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Obsessed by Cleaning: A Subconsciousness on the Sanitary Reform Movement in Joyce's "Clay"*

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I. Introduction

James Joyce's "Clay" opens with Maria's anticipation of and preparation for an evening out, a rare event by Hallow Eve. While the narrative expresses her anticipation mildly, its emphasis on the full performance of her domestic duties reveals her strong desire to leave her workplace, the *Dublin by Lamplight* laundry: "The kitchen was spick and span: the cook said you could see yourself in the big copper boilers. The fire was nice and bright" (*D* 82). Not only does the narrative emphasize the clean and ordered condition of the kitchen, but it also hints at Maria's avoidance of any disorder during tea time:

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"These barmbrack seemed uncut but, if you went closer, you would see that they had been cut into long thick even slices and were ready to be handed round at tea. Maria had cut them herself" (*D* 82). Reading against the narrative grain of "Clay," Margot Norris observes that the laundry is likely a place where "chronic quarreling and dissension" occur (209). Maria's cutting of the barmbrack in advance, then, can be read as her careful prevention from her delay after the tea, possibly caused by the uneven distribution of the food. Such a measure is a testament to the intensity of her desire to leave the laundry on time and spend her evening at Joe's house as soon as possible. Why does she so intensely want to escape the laundry? Why does the narration give emphasis on order and cleanliness so much? The narrator mildly suggests Maria's discomfort at the laundress's joke when it says, "But wasn't Maria glad when the women had finished their tea and the cook and the dummy had begun to clear away the tea things?" (*D* 84). But as we see later in the story, Joe's house is as uncomfortable as the laundry. The desire to exit the laundry and the emphasis on order and cleanliness, then, have further implications: The *Dublin by Lamplight* laundry, a charitable institution aimed for the fallen women's reformation through washing clothes, was set and working under the arbitrary distinction between cleanliness/faith/morality/(social) order and dirtiness/impiety/immorality/(social) disorder. Combined, they betray Maria's socially and culturally constructed, yet deeply-anchored fear and anxiety to be classified as one of the laundresses: a fallen woman.

The presence of such fear and anxiety, of course, does not mean that she is a fallen woman. Although there are few critics[1] who see her as one of the

1) Marian Eide, for example, suggests Maria's fallen status, saying, "Maria's residence in the Magdalene Refuge places her in the company of 'fallen women's and presents the likelihood of her own fallen status, a possibility reinforced by her ambiguously allegorical name: Maria, mother of God, or Maria the Magdalene" (63). This fallen status not only includes social one but also sexual one (Eide 63).

fallen women in the *Dublin by Lamplight* laundry, her virginal status among them makes her embarrassed and uncomfortable. Indeed, as an old Catholic maid, Maria is totally out of place in this Protestant institution. Yet her subservient position scarcely permits her to express her real feelings of embarrassment and discomfort. Such alienated feelings, however, are less dreadful for Maria than being socially indistinguishable from her inmates. In fact, the whole narration is dominated by her fear of and anxiety about being (mis)recognized and treated as a fallen woman. Such anxiety is reflective of Maria's subconsciousness, formed under the social and cultural atmosphere in which the lack of sanitation is considered a sign of immorality and impiety. Equating physical uncleanness with moral and religious depravity, had pervaded Ireland since the sanitary movement took place in Britain in 1830s-40s. The ideas of sanitation led to the legislation of the Contagious Diseases Acts in the 1860s that allowed inspection and detainment of women suspected of venereal diseases. Despite the law's repeal in 1886, the social purity movement continued to put these women under surveillance and control in the name of moral reform. Joyce's Dubliners at the turn-of-the-century must have been cognizant of this atmosphere. It is not coincidental that Eveline Hill in "Eveline" and Mrs. Mooney in "The Boarding House" put emphasis on order and cleanliness in their household management; they wished as well to elude the tag of being immoral and irreligious. Such tagging is what makes Maria genuinely afraid of and obsessed with cleaning. Suffused with Victorian and Edwardian sanitationism, the narrative of "Clay" divulges Maria's fear for being associated with the socially unacceptable, such as the fallen women in the laundry, and her desire — expressed through an obsession with order and cleanliness — to distance herself from them.

