Eveline Study Guide

Eveline by James Joyce

BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Groundbreaking in form and of great psychological depth, James Joyce's "Eveline" is a short but important story in Joyce's first major work of fiction, the short-story collection *Dubliners* (London, 1914). "Eveline" is a portrait of a young woman torn between her obligations to stay and look after her family or escape with her lover to a new life across the sea, and this struggle is developed intricately and realistically. But the story is also thematically ambitious and highly symbolic, containing allusions to Christianity, mythology, Irish politics, and Dublin's social conditions, and exhibiting many characteristics common to the newly developing literary movement of modernism.

Set in the closing years of nineteenth-century Dublin, Ireland, "Eveline" is very much about the political and social climate of this era. With its majority Catholic population suffering the disgrace and depression of economic and social decline and with no end to English rule in sight, Dublin Catholics were experiencing a spiritual and moral crisis. Part of a series of stories that portray the soul of this city, the publication of "Eveline" was delayed for nine years, until 1914, because publishers were worried about Joyce's controversial methods and themes.

Author Biography

Born February 2, 1882, in Dublin, Ireland, Joyce was the eldest of ten children in a family that went from prosperity to poverty in a short time. He attended two private Jesuit schools, and the religion he learned there influenced much of his writing. Joyce graduated in 1902 with a degree in modern languages from University College, Dublin, and then left for Paris to study medicine but instead spent his time writing. He returned to Dublin in 1903 because his mother was fatally ill. It was also during this time that Joyce began a lifelong relationship with Nora Barnacle, whom he married in 1931.

By the time Joyce brought Nora with him to continental Europe, he had already begun work on some of the short stories for *Dubliners*. In 1905, Joyce submitted the first version of this collection, including "Eveline," to the English publisher Grant Richards. Richards was afraid the stories were too controversial, however, and did not actually publish them until nine years later. In the meantime, while living mostly in Trieste (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), Joyce published a book of poetry titled *Chamber Music*, fathered two children, and worked on a semi-autobiographical novel called *Stephen Hero*, which he ultimately discarded, turning its subject into an entirely new work that became *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This novel, which helped define the form of European modernism, was published serially between 1914 and 1915 in Ezra Pound's *Egoist* magazine and was published in book form in 1916.

With the onset of World War I, Joyce and his family moved to Zurich, in politically neutral Switzerland, where they stayed until briefly moving back to Trieste after the war. They then moved to Paris to better negotiate the publication of what would become one of the most important novels of the century, *Ulysses*. This novel is a heavily allusive text following the lives of Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom through Dublin in the course of a single day. Joyce had begun work on the novel while in Switzerland, and its first edition was published in 1922 in Paris.

By 1922, Joyce had already earned international fame, but he began to suffer from severe eye troubles and was distraught at his daughter's mental illness, which ultimately led to her institutionalization. For the next seventeen years, Joyce worked on his final book, *Finnegan's Wake* (1939), which examines a huge canvas of issues in Western civilization and employs a completely new approach to language. He moved to unoccupied France during World War II. Joyce died January 13, 1941, shortly after he and his family had returned to Zurich.

Plot Summary

"Eveline" begins with a young woman gazing out the window to a Dublin street. Her name, Eveline, could be a reference to the title character of a nineteenth-century pornographic novel, or it could be a reference to a song by the Irish poet Thomas Moore; either way, the name is likely to connote a woman sexually active before marriage. Smelling the dust from "cretonne" curtains, a heavy cotton material that is usually brightly colored, Eveline reflects on her life, beginning with her childhood.

The Hill family, Catholic and working class, live in a "little brown" house distinct from the bright brick dwellings that stand on the old spot of Eveline's childhood playing field. A man from Belfast, a city that connotes the richer Northern Ireland that is largely populated by Protestants loyal to the English government, built the brick houses, and Eveline remembers the children that used to play on the field. She was happy then, when her father was less abusive and her mother was alive, and now, Eveline thinks, she is going to leave her home.

Looking at the objects around her that she might never see again, Eveline notices a colored print of promises made to Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French nun canonized in 1920, whose image was connected with domestic security and was common in Irish Catholic homes. Eveline remembers that the priest whose photograph is next to the print is in Melbourne now, which sends her thinking about whether or not she should leave home. She would not be sorry to leave her job; she works in the "Stores," a dry goods store in south Dublin, where her boss Miss Gavan is rude and embarrasses her.

