



Research on the Narrative Spaces of James Joyce's Novels; Taking *The Dead* as an Example

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Abstract

This study addresses the narrative space of James Joyce in his work *The Dead* (1914), and explores how it collectively enhance the thematic impact of *The Dead*, showcasing the paralysis state of Dubliners, especially Gabriel. The novel explores the spiritual death, social norms and character loss, love and marriage, nationalism and cultural identity of Dubliners, leading to Gabriel's psychological paralysis. This study provides an analysis of three narrative spaces of James Joyce's *The Dead*, focusing on Gabriel Zoran's spatial criticism theory. The above three narrative spaces include topographical space, chronotopic space and textual space. The topographical spaces refer to the Misses Morkan's Annual Dance and the hotel, which play a vital role in shaping the characters and expressing the "paralysis" theme of the story. The three confrontations between Gabriel and three women shows the the motion state and the rest state between the four characters and the changing process of Gabriel's spiritual world from paralysis to epiphany. The textual spaces like flashback and cinematography increase the artistic charm of the story's language. The findings suggest that the paralysis motif is critical in *The Dead*. The three narrative spaces created by Joyce drive the plot and the character shaping. Zoran's theory provides readers with a new way of reading and understanding text, which helps to enhance their spatial awareness, improve the text analysis ability and enrich the reading experience. The study recommends further research into the use of Zoran's spatial criticism theory to examine Joyce's other novels, in addition, comparative analysis, interdisciplinary research and qualitative and quantitative analysis of texts are also can be conducted in this field.

Keywords: *The Dead*; Spatial Narrative; Topographical Space; Chronotopic Space; Textual Space

1. Introduction

1.1 A Brief Introduction to James Joyce

James Joyce (1882-1941), an Irish writer, is one of the most innovative writers in 20th century, whose work shows an unique synthesis of realism, the stream of consciousness and symbolism. Together

with Franz Kafka, Thomas Stearns Eliot and Marcel Proust, he is known as one of the four founders of western modernist literature. Joyce embarks on modernist literature through his fiction *Dubliners*, a collection of 15 short stories, all realistic and impressionistic studies of the life, thoughts, dreams, aspirations and frustrations of diverse inhabitants in the Irish capital. Joyce's ability to write such famous works has great deal to do with his experience. He was a good student and was intended for a priest, but he renounced Catholicism at a adolescence. Later, he left Ireland and lived in France, Italy and Switzerland as "a voluntary exile", though his books were all written about Dublin because the Irish and Ireland were the people and the place he knew best and he believed that by writing about Dublin he was at the same time penetrating the heart of all cities and all mankind. However, in that time, Joyce's works are not accepted by the general public. It is not only because his works are hard to understand, but also because his works contain many taboo concepts that cannot be talked in public. But as time goes by, people's thoughts and ideas change gradually and the great value of Joyce's works is recognized and deeply explored by more and more scholars.

1.2 A Brief Introduction to *The Dead*

The Dead is the finale story in his *Dubliners*, and it is also a classic work linking Joyce's farewell to short stories and step on the road of creating long stories. Therefore, *The Dead* can be seen as a pivotal story which is a twist in Joyce's creating career.

The Dead tells a story about human's withdrawal into the circle of his own egotism and the subsequent breakdown of the barriers between human and his world due to external assaults on his egotism and greater internal understanding of the world around him. The main character of *The Dead*, Gabriel Conroy, is very much an egotist at the beginning of the story. He wants to be the center of crowds and have control over his interactions with others. When he is mulling over the speech he is to give at the dinner, he decides to stick to a more traditional topic as opposed to the one he had prepared so that he can better control the reactions of the dinner guests. He wants to make people happy, but not for the sake of altruism. The first person to challenge his ego is Lily, the caretaker's daughter. When Gabriel tries to make small talk with her, she responds in a very bitter and unexpected manner. Gabriel is ruffled and tries to make up for the incident by giving her money. Later, as he dances with Miss Ivors, she accuses him of being a "West Briton" because he would rather visit continental Europe than Western Ireland. This attack is again unexpected and wounds Gabriel's image of himself. The third person who frustrates Gabriel is his wife Gretta. When he and his wife are back at the hotel after the annual Christmas party, he finds his wife is on her mind. As a matter of fact, it is a song at the party which has reminded her of her old lover. The moment of truth, the heartbreaking realization that Gretta has had another lover, a passionate love, a young Michael Furey who died for her, forces Gabriel to question his own heart, soul and life. Having known this, Gabriel is seized by the feeling of terror. He thinks how little he knows about his wife though they have been living together for many years. Unconsciously, he feels that he has become a shade. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead. This represents the final assault on Gabriel's ego. He realizes that even his wife does not hold him at the center of her universe as he thought she did.