The early critics of "Clay" mostly paid attention to Maria's identity, whether she was a witch or Virgin Mary in particular, hinted by the story's

background of Hallow's Eve. Another notable attempt is to read her as Ireland or an incarnation of Ireland, as William York Tindall did. Summing up the tendency and warning against it, T. H. Gibbons writes in 1967:

> If we treat all six of these 'symbolic exegeses' equally seriously, then we are forced to accept them on equal terms, thereby creating a meta-Maria of staggering symbolic weight. For she must, to take her roles in the order of our extracts, either be or represent all of the following: Odysseus, the Virgin Mary, a witch, an average saint, *tristitia*, the territory and nation of Ireland, and the whole of malleable moribund humanity. (181)

Gibbons points out the meaninglessness of pursuing such problem as intractable as Maria's identity. As the problem is insoluble, any such symbolic approach may distort her and fail to yield a productive understanding of the text. In this sense, the narratological approach of Margot Norris (1987) was pioneering. Excavating the real Maria from what is not narrated, Norris claims the necessity of seeing Maria in a naturalistic light with all her desire for "family, wealth, or social standing" (206). Since Norris, there have been few, eclectic approaches to "Clay," but this essay sides with her naturalistic reading of Maria and even builds on her arguments that Maria creates and edits the narrative voice according to her desire. The current essay, however, attempts to look into the nature of her desire more closely and argues that it is the desire to avoid the social stigma of being fallen. Such desire, or more precisely, such fear and anxiety, are a product of particular ideas of a particular society: Victorian sanitationism. In order to understand Maria's psychology, therefore, this paper attempts to lay out the historical development of sanitationism and its sociocultural impacts.

II. Physical Distancing from Dirt

As is well-known, one of the significant figures who contributed to expand the meaning of dirt into the social and political realm in Victorian era was Edwin Chadwick. His *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* (the *Sanitary Report*), when first published in 1842, struck Victorian society. The report essentially claims the necessity of sanitary reform in order to improve health conditions and prevent diseases of the poor. Because of the report, according to George Rosen, "filth was no loinger simply a matter of private disgust; it was raised to the status of an important public enemy of the community health" (120). As critics noted, a more subtle change brought about by the report, though, was the association of dirt with immorality. Chadwick writes, "much of rebellion, of moral depravity and of crime has its root in physical disorder and depravity . . . The fever nests and seats of physical depravity are also the seats of moral depravity, disorder and crime with which the police have the most to do" (Freeland 804). His ideas soon spread in Victorian society. Based on Chadwick's idea, as Natalka Freeland succinctly expresses, "the Victorians made dirtiness itself a crime" (805). In such a context, it is not surprising that Parliament passed (in 1864, 1866, and 1869) the Contagious Diseases Acts. Also known as the CD acts, these laws allowed the police to arrest and examine a woman suspected of prostitution. If she was found to be carrying sexually transmitted diseases, she was detained for a certain time in a special institution called lock hospital. In 1886, after heated debate, the CD acts were repealed. Nonetheless, the view persisted that fallen women were carriers of both physical and moral ills. The same view was held by the social purity movement led by feminists and philanthropists, a moral reform that attempted to abolish prostitution and any socially deviant sexual behaviors through

conrol and regulation of social purity organizations.

Across Britain, Ireland, and Scotland, the Magdalene laundries, initiated as a result of social purity movement, provided temporary homes and workplaces for fallen women. They were detained in such institutions both for preventive purposes (not to transmit venereal diseases and moral ills) and for rehabilitative purpose (to train them for domestic service). Though Protestant insitutions, such as the *Dublin by Lamplight*, were less strict in their treatment of inmates, living in such institutions was never easy (Saunders 335). Not only were they "physically demanding and exhausting" for the workers, but they were "'insanitary' due to a laissez-faire administrative attitude (charitable institutions were not bound by the Factory Acts regulations of the nineteenth century, though commercial ones were)" (Saunders 334). Joyce seems to see through the exploitive nature of the laundry, as Marian Eide claims that "Joyce was aware of the exploitation of fallen women in the Magdalene Landries and he may have suspected the difficult conditions in which they worked" (63). However, his letter to his brother Stanislaus suggests more than that.