Eveline considers what it would be like in a faraway country, where she would be married and treated with respect, unlike her mother who had been abused by her father. Still afraid of her father's violence towards her to the point that it gives her spasms of fear (which, it is implied, may lead to a nervous breakdown), Eveline considers that with her brothers gone she is no longer safe. Her father has been threatening her, particularly when she asks him for money on Saturday nights, even though she gives him all of her wages, does the shopping, and looks after her younger siblings.

So she plans for her departure with her lover Frank, a sailor fond of music who has taken her to an opera (about the fortunes of a "Bohemian girl" who is abducted by gypsies) and told her of the "terrible Patagonians," or Argentines, who represent decadent morality. A veteran of the "Allan Line," a sea route associated with exile, Frank is planning to take Eveline by night boat to Liverpool, England, and then across the sea to Buenos Aires, a city at the time associated with prostitution. Mr. Hill dislikes sailors, has quarreled with Frank, and, having guessed about the affair, has forbidden Eveline from seeing him.

Eveline continues smelling the dust from the curtains and considers two letters on her lap, one to her brother Harry (who is living in "the country," or southern Ireland) and one to her father. She reflects that her aging father—who sometimes can be nice, like the time he took their family to the pretty Hill of Howth in northeast Dublin—will miss her,

and then she hears music from a street organ that reminds her of her mother's dying wish that Eveline stay home as long as she could. Then she remembers her father's racist remark to an Italian organ-player playing the same song and her mother's final, "foolish" repeated phrase, "Derevaun Seraun," which is possibly nonsense and possibly corrupted Gaelic for a number of phrases including "the end of song is raving madness." Terrified, Eveline feels the necessity to escape to happiness with her lover.

The final scene of the story is on a crowded dock on the river Liffey, where boats leave for Liverpool. Without understanding what Frank is saying to her, Eveline is pale, distressed, nauseous, and praying to God to reveal her "duty." The boat blows a long whistle. A bell clangs, and Frank tries to pull her on board, but Eveline clutches an iron railing on shore, feeling that he will drown her in "the seas of the world." She cries out and grasps the railing tighter while Frank calls to her, and she turns her helpless face to him without a glimpse of "love or farewell or recognition," staying on shore as the boat pulls away.

Detailed Summary & Analysis

Summary

It is evening, and Eveline is sitting at the window of her home, watching the afternoon fade into night. There are few people out, only the man who lived in the last house on the street is passing on his way home. As she hears the gravel crunch beneath his feet, she is reminded of her childhood when she and the other children of the neighborhood used to play in the vacant lot where several new homes now stand. She recalls one of the children standing watch so that she and her siblings could be warned that their father was coming to look for them. As she thinks back to these long-ago days, she realizes how much has changed: her mother is dead; so is Tizzie Dunn; the Waters family has returned to England. Now, she was leaving too.

As she contemplates the fact that she will soon be leaving, Eveline looks around the room, taking note of all the familiar things that have surrounded her for so many years and wonders if she will ever see them again. As she looks, she takes note of the photograph of a priest – a school friend of her father's - that hangs on the wall and realizes that she never learned the priest's name.

Once again, her thoughts turn to her impending departure and she wonders if she is doing the right thing. While she acknowledges that she works hard – both at home and at her job – at least she knows that people she knows surround her and she does not have to worry about having shelter or food. Even so, she wonders what her supervisor and co-workers will say when they discover she has left. She suspects her supervisor will be glad that she is gone and will quickly fill her position with another worker.

Eveline contemplates what it will be like to married. She suspects people will treat her with respect and that she will be safe from her father's violent moods. While he never harmed Eveline in the way that he harmed her brothers, he has been threatening to do so more often – a development that has left her scared and anxious. There is no one left at home to protect her; her older brother Ernest is dead and her brother Harry is usually away, working.

Eveline particularly fears Saturdays because she inevitably ends up arguing with her father over the money she needs to run the house and care for her two younger siblings. Usually by Saturday, her father is quite drunk and so rather than give Eveline the money she needs, he accuses her of squandering his hard-earned wages. In the end, he usually gave her the money, but by this time, it was late in the afternoon and she was forced to complete the marketing quickly before the stores closed. As Eveline thinks about how difficult her life has been, she begins to think that perhaps things were not so bad after all.