1.3 Research Significance

Theoretically, the essay improves the shortcomings of the research on *The Dead* that not many scholars focus on the spatial narrative of it. And through space narrative theory, the narrative spaces of *The Dead* can be presented clearly. Joyce tells the story of Gabriel by setting up the topographical space like the house and dining room, the chronotopic space in synchronic level and diachronic level, and the textual space like the spatial switching through transformation of points of view.

Practically, this essay is devoted to the study of the narrative effect of *The Dead*. At present, most scholars focus on the narrative strategy used by Joyce or reveal the narrative effect from a macro perspective, but few scholars study the narrative effect of *The Dead* from the spatial narrative theory.

Joyce is a writer with strong spatial awareness, thus the perspective of spatial narrative theory can better explore the narrative beauty of Joyce's novels and reveal the theme of paralysis in *The Dead*.

1.4 Outline of Essay

This essay consists of five chapters. Chapter one introduces the author James Joyce and his work *The Dead*, the research significance includes theoretical significance and practical significance and the outline of the essay respectively. Chapter two presents the literature reviews of James Joyce's *The Dead* and spatial narrative theory, which includes the development of spatial narrative theory at home and abroad and Gabriel Zoran's spatial narrative theory. Chapter three presents the method applied in this study. Chapter four is about the findings and discussion of three narrative spaces in *The Dead*, which includes three confrontations between Gabriel and three women in the two topographical spaces: the Misses Morkan's annual dance party and the hotel, synchronic relationship between Gabriel and Miss Ivors and diachronic relationship between Gabriel and Gretta, and the narrative techniques include flashback and cinematography which form the textual space in *The Dead*. Chapter five concludes this paper from two sections. The first section highlights how the three narrative spaces collectively shape the thematic impact of *The Dead*, contributing to a deeper understanding of Joyce's artistic mastery. The use of topographical space, chronotopic space and textual space reflects the superb narrative technique of James Joyce. The second section specifies the limitations and further suggestions of this paper, which states some directions for future studies of this field.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies of *the Dead*

The Dead is significant as the last story in *Dubliners*. By searching the keywords "The Dead" on CNKI, the researcher obtained 147 papers, including journal papers and thesis. And the domestic research on *The Dead* has produced results as early as 1982, and until 2024. The research trend first increased and then decreased, reaching the peak in 2008 and the second peak in 2011. After sorting out and analyzing the above papers and thesis, the researcher roughly divides the researches on *The Dead* into the following six types.

The first sort is about the research on the image of *The Dead*, which can be roughly divided into two categories: the female image and the image of Gabriel. He Shu (2004) analyzes the female image and national characteristics in *The Dead*, and believes that Joyce compared the female image to the bad roots of the Irish nation, thus criticizing the narrow nationalist forces in Ireland. Dong Mei (2011) analyzes the image of the dead in *The Dead*, and studies how the author Joyce presented the mental paralysis image of *Dubliners* to the readers.

The second one is about the theme of *The Dead*, from the awakening of the protagonist to the awakening of the nation. Wu Guangqin (2007) discusses the manifestation and significance of the theme of "paralysis" in *The Dead*. Wu Xiaomei (2012) studies Gabriel's epiphany that not only represents *Dubliners*' perception of their own survival state, but also symbolizes the author Joyce's expectation of the rebirth of the whole nation.

As a master of stream of consciousness, Joyce uses many writing techniques in *The Dead*, including stream of consciousness, metaphor and symbol. Yang Xiaorong and Kang Lianping (2004) analyzes the cause of stream of consciousness technique in *The Dead* and its role in it, indicating that Joyce revealed Gabriel's inner psychology through stream of consciousness technique, reflecting his fantasy and disillusionment. As for the symbolism used by Joyce in *The Dead*, the symbolic meaning of snow is of great research value. Qiu Feng and Zhang Boxiang (2002) believes that snow is the dominant image in *The Dead*, which not only symbolizes death, but also symbolizes life, and finally reaches the conclusion that death is both the end and the beginning of life.