> The meaning of *Dublin by Lamplight Laundry*? That is the name of the laundry at Ballsbridge, of which the story treats. It is run by a society of Protestant spinsters, widows, and childless women — I expect — as a Magdalen's home. The phrase *Dublin by Lamplight* means that Dublin by lamplight is a wicked place full of wicked and lost women whom a kindly committee gather together for the good work of washing my dirty shirts. I like the phrase because it is a gentle way of putting it. (*L* 192)

As the phrase "my dirty shirts" suggests, Joyce was conscious of his and his contemporaries's complicity in such exploitation (*L* 192). The proclaimed mission of the Magdalene institutions[2] simply disguised the needs for

2) According to *Thirteenth Annual Report of Dublin by Lamplight*, the mission was

bourgeois comfort. Eide thus sums up the situation that "His letter underscores the hypocrisy of this institution where the demand for clean linens by respectable families is met by the forced labor of young women who have failed the rigorous tests of Irish moral purity" (62). More problematic than this exploitation, however, is the loose definition of being "fallen." According to Eide, the initial inmates of prostitutes, after the "Catholic convent orders . . . took over asylums throughout Ireland," were expanded to include the "'fallen' women more broadly categorized" (62). According to Francis Finnegan, such categorization caused unnecessary stress for those who were not sex workers living in these asylums in which "young, relatively innocent girls were indiscriminately mixed with common prostitutes, and inevitably suffered from both the connection itself and by association" (Saunders 335). Even after they leave these places, they often "carried with them the stigma associated with Magdalene Asylums" (Eide 63). Such stigmatization was what really distressed them.

The social prejudice against the fallen women and the laundries are well-exemplified in Molly's consciousness in *Ulysses*.

> one of those wildlooking gipsies in Rathfarnham had their camp pitched near the Bloomfield laundry to try and steal our things if they could I only sent mine there a few times for the name model laundry sending me back over and over some old ones odd stockings . . . and when I turned round a minute after just to see there was a woman after coming out of it too some filthy prostitute then he goes home to his wife after that only I suppose the half of those sailors are rotten again with disease (*U* 18.1413-26)

Molly's stream of consciousness shows her prejudice against gypsies and

stated as "the eternal salvation of unhappy ones who have been led [sic] captice by the devil, and have fallen through his devices" (qtd. in Cullen 20).

prostitutes. The Bloomfield laundry likely reminds her of prostitute. As the culturally charged phrase "filthy prostitute" suggests, Molly sees them as morally depraved as well as physically dirty beings (*U* 18.1424). They are also likely infectious with veneral disease, Molly thinks, so that the sailors, generally known to be promiscuous, must suffer from the disease (*U* 18.1425-26). Molly's ideas are also fraught with her own inconsistency. According to Helen Saunders, "she is perfectly happy to leave her own stockings lying around her home" while "she is understandably annoyed at receiving someone else's" that she calls "old ones odd stockings" (Saunders 340; *U* 18.1416-17). More seriously, Saunders observes, "Molly's frustration at the laundry's error is dwarfted by her comments about 'wildlooking gipsies'" who are "being dirty and unclean, not simply different but beyond the margins of acceptable society" (341). That is, Molly's comments reveal "how people use the metaphor of dirt to differentiate themselves from apparently undesirable others" (Saunders 341). Such distinction between the bourgeois and the poor, especially those who are socially unacceptable (such as gypsies and prostitutes), is what prevailed in Irish society. Through Molly, whose consciousness is harmless but not above the bourgeois way of thinking, Joyce shows how society was uncritically saturated with bourgeois hypocrisy.