As Eveline thinks about what her future will hold, she thinks about how kind Frank – the man she is to marry – is. The couple has planned to travel by boat the Buenos Aires

where they will be married and live in the home that Frank has waiting for them. Eveline remembers how they met – he was renting a room at a house in town and she used to see him outside. Little by little, they became acquainted and soon, he would meet her after work and walk her home. At first, Eveline thought she was attracted to the idea of having a boyfriend, but over time, she realized that she genuinely liked Frank. Frank has spent a good number of years at sea and always had interesting stories to tell of the various countries he had visited. He eventually settled in Argentina and was back home on vacation when he and Eveline met. When Eveline's father found out about Frank, he forbade her to see him; so, the two meet in secret.

Eveline's thoughts are interrupted as she glances at the two letters in her lap: one for her brother, the other for her father. She thought that her father seems to have aged recently, and thinks that he might actually miss her.

She continues to sit by the window, even though the time for her departure is drawing near. As she looks down at the street below, she hears the strains of a street organ and finds it somewhat ironic that she had heard the very same tune the night that she promised her dying mother that she would keep their family together for as long as possible. She thinks of her mother's life – a life controlled by her husband and by daily routine – and vows to make her life different. Eveline believes that the only way for her to have a life better than her mother's is to go away with Frank and so she leaves her home and goes to meet Frank at the port.

As they wait to embark the ship, Eveline is aware that Frank is talking to her but she does not answer him. Instead, she begins to pray for guidance as well as for assurance that she is doing the right thing. While she feels indebted to Frank and does not think it would be right for her to change her mind, she wonders if she is doing the right thing.

As the ship's bell rings, Frank implores Eveline to follow him on board. Eveline is paralyzed by fear and grips onto the iron railing, unable to go any further, even as Frank begs her to follow. Eveline remains behind and as Frank moves away, he notices that her face is void of all emotion.

Analysis

James Joyce's short story "Eveline" is a story that examines the effects of fear. We learn early in the story that even as a young girl, Eveline and her siblings feared their father. Recall that as they played in a nearby vacant lot that one of the children – a crippled child - always kept watch for him so that Eveline and her siblings could scatter before he arrived. As Eveline grows older, her father does not physically harm her, however, his verbal threats are enough to make her constantly live in fear. As we will learn as the story unfolds, the presence of the crippled child is symbolic of the effect that Eveline's father has had – and will continue to have - on her life.

We know that Eveline's life is difficult; while she has a job, her father takes her wages from her and she is responsible for the care of her two younger siblings. Considering

the enormous physical and emotional strain that she must contend with, it is not surprising that Eveline is contemplating eloping with Frank. What is surprising, however, is her decision to stay.

We begin to sense that Eveline may not go with Frank early in the story. As she reminisces about her childhood, the pain and fear seem to have faded and she comments, "they seemed to have been rather happy then." Eveline's ability to block the unpleasant memories tells us that, despite her indications to the contrary, she is not yet ready to leave home. This becomes apparent again later in the story when Eveline thinks that despite the daily hardships she must endure, her life is not "wholly undesirable." She has similar thoughts later in the story when she recalls a recent day when her father cared for her when she was not feeling well.

Another indication that perhaps Eveline is not ready to leave is her reluctance to leave the window. Rather than being excited about what her future may hold, Eveline is described as tired and she spends her last few moments at home taking in all the familiar surroundings. It is clear by this point that Eveline finds comfort in her familiar routine and surroundings and is becoming increasingly reluctant to begin her new life. Even when her time to leave to meet Frank draws closer, she remains by the window, providing yet another indication that she is not ready to leave her current life behind.

The final indication comes near the story's end when Eveline turns to prayer to help her decide whether she is doing the right thing. The fact that she finds comfort in the routine of prayer tells us that she will not allow herself to move forward.

In addition to the comfort she finds in the routine of her life, it is possible that Eveline's reluctance to marry Frank stems from her fear that her life may turn out to be no different from that of her mother. This is becomes evident at the end of the story when Eveline imagines her own death as she contemplates whether to board the ship with Frank. Since Eveline's life to date has been relatively sheltered, she has no way of knowing that not all men treat their wives as badly as her father treated her mother. While she believes Frank to be a kind man, she begins to wonder if she will be subject to the same fate. Further, and perhaps more importantly, she already feels indebted to him and wonders if she could change her mind "after all he had done for her." The fact that she feels this indebtedness – even if it is subconsciously – tells us that she is aware of the potential ramifications should she decide to marry Frank.