With the emergence of various advanced literary theories, more and more scholars look at *The Dead* from the perspective of literature. For example, Hegel's collision theory, space criticism theory and so on. Pu Yu (2020) views various confrontations in the novel from the perspective of Hegel's collision theory, and believes that these confrontations not only promotes the development of the plot, but also plays a crucial role in the change of Gabriel's spiritual world. Zhang Jianhui(2012) studies the physical space in *The Dead* from the perspective of space criticism theory, including the party landscape, street landscape and hotel landscape.

Many scholars are keen to compare *The Dead* with other literary works from various angles. Jiang Hong (2001) compares *The Dead* with Woolf's *The Mark on the Wall*, and analyzes the stream-of-consciousness techniques of the two writers' early short stories from the three perspectives of theme, character and narrative structure, so as to guide the appreciation of their works. Wang Ping (2008) compares *The Dead* with Lu Xun's *On the Restaurant* in various aspects, studies the same social and cultural environment in China and Ireland at the beginning of this century, reveals the alienation of intellectuals in the social transition period, and explores the similarities and differences in the development of Chinese and Western modern novels, which has great significance.

Finally, other scholars have studied *The Dead* from interdisciplinary fields, including linguistics and translation studies. Zhang Xiaoxia(2013) looks at Joyce's *The Dead* from Speech Act Theory, and looked at the shaping of Gabriel from locutionary act, the confrontations between Gabriel and other characters from illocutionary act and Gabriel's epiphany from perlocutionary act. Hong Gang and Zhang Jing (2006) uses Relevance Translation Theory to make a comparative analysis of three Chinese translations of *The Dead*, and finally found that the theory has strong explanatory power in literary translation criticism.

2.2 The Development of Spatial Narrative Theory at Home and Abroad

At the end of the 20th century, spatial narratives attracted a great deal of attention from scholars. Since then, scholars have started to shift their previous attention toward time, history, social relations to narrative space in literature. Joseph Frank (1945) publishes a paper called *Spatial Form in Modern Literature in Sewanee Review*, and in it, He firstly mentioned term Spatial Narrative. Chatman (1978) pioneers the two concepts of "story space" and "discourse space" in the article *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. And the former describes where the story is happening, while the latter refers to where the describer tells the story. Bakhtin (1981) proposes the concept of chronotope in the field of literature in his article *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel*. Chronotope is not a static state but has dynamic artistic characteristics. Gabriel Zoran (1984) creates a spatial theoretical model in *Towards a Theory of Space in Narrative*. He emphasizes that space is a constructive process in which readers actively participate. Some Chinese scholars complement Zoran's spatial narrative theory as one of the most intricate, practical and highly practical theoretical approaches to date (Long 12; Chen 78).

Although domestic research about spatial narrative is relatively late, its development is very rapid and there have been quite fruitful research results. For example, Long Diyong's theoretical monograph --- Spatial Narrative systematically organizes and studies spatial narrative theory. He also takes four novels: Ivan Alekshenovich Bunin's *The Homeland*, William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily*, Carson McCullers' *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*, and Adeline Virginia Woolf's *The Mark on the Wall* as examples to further explain the spatial narrative. He points out that in many modern or post-modern novelists, space has become a kind of skill or mean that is taken advantage of consciously. They not only consider space as "essential narrative scenes, where the story happens, but also use the space to show time, arrange the structure of the novel, and even to promote the whole narrative process."

3. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study and a textual analysis design, specifically using Gabriel Zoran's spatial narrative theory. The goal is to explore how Joyce highlight the "paralysis" motif in *The Dead* by creating topographical space, chronotopic space and textual space.

Gabriel Zoran sees the narrative space as a whole and creatively proposes three levels of spatial representation in narrative: the topographical level, the chronotropic level and the textual level. These three levels "all belong to the reconstructed world, and can be regarded as three levels of reconstruction." Therefore, the representation of space is not a combination of many individual scenes, but a complex and fine spatial complex constructed by a series of mobile scenes, covering many topographical, chronotopic and textual factors.