Indeed, no one can be unaffected by the idea of dirt and its association in Joyce's Dublin. Particularly in *Dubliners*, depicting the lives of petit bourgeois on the fringes of colonial society, his characters attempt to differentiate themselves from the lower class using the metaphor of dirt. Mrs. Mooney in "The Boarding House," for example, emphasizes the sanitary condition of the boarding house under her direction. Its narrative voice, reflecting Mrs. Mooney's consciousness, boasts of her household management:

> Breakfast was over in the boarding house and the table of the breakfast

> room was covered with plates on which lay yellow streaks of eggs with morsels of bacon fat and bacon rind. Mrs Mooney sat in the straw armchair and watched the servant, remove the breakfast things. She made Mary collect the crusts and pieces of broken bread to make up Tuesday's bread pudding. When the table was cleared, the broken bread collected, the sugar and butter safe under lock and key, she began to reconstruct the interview which she had had the night before with Polly. (*D* 52)

Mrs. Mooney pretends to maintain a clean and orderly house under the principle of economy. She watches the servant to clean the table and sort the leftovers for their further use; not only does she disallow any consumption of sugar and butter outside the mealtime, but she also recycles bread crumps for another day's meal. More interesting, however, is her reuse of the idea of social purity on Bob Doran. The passage, in fact, comes just before her critical interview with him. Having learned of his premarital relationship with her daughter Polly, Mrs. Mooney is devising a method to force him to marry Polly. Her method, however untruthful it may be, is to moralize the situation in which Doran is presented as a seducer "[taking] advantage of Polly's youth and inexperience" and on Mrs. Mooney's own trust and "hospitality" (*D* 52). She also counts that "he had been employed for thirteen years in a great catholic winemerchant's office and publicity would mean for him, perhaps, the loss of his sit" (*D* 53). Armed with "all the weight of social opinion" of the sexually rigid Catholic community, she succeeds to secure what she wants: her daughter's marriage (*D* 52). Mrs. Mooney's moralizing tactic and boast of domestic skills are not irrelevant: they have, in fact, the same root in Victorian sanitationism. Her emphasis of order and cleanliness, in other words, is another expression of her morals. Why then does she underscore her morals, though indirectly, over and over? It is likely because of Mrs. Mooney's vulnerability in her social status and financial condition. Her boarding house

is the last financial resort for her after her husband ruined butcher's business. She is, furthermore, suspected of running the boarding house by exploiting Polly's sex appeal to the male lodgers: "All the resident youg men spoke of her as *The Madam*"[3] (*D* 50). In such circumstance, Mrs. Mooney's strident emphasis on order and cleanliness may be her defensive response to the social tagging of moral depravity.

The same defensive mechanism is also found in Eveline's excessive sense of the necessity for cleaning. While "she had dusted once a week for so many years," she seems to feel the presence of dust all the time, as she is "wondering where on earth all the dust came from" (*D* 27). Even when she takes a rest, "the odour of dusty cretonne" does not leave her (*D* 26). Like Mrs. Mooney, Eveline's social status and financial condition are precarious. She barely manages her family finance although she contributes all of her scanty wages earned as a shop assistant (*D* 28). She is let down by her employer who is always displeased with her service (*D* 28). It is no surprise that she dreams of escaping the current pattern of life through marriage: "But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married — she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been" (*D* 28). Her dream, however, accompanies a fear and anxiety about an uncertain future. According to Katherine Mullin, there was widespread propaganda in Irish society of sexual danger posed in foreign countries (57). Not unaware of such danger, Eveline is paralyzed and unable to move in the final moment of boarding a ship with her lover Frank. If she does not feel respected by others in her present life, going with Frank would make her irredeemable to respectable society. Her fear of such a possibility is likely expressed through

3) Norris suggests the term may be used as a mockery for "the female proprietess of a house of prostitution" (*D* 50).

her obsession with dusting. Like Mrs. Mooney, Eveline in "Eveline" also overemphasizes the sanitary condition of household as a way of differentiating herself from the poor, unclean, and possibly fallen women.