Characters

Frank

Frank is a sailor planning to move to Buenos Aires and take his lover Eveline with him. He has told Eveline he intends to marry her, which may well be the case, but Frank is a mysterious character and there is some implication that his intentions are devious. He started his sailing career on a trade route associated with exile and full of stories about infamously savage tribes from Argentina. Also, "going to Buenos Aires" was a slang term for prostitution, and the night boat to Liverpool may have been a reference to the mythological journey over the Styx river to the pagan underworld—both of which are implications that Frank might have no intention of marrying his lover, but instead is planning bring her into a situation she will find immoral.

However, Frank is also described as "kind, manly, open-hearted" and is set up as Eveline's only way to happiness, so he may indeed have only the best intentions in helping his lover to escape from her abusive household and difficult job. In fact, the new lands and adventure into the outside world that Frank represents are perhaps the only hopeful elements of the story, especially considering Eveline's very bleak future at home. But Frank's character is left obscure so that, like Eveline, the reader is left nervous and guessing at what life would be like with him.

Miss Gavan

Eveline's supervisor at the "Stores," which sells a variety of dry goods in south-central Dublin, Miss Gavan nags and embarrasses Eveline, especially when other people are around. She is probably a Quaker because the "Stores" was owned by Quakers, a religious group known for being pacifist and often associated with trades people in Ireland.

Ernest Hill

Eveline's favorite older brother, Ernest, is dead at the time of the story. Eveline remembers him being too grown up to play with the other children in the field next to their house.

Eveline Hill

Eveline is the protagonist of the story; her psychology is profoundly developed and the majority of the story takes place in her mind. A complex and conflicted person, she leads a hardworking life taking care of her family and tending a shop in Dublin. Her main problem is her abusive father, who has been threatening, berating, and beating her, and she must decide whether to abandon him and her family for her own happiness. Her

father has forbidden her from seeing her lover, a sailor named Frank, but Eveline has managed to sneak away and keep up the affair, to the point that he has promised to marry her and sail with her to a new life.

Tortured by the promise she made her mother to keep the home together as long as she could, and unsure of whether to leave her father, who will miss her, Eveline is trying to decide whether to attempt to "live" and be happy with her lover. She expresses some subtle doubts about Frank when she reflects that she had merely "begun to like him" and that he will only "perhaps" give her love, but this does not seem to be the major issue in her debate with herself. Eveline is principally concerned about her "duty" and her role within her family.

Although her name connotes the idea of a "fallen" woman, as does the concept of going to Buenos Aires, Eveline seems to be a rather modest and prudent person. She does the housework and the shopping, works faithfully at her job, and could be said to live in the image of her mother, in a life of "commonplace sacrifices." On the surface this term implies the difficult job of the person holding the family together. Eveline also thinks in a manner common to victims, justifying her father's abuse with three random acts of benevolence she remembers.

The last scene of the story renders Eveline's character rather enigmatic at the same time as it penetrates the deepest parts of her psychology. Unable to leave and petrified to return, Eveline is revealed to be a torn, devastated person by her difficult life and rigid value system. Like her mother before her, she is resigned to an abusive household that will, as we learn from her "palpitations" due to her father's violence, lead to her own nervous breakdown.

Harry Hill

Harry is the older brother to whom Eveline has written one of the letters she is holding during her scene of reflection. He works as a church decorator, lives somewhere in the countryside south of Dublin (which comprises most of Ireland), and regularly sends money to his sister. Harry and Ernest used to shield Eveline from their abusive father because he would "go for" them first, but now that Harry is living elsewhere and Ernest is dead, there is no one to protect her.

Mr. Hill

Mr. Hill is Eveline's abusive father. He has regularly beaten his wife and children in the past, and as he gets older he is becoming increasingly prone to violence towards Eveline. With her mother and older siblings gone, she is likely to take all of the abuse herself.

Eveline has a confusion of memories about her father; first she remembers him "hunting in" the children from their playing field with a walking stick, which is a rather worrisome image itself, and then she remembers in depth all of his increasing abuse. She finds it

very difficult to get money from him (for the family shopping) because he says she wastes all of his "hard-earned" money, and he threatens to abuse her just "for her dead mother's sake." By this he could be referring to any number of real or imagined faults, including what seems to be a certain amount of time living out of wedlock, which was a major taboo in the Catholic community. Eveline also remembers two isolated examples of how her father is sometimes "very nice": when he read her a ghost story and toasts her, and when he made his children laugh at a picnic.

These positive memories are very tenuous evidence of Mr. Hill's good character. From the comment that he is usually "fairly bad of a Saturday night," it can be inferred that he has a drinking problem, and the fact that he would miss Eveline in his old age suggests he might be insecure and bitter about getting older.