In the topographical level, space is "as a static entity". Chronotopic space is composed by affairs and motions. It contains two aspects: synchronic and diachronic level. Synchronic level refers to the spatial relationship formed by the interrelation of objects moving or static at any narrative point in the text, while diachronic level indicates that the development of space in a specific narrative text has a certain direction or movement track, which is affected by the author's intention, the character's intention and actions, obstacles set in the plot and other factors. In the textual level, "the structure imposed on space by the fact that it is signified within the verbal text and the most immediate level of reconstruction is the textual one, in which the world still retains several of the structuring patterns of the text". The textual space is the space represented in the text and it is influenced by three aspects: the first is selectivity of language and its effect. Since language cannot express all the information, the description of space is often vague and not specific. How detailed the narration is and selectivity of language determine the effect of spatial reproduction in narration. The second is the linearity of the text. The order of the language and the information conveyed in the narrative process affects the direction and trajectory of the spatial movement and change. The third is the perspective structure. The point of view in the text forces upon the reconstructed space a perspective structure. The perspective of the text will affect the reconstruction of space in the narrative. "Here" is confined to the fictional space of the text and "there" is beyond the fictional space of the text. "Here-there relationships occur in two ways: the first one is between the spatial location of the act of narration and the world as a whole, and the other is within the world, between things perceived as in the background". "Here" and "there" can transform to each other in the narration, but different focuses will produce different spatial effects.

For the textual analysis, data collection for this study is based on primary and secondary sources. The primary data is the text of *The Dead* itself, while secondary data is drawn from scholarly works on Gabriel Zoran's spatial narrative theory, including Zoran's papers, conference presentations, interviews and so on. Additionally, sources that provide historical and cultural context to the Irish and Ireland in 20th century, which is crucial to understanding the "paralysis" theme in the novel, are consulted, too.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Topographical spaces in *The Dead*

Topographical structure is at the highest level of reconstructed space level, and it is regarded as a self-existence, independent of existing structure of the world and the order of the text. It encompasses "the horizontal structure of the world, relationships such as inside and outside, far and near, center and periphery, city and village, etc., it may also include contours signifying the vertical organization of the world and representing the opposition up-down" (Zoran, 316). As Zoran further explains "The topographical space is conceived as a kind of map based on elements from the entire text, including all its components... This space can be divided up according to the modes of existence of its units. These modes of existence may overlap with the factor of topographical location, for example the world of man" (Zoran, 316). In *The Dead*, James Joyce describes two main topographical spaces: one is the Misses Morkan's

annual dance and the other is the hotel. Two different topographical spaces accommodate three confrontations and two different storylines of Gabriel. On the one hand, Joyce shows the specific characteristics of these two topographical spaces through careful description, which provides the background for plot and character shaping; on the other hand, with the transformation of topographical space, the character confrontations deepen, thus showing the mood and thinking of Gabriel in different topographical spaces.

4.1.1 The Misses Morkan's Annual Dance

The first two confrontations in the story both occur in the Misses Morkan's Annual Dance, as for the Misses Morkan's house, Joyce describes it "in the dark gaunt house on Usher's Island, the upper part of which they had rented from Mr Fulham." In spite of this dark house, Kate and Julia have the dance party every year for almost 30 years. And this space in which the story takes place reflects the life style of Dubliners: greedy for pleasure, have not ambitious pursuit, addicted to useless social and play. As Gabriel enters the scene, in his eyes, the pantry ceiling is shaking as the stamping and shuffling of feet on the floor above. The ceiling is a symbol of shelter and boundaries, but now it is shaking, and this shaking is caused by the greed of the people, their unrestrained enjoyment and carnival. At the same time, he gets into a confrontation with the janitor's daughter, Lily. Clearly is a long time ago to know Lily, at this time in his eyes is so strange, although Gabriel tries to find a topic, the conversation with Lily makes him feel rather awkward. Factors such as education and social status in reality makes it impossible for him and Lily to understand each other, and the disconnect between history and reality gives him a sense of nothingness. This sense of nothingness has caused him no peace. And this feeling follow him until the speech time.