Such desire for differentiation through an emphasis on sanitation is also found in "Clay." The readiness of the kitchen, as we have seen in the opening paragraph, is one example, and another is found after the tea scene when she prepares for her outing:

> She went into her little bedroom and, remembering that the next morning was a mass morning, changed the hand of the alarm from seven to six. Then she took off her working skirt and her houseboots and laid her best skirt out on the bed and her tiny dressboots beside the foot of the bed. She changed her blouse too and, as she stood before the mirror, she thought of how she used to dress for mass on Sunday morning when she was a young girl; and she looked with quaint affection at the diminuitive body which she had often adorned. In spite of its years she found it a nice tidy little body. (*D* 85)

The narrative in the scene particularly reveals Maria's sanitary consciousness. While this is one of the few passages that directly speak of Maria's own cleanliness as a "nice *tidy* little body," her change of clothes from dirty working dress to clean walking one indirectly indicates her preference to cleanliness and order (*D* 85, my emphasis). Her preparation for the mass in the next morning further emphasizes her punctiliousness, a sign that she is far from promiscuous life. On the whole, Maria in the passage consciously attempts to differentiate herself from others in the laundry through this occasion of Hallow Eve's outing. Her consciousness, like that of Mrs. Mooney and of Eveline, shows that Joyce's Dubliners are not impervious to the sanitary discourse of the days.

III. Narrative Distancing from Dirt

Maria's attempt to distance herself from dirt and its associations is more clearly revealed when we look into the narrative of "Clay," which inescapably expresses her consciousness. In her influential essay "Narration under a Blindfold: Reading Joyce's 'Clay,'" Norris argues that the real speaker of the story is Maria, that "Maria [is] implicitly inventing, or wishing she could invent, someone who will speak for her (while pretending to speak of her) in the ways she cannot speak for herself" (207, 208). Behind such invention is her desire, according to Norris, "a desire for the recognition and prestige that would let a poor old woman without family, wealth, or social standing maintain her human status in paralytic Dublin" (206). Such desire brings forth two incompatible versions of her. The narrative voice presents Maria as a "well-bred, middle-class maiden lady living on a small but independent income from a job that earns her the respect of co-workers and superiors" (Norris 208). According to this version, Maria is not unsuccessful in family life: "Though unmarried and, of course, childless, she enjoys the affection of a surrogate family that had once employed her more as a governess than as a domestic and that still cherishes her as a favorite sort of godmother who visits them laden with gifts" (Norris 208). The real version the critic exposes, however, is that she "works long hours for meager pay as a scullion in a laundry for reformed prostitutes who make her the butt of their jokes" (208). In this hostile environment, "She is ignored and patronized by everyone, including the family whose slavery she once was and from whom she succeeds in extorting only a minimal and ritualized tolerance by manipulating their guilt and pity" (Norris 208). The latter version is accessible, Norris argues, only in "silent semiologies: a wince, a blush, a lost object, a moment of forgetfulness, a mistake" in the text (208). Much indebted to Norris's argument and

observations in such semiologies, this essay further argues that Maria's fear of and anxiety about the revelation of her reality is particularly found in her rejection for her connection to the socially unacceptable.

Significanlty, the selective narrative in "Clay" is dubbed by Lisa Fluet as "sanitizing narrative," a term hinted from Norris's expression that it is "the work of a rhetorical scullion" (Fluet 194; Norris 212). Indeed, Norris provides an excellent example of rhetorical sanitization from Maria's comment on her workplace: "There was one thing she didn't like and that was the tracks on the walls; but the matron was such a nice person to deal with, so genteel" (*D* 84). The critic points out that Maria "knows the kind of place that is her home, that the tracks on the walls are a constant reminder of that fact" to her, and her visitors would find "its status as a laundered whorehouse advertised on its walls" (209). That is why the narrative voice diverts the reader's attention away from the tracks to the matron. Invisible they might be, even the religious texts function as a moral sanitizer as they perform "the erasure of the vice, the bleaching of the stain . . . in the exhortation to reform" (Norris 210). The narrative of "Clay" thus attempts to evade any association with moral depravity, but it unconsciously betrays Maria's innermost fear and anxiety for being associated with (or even recognized as) the fallen women.