Mrs. Hill

Eveline's mother was abused by Mr. Hill and treated with disrespect by the community, as becomes clear when Eveline muses that, unlike her mother, she will be married and therefore treated with respect. It is likely that Eveline's mother had an affair with Mr. Hill out of wedlock and later married him, but this is not explicitly mentioned in the story. Her life was one of sacrifices, according to Eveline's musings, probably for her children's sake, but it seems that these sacrifices and her husband's abuse eventually drove her crazy and to her death.

Mrs. Hill is particularly important for her somewhat conflicting dying advice to her daughter. Eveline has promised to "keep the home together as long as she could," but her repeated last words in "foolish insistence" seem to contradict the life of martyrdom that she has recommended to her daughter. "Derevaun Seraun," whether it means "worms are the only end," "the end of song is raving madness," something else in corrupt Gaelic, or nothing at all, inspires Eveline's terrified epiphany that she must escape. In fact, it is possible that Mrs. Hill's "final craziness" actually results in her most coherent advice, since keeping the family together seems very likely to drive Eveline to the same bitter end as her mother.

The Priest

Mr. Hill's school friend, the priest is only present in "Eveline" as a yellowing photograph on the wall. He has gone to Melbourne, which was known for its association with exiled Irish criminals as well as with the Irish Catholic priesthood.

Themes

Paralysis

Critics have long noted that one of the most important themes in *Dubliners* is the tendency for its characters to be frozen in a state of psychological and spiritual arrest, or "paralysis." As it is portrayed in the collection, Dublin suffers from harsh social conditions, the lack of moral hope, and spiritual emptiness, which combine to erode the impetus to positive change in many of its characters. And there is perhaps no example of this paralysis so bleak as that of the seemingly doomed and completely immobile Eveline at the end of her story.

Eveline is unable to escape the paralyzed existence of the "duties" and inhibitions of home, living under her father's abusive control. Her mother's death, emblematized by the mysterious (but most likely morbid and fatalistic) Irish phrase "Derevaun Seraun," inspires Eveline's desperate and terrified desire to escape. But it also reminds her of her promises to stay at home, and Eveline's chance to flee to the freedom and motion of a new life across the sea fails, leaving her locked into the paralyzed role of housewife to an abusive father, poised for a nervous breakdown of her own. As Brewster Ghiselin notes in *Accent*, in *Dubliners* "the soul's true satisfaction cannot be exhibited in the experience of those who remain in Ireland"; distant countries and the sea to the east represent "the aspect of a new life" and the possibility of spiritual regeneration. Eveline is denied this possibility precisely because she is paralyzed, clinging to the iron railing at the harbor passively, "like a helpless animal" unable to move or even think of her own volition.

Joyce is careful to develop the complexity of Eveline's situation; the association of Buenos Aires with prostitution is an example of the implication that her fears of being drowned in the sea of her new life are justified. Also, Eveline might not even be in love with Frank; she says he would "perhaps" give her love, and her description of his character, which concentrates on the stories and adventures he tells her, may imply that she is more interested in the exotic new places Frank can bring her than in his true personality. This point is also important because it marks Eveline's conscious desire to leave her paralyzed state.

Ultimately, however, Eveline cannot enter the perilous sea. Ghiselin writes that she is paralyzed because she fails "in the cardinal virtue of fortitude," fourth in what he considers Joyce's systematic approach to the degeneration of the soul that is developed throughout *Dubliners*. Whatever the reason, Eveline is paralyzed into an enclosed island of suffering from which, Joyce implies, she is unable to escape.

Freudian Psychology

Eveline's central conflict is directly connected with the theories of Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis. Exhibiting the major symptoms of Freud's theory of the "Oedipal complex" (or Electra complex, the Oedipal complex occurring in women), Eveline is a classic example of a patient trying to escape from an attachment to her tyrannical father. Freud believed that children inevitably form an attraction to the parent of the opposite sex and a rivalry with the parent of the same sex, that can lead to a profoundly troubled adult sexuality. In her desire to stay with her father in her mother's role, Eveline is displaying what Freud would likely consider an "Oedipal complex," or an inability to break from the attraction to the father and pursue other lovers. The fact that she considers Frank a protector and father figure who, she repeats, would "save her," underscores the Oedipal drama in the story, since Freud thought girls only emerged from the crisis by finding lovers similar to their fathers.