In the room, when Gabriel dance with Miss Ivors, the second confrontation occurs. Miss Ivors and Gabriel have similar life experiences - both have higher education and are now teaching at the university. At the party, Miss Ivors makes a merciless mockery and ridicule of Gabriel, which disgraces him, greatly shakes his self-esteem and self-confidence, and sets him step by step on the road to self-reflection. Gabriel has been in confrontation for a longer time, and this confrontation is therefore sharper and strikes him harder. From Miss Ivors's decoration and rhetoric, it can be seen that she represents a radical Irish nationalist. It is worth noting that the confrontation occurs when Gabriel and Miss Ivors dance and circle. When they move to the other side of the room, they end the awkward conversation and move on to the next topic. After the quadrilles, Gabriel moves from the center of the room, where the dance took place, to a remote corner of the room. The change in Gabriel's topographical space reflects a shift in his spiritual state, as well as Gabriel's sense of superiority has been further shaken. All this also prompts him to constantly reflect on himself, step by step on the road of self-realization. It is a shame to be a Dubliner who knows nothing of his own country, his own language, his own people, his own land, and it is high time he knows his country, his own people, and accepts the ancient national culture.

4.1.2 In the Hotel

Gabriel at the Misses Morkan's Annual Dance is not yet "dead", because he clearly realizes that what he has done is to bury the truth with the false. Whether he is stuffing coins or dancing vigorously, all he does is cover up his true heart, and he has not really realized that his so-called true-self is also nothing. And when he really realizes that he is in the same nothingness as all those he despises, the topographical space is in the hotel room.

The third confrontation, between Gabriel and his wife Greta, takes place in the hotel room, where the topographical space is more private than the Misses Morkan's Annual Dance. When Gabriel has left the dance party, he has escaped the dreary shackles of life, family and friends. In the hotel room, he forgets the dull reality of life for a while, and recalls the sweet moments with his wife Gretta, and the suppressed sincerity keeps stirring under his mask. Therefore, the hotel in *The Dead* not only symbolizes a private space, but also a place where Gabriel and Gretta can show their true thoughts together. At the hotel, Gretta talks about what happened to her when she was young, and how she always thought about a

boy who died for her. When Gretta confesses her innermost secrets to Gabriel and her feelings for Michael Furey, it is an insult not only to Gabriel's true love as a husband, but also to the persona he has always held on to as a popular person in the eyes of others. The third confrontation punctures the final window between reality and nothingness in Gabriel's life. After this talking, Gabriel feels immense jealousy of Michael Furey, a gasworks worker, whom he has not always admired, and at the same time endless sorrow for himself who is still alive in the world and accompanies Gretta.

4.2 Chronotopic Spaces in *The Dead*

The term chronotopic is introduced into literary criticism by Bakhtin, who uses it to signify the entire complex of space and time together, including physical objects, events, psychology, history, etc. Here, Gabriel Zoran uses it to signify "what may be defined by an integration of spatial and temporal categories as movement and change". Therefore, when using the chronotopic space to reconstruct the text, we should make a difference between synchronic and diachronic relations. The chronotopic relations contains motion and rest. In other words, in zones of action, some objects are in the motion, compared to them, some are at rest. In *The Dead*, Joyce describes two main chronotopic spaces. In the synchronic level, the paper interprets the synchronic relationship between Gabriel and Miss Ivors, including the "motion" state of Miss Ivors and the "rest" state of Gabriel. In the diachronic level, the paper shows the synchronic relationship between Gabriel and Gretta, especially Gretta's spiritual journey as a circular trajectory. The above totally different chronotopic spaces between three major characters highlight character shaping.

4.2.1 Synchronic Relationship Between Gabriel and Miss Ivors

Synchronic relations mean motion and rest. According to Zoran "at every point of the narrative, that is, at every synchronic situation, some objects may be found at rest and others in motion".

