronze of her hair, which he had seen her drying at the fire a few days before. She was in the same attitude and seemed unaware of the talk about her. At last she turned towards them and Gabriel saw that there was colour on her cheeks and that her eyes were shining. A sudden tide of joy went leaping out of his heart.

'Mr. D'Arcy', she said, 'What is the name of that song you were singing?'

'It's called The Lass of Aughrim'(\*) said Mr. D'Arcy', 'But I couldn't remember it properly. Why? Do you know it?' (D: 152).

Thus, with Gabriel's furious lust against his wife, they walk to a place where they can find a cab, he looks at her, while she is walking up ahead of him with Mr. Bartell D'Arcy and a young woman named Miss O' Callaghan. In the cab, he continues to look at his wife with great feeling. When they cross O'Donnell bridge, Miss O'Callaghan repeats the saying that one can never cross the bridge without seeing a white horse. Gabriel says that instead he sees a white man, referring to a statue covered with snow. And, here may be, his uncalculated warm passions against his wife push him to see himself in an image of a white knight who is on a quest to achieve his goal. The same passion will also encourage him at the hotel, to pay the whole fare of the cab and sees off Miss O' Callaghan and Mr. D'Arcy.

At the hotel, the porter brings them to their room, leading them by candlelight because electric lights are not working. But, in spite of the dark and cold atmosphere Gabriel asks the man to take the candle away with him, because they have enough light from the window. In Gabriel's behaviour one can find that his sparking passions also push him to think that the little light is enough to achieve his quest, but, when he approaches his wife she breaks into tears, and informs him that the tenor's song reminds her of a former lover she has known when she was living in Galway. Therefore, ironically Gabriel asks her whether that was the reason of her desire to go to Galway for the summer

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(\*) *Lass of Aughrim*: The quoted words are a young woman's, as she begs her lover to take her and their baby into his castle. She does not know that Lord Gregory's mother is plotting to keep them a part. The setting of this old ballad migrated from Scotland to the village of Aughrim, east of Galway City, Gretta's home. (D: 170).



holiday. But, when he knows that the young lover is dying when he was only seventeen and he was a mere worker in the gasworks, his self-confidence is destroyed by such sharp blows. He felt upset and so much humiliated by the failure of the irony and for being even not equal to such a simple boy. So, he burns with shame, he feels that he is a mere loser and he has no further defenses left. He starts to feel sad and jealous from the dead Michael whose passions are still alive in the minds of Gretta at the time he has himself always lacked. His feelings are transformed into a powerful sense of inferiority which terrifies him and obscures his vision. He sees himself:

...as a ludicrous figure, acting as a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous, well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealizing his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror. Instinctively he turned his back more to the light lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead. (*D*: 154).

As Gretta finishes her story, she breaks down into an uncontrollable cry. Gabriel watches her sleeping, as if they had never lived together as man and wife. He feels insignificant in her life and wondering about her girlish beauty and how the seasons have changed it. Her face now is not that which caused Michael Furey had braved death. "Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that himself towards any woman, but he knew that such a feeling must be love." (*D*: 160). Thus, his sympathy towards his wife transforms lust into love and as he gains transforming insight into his life, his feelings of superiority seem to vanish away and step by step lead him to his self-knowledge. Ellman stresses that at the time Gabriel envies Michael Furey for his sacrifice, he is also dying for Gretta in giving up his pride which holds him apart from the people around

him especially when he feels close not only to her through sympathy and love but to her dead lover also. (Ellman: 180-181).

Hence, Gabriel realizes that he knows nothing about the other world of his wife; a world of a dead youth memory. Therefore, he bitterly feels the absolute failure of his mockery to bring his wife back to the world of which he was the centre of attraction; such a failure finally helps to break the walled circle of his pride. As a result of knowing such realities Gabriel escapes from himself to feel a sense of absolute unity and identity with all those parts which before had been unfavorable to his self-esteem. Thus, he realizes his pompous sense of dignity and being superior to everyone, and knows that they were just illusions. On that basis, Juan states that

His wife's past life excludes him completely. No longer a participant and no longer anxious about attacks against his ego and the peril of self-mockery, he can depend on his own detachment, which spontaneously begets a poised and sensitive registration of actuality (Juan: 231-232).