The breakthroughs in psychology that Freudian theory allowed for modernist artists were particularly important to groundbreaking writers like Joyce. Joyce's portrayal of Eveline's psychology, developed with a minimum of elaboration, acquires a new dimension by employing Freud's insights into the workings of consciousness. Applying Freudian theory to "Eveline" reveals some of Joyce's ambitions with the story, such as underscoring the psychological paralysis (discussed above) of its main character. It also implies the sexual tyranny of her father, who is subconsciously involved in the violent struggle to maintain control over his daughter's body and mind, and allows the reader a clue as to the true nature of Eveline's choice to remain behind. Although Frank's intentions are possibly dubious and although Eveline does not even seem to love him, he is her one chance, in Freudian terms, to escape the Oedipal complex. The fact that she is unable to leave with him implies that she is in a state of a nearly inescapable psychological trauma.

Irish Politics

Although its treatment is often beneath the surface, "Eveline" attacks some of the most pressing issues in the Irish political climate of the time. By depicting the oppressed condition of Dublin Catholics and connecting the idea of staying in Ireland with devastating abuse and hardship, Joyce is editorializing on the condition of his country that would continue until well after the volume was published. It took Joyce nine years to publish *Dubliners* in no small part because of his frank treatment in stories such as "Eveline" of the dynamics of both political and domestic oppression.

Style

Epiphany

One of Joyce's stylistic trademarks is the use of a character's brief realization of truth and clarity, usually signaling a new direction and understanding of the world. Eveline experiences an "epiphany" after she remembers her mother's dying words "Derevaun Seraun" and makes the ecstatic resolution to escape to a new life, although she is unable to follow a new course when the time comes.

The word "epiphany" comes from the Greek for "manifestation," usually of divine power, and Joyce was very cognizant both of this root and the connotation of the January-sixth Christian festival of the Epiphany, which commemorates Jesus' baptism, the visit of the Wise Men, and the miracle at Cana. Each of these events is, for Christians, an instance of a manifestation of God's power, and the festival is second only to Easter in theological importance. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen's epiphanies are often overtly religious, and although Joyce expands the idea into other contexts, it carries Christian undertones throughout his works.

Because of this religious context, and because Eveline is seeking spiritual regeneration in her journey, the epiphany in the story can be read as a moment of divine clarity. Phrases like "sudden impulse" and "he would save her" clue the reader into the religious connotations of the moment. Since she fails to carry out a divine manifestation, Eveline could be said to be falling into spiritual decay when she is unable to follow the course revealed by a holy epiphany.

Joyce is unlikely to be providing a straightforward spiritual allegory, however, and he may even be bitterly ironic about the form of Eveline's divine epiphany and escape. Religion is a potentially dubious influence in the story, from the sickly yellow portrait of her father's priest friend to the fact that a perverse sort of religious duty confines Eveline to the home to the epiphany that guides her to the arms of a sailor she might not even love. Instead, the epiphany reveals Joyce's very subtle thinking about the actual resonance of this kind of religious imagery. He is likely to be using the religious reference to underscore and universalize the complications of Eveline's bleak choice, her confinement on all sides.

Symbolism

Although *Dubliners* was originally considered a strictly realist work, critics now largely place it alongside Joyce's later masterpieces and acknowledge its profound symbolism. "Eveline" is an extremely realistic and focused portrayal of two events in one important day, with a thoroughly developed psychological narrative. But the story also contains a variety of symbolic references that broaden its implications and possibly allegorize its content (turning it into a lesson for the reader to absorb).

The first symbol is overt, that of the print of Margaret Mary Alacoque. This prominent Irish Catholic symbol represents domestic security and piety, and Eveline notices it just as she is having her first doubts about leaving home. The print is beside a yellowing photograph of a priest who is Mr. Hill's friend and above a broken harmonium (a keyboard instrument with reeds), which may be meant to emphasize the disorder of the home or Eveline's discordant spirituality. The fact that the priest has emigrated is a particularly interesting detail, possibly implying that problems in domestic piety will follow Eveline elsewhere.

As discussed above, Brewster Ghiselin argues that the sea itself is a symbol for Christian rebirth and salvation, perhaps even representing the water of a baptismal font. He also writes that Eveline's failure to leave is a symbol of failure of the fourth cardinal virtue of Christianity—fortitude—and that "music symbolizes the motion of the soul toward life or the call of life to the soul." This might be why the music in the story—such as the Italian air from the street organ that reminds Eveline of her promise to her mother, Frank's sailor songs, and the boat whistle and bells that "clanged upon her heart"—is closely connected with the idea of leaving for faraway shores.