In the second confrontation, Miss Ivors and Gabriel are in a synchronic relationship of "motion" and "rest". Between them, Miss Ivors belongs to the "motion" state. First of all, it can be seen from the state when she dances with Gabriel that Ivors has always been in an active state in dancing. Whether she starts chatting with Gabriel or actively guides Gabriel to change the dance direction and continue to turn around, Ivors has always been in a "motion" state. Gabriel, by contrast, belongs to the "rest" state. In the conversation between him and Miss Ivors, he has been in a tendency to retreat, he has difficulty in answering the question opposite him, thus he has even jumped to the end of the room and has forgotten the need to change direction. This dynamic and static relationship from the synchronic perspective reflects that Gabriel himself is in the contradiction between conservatism and worship of the new. He appears to respect conservatism on the surface, but in fact, he is no different from the West Britons in worship of the West. He ostensibly denies Miss Ivors's "West Briton!" comment, but in practice demands that his wife wear overshoes "worn by everyone on the continent", insists on writing a book review for *The Daily Express* every Wednesday, and refuses to travel to the Aran Islands, retorting that "Irish is not my language" and "I hate my own country". And when Miss Ivors exposes Gabriel's lies, Gabriel falters, stutters, and dances very vigorously to hide his excitement and embarrassment. Here, even the vigorous act of dancing reveals that Gabriel is in an extremely passive relationship, that his spiritual credentials are illusory, and that his life is a meaningless illusion.

4.2.2 Diachronic Relationship Between Gabriel and Gretta

The confrontation between Gabriel and Miss Ivors shows the synchronic relationship between them, while the confrontation between Gabriel and Gretta reflects the diachronic relationship between them.

Gretta was born on the island of Galway, grew up with her grandmother, and loved her hometown in the west of Ireland, but when she grew up as a girl, for some reason, she wanted to go to a monastery in Dublin to become a nun. As for what reason, some researchers speculated that her love affair with Michael Furey may have exceeded the tolerance of social conventions. For example, after becoming

pregnant, she had to retire to a monastery to give birth, and after giving birth, she had to continue to repent and atone in a monastery (Ryan, 2015). No matter what have happened, after that, Gretta went to the convent in Dublin, and later met Gabriel and became his wife. In public, she is a good wife and obedient to Gabriel, never publicly refutes and criticizes him, but in her heart, she is addicted to the vigorous love of that young man. As Villar-Argáiz said: “The non-functioning of the marriage community in the novel is an expression of the paralysis and hypocrisy of Irish people” (2013). Until in the hotel, she confesses to Gabriel what the music *The Lass of Aughrim* meant to her, she revisits the memories of the past, and she goes back to the past once again, as if back to that rainy night, Michael Furey begs her not to leave, the boy seems to be just in front of her. So far, Gretta’s spiritual journey has formed a circular trajectory. Gretta’s circular trajectory shows that although she is paralyzed in her emotional life, she has not completely lost herself. In response to Miss Ivors’s invitation, she is very willing to go to Galway again, even though Gabriel does not want to go. She is brave to face her past and trusts her husband, thus she tells Gabriel about the heart-breaking secret in her mind, that is the existence of Michael Furey who had died for her.

In general, Joyce constructs the chronotopic space by explaining synchronic and diachronic relations in the novel to better presents the two confrontations between Gabriel and two women through the juxtaposition and contrast of the “motion” state and “rest” state of characters. From this perspective, the chronotopic space highlights Gabriel’s self-rescue process from spiritual paralysis to epiphany.

4.3 Textual Spaces in *The Dead*

As for the level of textual structure, Zoran said: “it encompasses the structure which is imposed on space by the fact that it is formed within the verbal text...The objects structured belong to the reconstructed world, but the structure itself is imposed on them by the linguistic nature of the text.” In *The Dead*, James Joyce mainly uses “flashback” and “cinematography” to obtain the textual space of the novel. The use of these two narrative techniques not only shows rich textual space, enhances the artistic charm of the novel, but also makes the characters three-dimensional and vivid, and the theme can be better displayed.

4.3.1 Flashback

Flashback refers to the story that happened to the characters in *The Dead*, which affects the readers’ construction and imagination of the characters (Qu Mingmei,2015). James Joyce narrates them slowly after the characters appear, so as to achieve the expected narrative effect. It can be used to refer to the postpositional description of the character’s story in *The Dead*, that is, the supplementary narration of the story related to the character after the appearance of the character. For example, while Mary Jane is playing the piano, Gabriel tours the walls of the piano and makes a simple flashback summary, tightening the wandering thoughts created by the previous text to the core by recalling the stories of the various characters, and re-erecting a new narrative structure from the time span and time temperature, another example, after Gabriel enters the room and talks with Lily and his two aunts, his character slowly emerges, again through Gabriel’s memory of the speech he will give later and his self-monologue related to it. This way of flashback makes the erratic time frame constructed by the author be integrated and summarized in stages, it makes the whole story from one kernel and unbounded chain to multiple such chain links, each chain is loose but unbreakable, and the reader drifts back and forth in the author’s narrative time, but never gets lost, and always shuttles around the naked core of the work.