At last, and as Gabriel sleepily looks through the window watching the flakes fall, the snow is coming down all over Ireland, "the time had come for him to set out on his journey westward." (*D*: 160). What we find here is that in spite of the symbolic conventional meaning of the west which is usually associated with death, ghosts, unhappy things and paralysis, but in this story it has a special meaning. For Gretta, it is a place of life and love, while for Gabriel it is associated with the past, backwardness and death from which he has alienated himself before, but now things are changed. The sense of Gabriel's importance of his self-esteem is shattered and he no longer possesses himself which is a kind of spiritual death. So, while he is watching the falling of the snow which suggests the unifying

consciousness of the living and the dead, and falls everywhere upon all things; he starts to imagine through a sudden epiphany how it covers the whole earth like a blanket and how it covers the dead and the living. He thinks of how the snow falling over Ireland and unifying the strange land of the west, where Michael Furey who defeats him is buried, with the familiar and comfortable eastern Dublin world. Thus, he starts to feel close to Gretta and her dead lover whether thorough sympathy or love. Henceforth, through such a symbolic portrait Gabriel realizes his new sense of identity with the world he is living in, because the breakdown of the circle of his pride helps him to know the reality of himself as a normal person not different from others. Thus, Gabriel moves from his self-importance and pride to be objective and adopting an impersonal point of view. In fact, such a way of living is the ideal aesthetic attitude of Joyce himself.

## Conclusion

In spite of its realistic description, "The Dead" reveals Joyce's use of certain modern narrative devices, such as the use of the stream of consciousness in Gabriel's monologue, death symbolism through the use of morbid vocabulary, poetic language, and the use of epiphany where a character has a special moment of self-understanding or illumination. Then, the way of narrating this story is told through the use of third person omniscient point of view, by a narrator who describes vividly all the characters and especially the thoughts of the protagonist. So, the use of such devices in addition to the use of a subjective tone by focusing on Gabriel's personality, helps the reader to comprehend such a fictional world without any direct interference or any voice of the narrator. Hence, the stressing on the subjectivity of the protagonist makes such a fiction present a unity of place and time since most of the details are connected

with Gabriel's self-awareness of his life and love. Such detailed description gives the clues not only to the development of the actions but are closely associated with the development of the characters. Through these developments, the reader can be in touch with the processes of Gabriel's self-discovery which is embodied in his stream of consciousness when it allows him to rediscover himself. Thus, within such processes of self-doubt and self-discovery the reader becomes involved by the development of the narrative.

In this story, as in the other stories of *Dubliners*, we can see how the image of Dublin as a city of the spiritually dead is connected with the memories of the physically dead which haunt the living, who are physically alive but spiritually dead, and colours every action in their life. In fact death, in "The Dead", as in most of the stories of *Dubliners* throws a shadow on the present. To reflect that and to emphasize the gloominess of such a city, Joyce portrays Dublin as if it were in an eternal dark. He gives no stream of such light, therefore, characters walk through Dublin at nightfall and live their most deep and difficult moments in the darkness of late hours. Usually such a dark setting evokes the thin line between life and death. In such a ghostly and depressed atmosphere Gabriel sees the snow as representing a mutual connection between the dead and the living. So, through such a complicated passions, Gabriel becomes aware of the world around him and the world of the dead, into which the living pass. He feels that the living and the dead are living peacefully together under a strange connection with each other to the limit that Michael Furey is more alive than him.

As a result, and in spite of the fact that some critics have described Gabriel as a living dead but at the end he realizes his new sense of self-identity with the world he is living in. Now, he is completely realizing that, the splendid picture of his self-esteem, was only in his mind, and it removes his blindness and leaves him alone with the realization that life and love differ from the dream. He realizes that he is competing for the love of

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his wife with a dead man whose passions will never be able to match. He realizes that he is a normal person who does not differ from the others. Joyce succeeds so well in portraying Gabriel's struggle with himself because he engages his readers with Gabriel's inner psychological state. Thus, Joyce proved that he is a psychologist more than a philosopher.

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## الخلاصة

### ( عملية اكتشاف الذات )

في

قصة ( الميت )

للكاتب

### جيمس جويس

تعد قصة (الميت) الخيرة والاطول والاكثر شهرة من مجموعة (سكان دبلن) القصصية للكاتب الايرلندي (جيمس جويس). تناولت هذه الدراسة مراحل اكتشاف الذات لبطل القصة (كابريل كونروي)؛ المتسم بالغرور، وعريف حفل اعياد رأس السنة الذي اقيم في بيت عماته الطاعنات في السن. بينت الدراسة عدد من العوامل الخارجية خاصة التهكم والسخرية التي ادت الى تحطم جدران الغرور التي يمتاز بها (كابريل)، ومع تتابع عمليات الاحداث، نجد ان القارئ اكتشف تأثير وقدرة الميت على الحي والماضي على الحاضر.