Historical Context

Turn-of-the-Century Dublin

The world of *Dubliners* is based on the political and social climate of Dublin around the closing years of the nineteenth century, when Joyce was growing up. The author used Dublin as the artistic canvas for all his major writings, and each street name, political reference, or mention of different regions of Ireland holds a particular significance to what he is communicating.

Dublin was the capital of Ireland, although Belfast was to temporarily outgrow it in size by 1900, and the entire island was under strict English rule (a regime that would lead to nearly a century of violent conflict). At the heart of the economic and political hardships of the era, Dublin had a majority Catholic population, most of whom desired home rule for Ireland. These "Nationalists" were deeply disillusioned after the disgrace and death of the formerly championed Irish political leader Charles Stewart Parnell, who skillfully fought for home rule in the British Parliament until he was voted down as leader because of an affair with a married woman. Parnellite loyalists like Joyce's parents, living on the unfashionable north side of the river Liffey, were shamed and humbled after Parnell's death in 1891. Coupled with the longstanding economic decline of the city in general, Catholic families like the Joyces were often left in miserable social conditions.

At the top of this strict social order was Dublin's 17 percent Protestant population, closely tied to the English ruling class. Holding most positions of political power and business influence, this mi6 nority kept the class system rigid. One of the most overt signs of the religious discrimination that stemmed from their power was the worsening north side of the city, which was vastly overcrowded, poor, and almost entirely Catholic. The docks on the Liffey were another example, overflowing with the displaced and unemployed masses of the Catholic lower class and a symbol of the exploitative British colonial system; this is why it is not insignificant that the boat at the end of "Eveline" is leaving from the docks of the "North wall," and why it would be very resonant with Irish readers that she makes a meager seven shillings per week. Modernism The beginnings of the literary movement of modernism are generally considered to have coincided with World War I, an upheaval that caused a variety of assumptions and ways of thinking to drastically change. Many modernist writers, feeling they could no longer express themselves in old forms, responded with experimental techniques based most notably on post-impressionism (which dealt with a simplification of form in the visual arts) and naturalism (which dealt with a deterministic universe that often involved a brutal struggle for individual survival). Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot were among the chief writers of the modernist movement, Pound's criticism often becoming more influential than his other writings and Eliot's poetry examining the spiritual decadence of the modern world by reconciling the idea of "tradition" with new artistic forms in works like The Waste Land. Later, American novelists such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway moved to Paris and produced their own innovations in style, while in London, Virginia Woolf, who was associated with the "Bloomsbury Group," wrote novels dealing with feminism and

new expressions of consciousness. Joyce himself was probably the most influential author on the whole of the modernist movement. One of the first writers considered a modernist, he actually invented many of its new aesthetic methods, including the tendency to develop a multiplicity of viewpoints that lead to an "epiphany," or sudden moment of truth and understanding. Dubliners was written ten years before the main onset of modernism, and for a long time it was thought to be straightforward realism out of the naturalist movement. The Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen, whose naturalist and proto-modernist tendencies depicted a somewhat dismal provincial world and its complex relationship to truth and light, was particularly 6 nority kept the class system rigid. One of the most overt signs of the religious discrimination that stemmed from their power was the worsening north side of the city, which was vastly overcrowded, poor, and almost entirely Catholic. The docks on the Liffey were another example, overflowing with the displaced and unemployed masses of the Catholic lower class and a symbol of the exploitative British colonial system; this is why it is not insignificant that the boat at the end of "Eveline" is leaving from the docks of the "North wall," and why it would be very resonant with Irish readers that she makes a meager seven shillings per week.

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Critical Overview

Craig Hansen Werner writes in his book "*Dubliners": A Pluralistic World* that "the earliest critics of *Dubliners* were the editors and printers who seem to have shared a feeling that the book was in some sense obscene or dangerous." The collection did not, however, receive the antagonistic reception its publisher Grant Richards had feared. Although it tended to be eclipsed by what were considered Joyce's more radical works, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses, Dubliners* had a warm reception in the literary climate of the time. Werner notes that its most influential critic, Ezra Pound, praised the collection's "clear hard prose" and, like other critics, concentrated on its effective realism. In his book *Axel's Castle*, Edmund Wilson calles the work "a straight work of Naturalistic fiction," which was the general view of *Dubliners* for twenty years.