Joyce uses the narrative strategy of flashbacks to give readers insight into the characters’ pasts and how those pasts affect their present. Through the characters’ inner monologues, dialogues, and descriptions, Joyce deftly reveals the characters’ memories and feelings, making these fragments, while in the past in time, closely connected to the main line emotionally and thematically. As for the role of this narrative strategy, it not only enriches the level of the story, but also deepens the reader’s understanding of the character’s motivation and psychological state. Through flashbacks, Joyce is able to show the intricate relationships between the characters and the social and personal dilemmas they face without

interrupting the flow of the narrative. In addition, the use of flashbacks enhances the symbolism of the story, allowing the reader to experience the profound meaning of the theme of death at different levels of time.

4.3.2 Cinematography

The change of perspective in *The Dead* is different from that in general novels, which generally have obvious watershed and narrative objects. In other words, the transformation of perspective in general novels is photo-switching, and each form of perspective is frozen, while the change of perspective in *The Dead* is different, which uses a constantly changing and advancing lens to change perspective without trace if the former is called “slide style”, then the change of perspective of *The Dead* is called “cinematography”.

At the beginning of the novel, Joyce uses a scattered narrative perspective, that is, a non-focused perspective, and this stable perspective presents everything that happens at the party in a very orderly and logical way. Whether the lens is focused or dispersed, or pulled closer or farther away, this is the main axis of the space body shaped by Joyce. It's not until Gabriel is alone in his hotel room with his wife Gretta that the narrative slowly shifts inward. There are many similarities between Joyce's narration techniques in *The Dead* and the filming techniques, which enhance the visual sense and emotional depth of the story, so that readers can feel the psychological changes of the characters and the atmosphere of the story more vividly. Through this cinematography narrative perspective, James Joyce succeeds in bringing the reader into a story world full of memories and insights.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Major Findings

The Dead is a work of great narrative tension, and Joyce's superb and unobstructed spatial narrative skills make it rich in reading and interpretation. Topographical space, as the physical space where the protagonist Gabriel confrontations with the three female characters, shows the difference between the confrontation in public and the more private space, and Gabriel's deep exploration of his heart. From the perspective of chronotopic space, the difference between Gabriel and Miss Ivors in the synchronic relationship shows their different states in the second confrontation. The circular trajectory in Gretta's life form the diachronic relationship helps better show the Gretta's character image and deepen the confrontation between Gretta and Gabriel. The textual space shaped by Joyce is reflected in the use of two narrative techniques: flashback and cinematography. As Zoran puts it, the reader “constantly moves back and forth in the space of three levels, and simultaneously observes the three levels as one indivisible whole”. The narration of multi-level spatial dimensions contributes to the deepening of the three character conflicts, and becomes the three-dimensional perspective from which Gabriel goes to epiphany.

The above findings have broader implications for appreciating James Joyce's novels and understanding how narrative space contributes to the character portrayal and theme prominence. Besides, the study underscores the importance of exploring such narrative devices to unveil layers of meaning and thematic resonance within novels.

5.2 Limitations and Further Suggestions

While the study contributes significantly to understanding the characters and theme of *The Dead* and the narrative techniques of James Joyce, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations. One limitation is the research horizons need to be broadened. A comparative exploration across multiple stories of Joyce or other writers in the same period may be unveil recurring narrative patterns or variations, thus offering insights into Joyce's narrative techniques in his works. Another possible limitation could be the application of Gabriel Zoran's narrative criticism theory is not as comprehensive

or skilled as it could be, which affecting the theoretical interpretation's depth. The above limitations may be the deficiencies of the paper but also the potential points for further research in future study.

In conclusion, while this paper advances the comprehension of *The Dead*, recognizing its limitations paves road for future research to build upon these foundations and further illuminate the intricate world of Joyce's novels and his narrative techniques.

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