Perhaps the best safeguard to avoid such association for Maria is marriage through which she can, like Molly in *Ulysses*, smoothly enter bourgeois society. But she knows too well that this is impossible. Unable to admit it, Maria shys away from the topic whenever it is alluded to. When Lizzie Flemming declares that "Maria was sure to get the ring,"[4] for example, she overreacts to the joke and denies her desire for marriage (*D* 84). When a shop assistant at a cake shop taunts about Maria about her indecision, asking

4) In a Hallow Eve's divination game, a ring in a cake foretells marriage (Norris *D* 84n9).

whether she wants to buy a weddingcake, she answers obscurely with her "blush and smile" (*D* 85). Maria's ambiguous silence is also found in *I dreamt that I dwelt*, a song through which Maria summons the desire of a girl who has been deprived her original birthright such as social prestige and wealth and treated as a social outcast among the gypsies (Norris *D* 88n5). The first verse, according to Norris, "nicely mirrors Maria's own sense of displacement, of being trapped in a class below her breeing and sensibility" (213). But more significantly, she omits the second verse about romance and marriage, repeating the first one instead. The ommision, remaining as an invisible text like the religious tracks on the wall, functions just like it: disregarding it as Maria's "mistake," the narrative voice evades the mention of romance and marriage; however, such evasion effectively betrays what Maria really desires but knows its futility: her own marriage (*D* 89).

Maria cannot but look for its substitution at Joe's home. Though her visit to this old home is likely to happen rarely, the narrative presents it as a kind of home-coming: "What a nice evening they would have, all the children singing!" (*D* 83). The narrative also colors Maria's stay at the laundry as a choice of an independent and thoughtful woman, saying, "Often [Joe] had wanted her to go and live with them; but she would have felt herself in the way (though Joe's wife was ever so nice with her) and she had become accustomed to the life of laundry" (*D* 83). Joe's affection is proclaimed in the direct insertion of his flattering words into the narrative: "Mamma is mamma but Maria is my proper mother" (*D* 83). We know, however, that it is Joe and his brother Alphy who placed Maria in *Dublin by Lamplight* (*D* 83). Their hospitality, in this sense, is likely to be the minimal decorum toward an old woman who has spent her youth slaving for their family. Nevertheless, she does her best to be welcomed into the family: she tidies herself, buys an extravagant present, and tries to be agreeable to the family and their friends.

All these efforts are gestures to secure a position within the family nearer to a family member than to a temporary visitor, and by doing so, to differentiate herself from other homeless women in the laundry.

The epistemological shock and crisis for Maria arises when she realizes, through the feel of clay, the refusal from Joe's family and friends. Norris carefully builds up the possible reading of the inclusion of clay as the "children's aggression toward Maria," who has provided enough reason to do so (212). Norris argues that bringing in clay is a "much more primitive, conventional, universal childish trick" intended to make Maria "recoil in shock and disgust at the sensation of touching 'excrement' — only to reveal to her, on the removal of the blindfold, the harmless garden dirt" (212). This "soft wet substance" is never clarified within the text, "because the very ambiguity of its identity is fraught with such cruel danger to Maria's ego" (*D* 88; Norris 212). Norris's general reading would be persuasive enough if we did not know of the prevalence of sanitationism in Irish society at the turn of the century. Aware of how the sanitary ideas are deeply rooted in Irish society and adopted to exploit those tagged as being dirty, the reader finds the "cruel danger" to be much more specific (Norris 212). The sensation of touching the "soft wet substance" on the deeper and subconscious level must have been imaginary re-association with dirt for Maria, a connection she has desperately tried to avoid so far (*D* 88). Such association also occurs in the mind of onlookers. If their request for Maria's song signals her time to leave, as Norris claims, the renewed association between Maria and dirt in their minds might provide the reason for doing so (213). In spite of all their efforts at changing the mood such as re-playing the game, playing the tune, and drinking, the once-made association likely remains for both parties, perhaps prompting Maria to return to the laundry.[5] This is why the word "clay," like the religious tracks or any

5) It is not unnatural for the family to feel Maria as being contageous once such

references to romance and marriage, is avoided at the narrative level. The roundabout expression of "soft wet substance" is a narrative evasion of the association at any event (*D* 88) The bourgeois world, represented by the Donnelly home, refuses Maria's entry into its membership, which she instinctively realizes at the moment she touches clay and silences the narrator.

IV. Conclusion

The artificial silence in "Clay," from the religious tracks on the wall of the laundry through the second verse of Maria's song to the word "clay," betrays Maria's innermost fear that she could be associated with the socially unacceptable, like the fallen women in the laundry. Like her author, she seems to know how such association endangers her already alienated life. The historical records about the Magdalene laundries inform how the category of the fallen is loosely applied, even to those who are not prostitutes, while Joyce's representation of Molly's consciousness shows how rigid, though absurd, the social prejudice against these women (as well as the gypsies) was. It might be natural for Joyce's Dubliners to attempt to avoid any association with them, an association made freely through the metaphor of dirt. Since the sanitary ideas and discourses swept British society in the nineteenth century after the publication of Chadwick's sanitary report, colonial Ireland could not escape their influences. Absorbed in sanitationism, Joyce's female characters, including Maria, often stress the order and cleanliness of their household

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association with dirt is made. Their signal for Maria's leave, then, is a way of drawing a line between her and themselves. While not directly discussing "Clay," Martin Bock in "James Joyce and Germ Theory: The Skeleton at the Feast" points out that "The fear of infection in the early twentieth century . . . would hardly have been phobic" (23).

management as a way of differentiating themselves from the lowest class. In "Clay," such subconsciousness is reflected in the narrative voice, which often omits any possible reminder of Maria's rejection by the bourgeois society. Maria's cognizance of the impossibility of being granted entry is revealed by the omission of any reference to marriage, a path into respectable society in which she need not be concerned about any association with dirt. Her admission into Joe's home, a substitute for her own marriage, is also rejected when she touches the "soft wet substance" (*D* 88). Whether it is excrement or garden dirt, the implication is clear: for all the narrative efforts, she is forever associated with dirt and always pulled back to the world of the *Dublin by Lamplight*, a world of those disrespected and despised by society.

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Younghee Kho, "She's so deliciously low－so horribly dirty－": Sociocultural Implication of Dirtiness in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. *The Journal of East-West Comparative Literature*, vol. 61, 2022, pp. 53-71.

Abstract

Obsessed by Cleaning: A Subconsciousness on the Sanitary Reform Movement in Joyce's "Clay"

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This paper argues that the narrative voice of Joyce's "Clay" divulges Maria's fear of being associated with the socially unacceptable, such as the fallen women in *Dublin by Lamplight*. The voice also reveals her desire to distance herself from such women by emphasizing order and cleanliness. While such values as order and cleanliness are overemphasized, the narrative suppresses the mentioning of particular object or words, the ones which might help associate Maria with dirt both in physical and metaphorical senses. Take, for instance, the title word "clay," only mentioned as a "soft wet substance" in the body of the text. The roundabout expression of the object is a narrative attempt to avoid Maria's identification with dirt at any event. This paper finds such narrative appropriation, whether it be overemphasis or silence, to be rooted in Victorian sanitationism, an ideology often used to divide and discriminate the marginalized members of society on the pretext of being dirty. Such pretext in Victorian society was prepared and propagated by Edwin Chadwick, whose *Sanitary Report* critically influenced not only Britain but also Ireland, its colony. The Magdalene laundries in Ireland, set up and managed within such a social context, aimed to perform moral and spiritual cleansing of the fallen women through the physical cleansing of others' laundry. While a source for some of the most exhausting labor, these women were not treated with respect; on the contrary, they were treated with disgust and disdain. It is hardly surprising that Maria desires to escape her laundry

and to confirm her membership in the Donnelly home on the occasion of Hallow's Eve; her phobia is to be classified in the same category as the fallen women; she wishes to belong to respectable society. However, all her physical and narrative efforts are quashed when she is re-associated with dirt in a children's game. Irreversibly exposed through shock is one of the profound impacts of sanitationism on one's subconsciousness in Dublin at the turn of the twentieth century.

■ Key words : "Clay," dirt, sanitationism, *Dublin by Lamplight*, fallen women, narrative distancing
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