One of the first critics to begin to explore the symbolic themes of *Dubliners* was Brewster Ghiselin. In his 1956 essay "The Unity of Joyce's *Dubliners*," published in *Accent*, Ghiselin argues that the collection of stories should be understood as a unified whole and that its symbolism reveals "a sequence of events in a moral drama, an action of the human spirit struggling for survival under peculiar conditions of deprivation." Since Ghiselin's reading, critics have tended to deny that *Dubliners* is exclusively a work of realism. As with Joyce's major novels, critics have thoroughly examined it under almost every conceivable critical lens and raised it to the level of a modern classic.

Because of the trend to review the collection as a whole, "Eveline" has largely been considered within essays or books alongside theories about all the stories in *Dubliners*. While early critics focused on the psychological forces in Eveline's decision, Ghiselin, for example, discusses the story as an instance of the symbolism recurring through the collection, such as the sea as a symbol for freedom. Similarly, Garry Leonard's 1993 book *Reading "Dubliners" Again* analyzes the story as an example of how the text as a whole relates to the theories of the French psychologist Jacques Lacan.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3
- Critical Essay #4

Critical Essay #1

Trudell is a freelance writer with a bachelor's degree in English literature. In the following essay, Trudell examines the elements of Freudian theory beneath Joyce's psychological portrait of Eveline.

On either side of Eveline's major life decision about whether to leave her home is a suspect and potentially abusive man. Because of the manner in which Joyce has set up the story, however, she must choose one of them; and due in large part to what is probably the result of years of psychological and physical abuse, Eveline pictures both of these men as her potential protector. She seems to be searching for a tender father figure; somewhat illogically, she tries to balance her father's increasing capacity for violence by remembering three random acts of gentleness. And she pictures Frank in a similar way, as a savior and protector to "take her in his arms, fold her in his arms," repeating as if to convince herself that "he would save her."

In his 1993 book *Reading Dubliners Again*, in which he studies the collection from a Lacanian perspective (based on the theories of the psychologist Jacques Lacan, who is associated with the literary movement of postmodernism), Garry Leonard discusses Eveline's desire to subject her self to a "nice" father in terms of what Lacan would call a participant in the male-dominated symbolic world:

The hope that Frank will be an unconditionally loving father is the result of a feminine fantasy on her part about belonging to a benevolent phallic economy that would regard her as a particularly valuable object of exchange.

In other words, in Eveline's subconscious mind, which is deeply infused with the sexism she has learned from her culture and from her abuser, she can only conceive of her "value" as the property of a father figure. Her choice, Leonard believes, is simply to find which masculine master would deem her of greater value as a sexual object (not even which one would treat her better). Elements of the story, such as Eveline concentrating on her duty to her father and concern that "he would miss her," as well as language like "He would give her life," in reference to Frank, use such passive language as to support the idea that she has a completely servile understanding of her self worth. Leonard then goes on to discuss the presence of Eveline's own sexual desire and how it finds a form in the story, arguing that the final scene can be interpreted as Eveline's sexual orgasm that the male perspective of the story fails to understand.

This is where Leonard's analysis fails to ring true; despite his insistence that Eveline's "jouissance" (a word from postmodern theory that means orgasmic pleasure at the expense of others) cannot be understood from the male-dominated perspective of the story, the final scene is undoubtedly a devastating failure for Eveline. It is certainly true that she is, seemingly willingly, objectified into the property either of her father or her lover, but it is doubtful that the end of the story could in any way represent her orgasm. The bleakness of the situation and Eveline's dismal paralysis that will probably lead to her own nervous breakdown (signaled by the "palpitations" her father's abuse has

already started to give her) imply, to the contrary, that she is stifling the orgasm Frank offers by repeating, "Come!"

Perhaps, then, despite Leonard's progressive insight into the ways that Joyce's story can be applied to more recent psychological theory, it will be more helpful to return to the discussion of earlier critics and examine the story in relation to the theories of the famous psychoanalyst that was Joyce's contemporary, Sigmund Freud. Already incredibly influential over the literary world at the time Joyce was writing "Eveline," Freud had in 1900 published *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which began to develop his ideas about the "Oedipal Complex" that would become central to his later work on sexuality. Joyce was very much aware of Freud's work, and psychoanalysis would come to be associated with some of the most fundamental explorations of the modernist forms that *Dubliners* helped to develop. Applying the Freudian Oedipal drama to "Eveline," therefore, will provide a fruitful understanding of the story's portrayal of psychological development.

According to Freud, attraction to a parent of the opposite sex and rivalry with the parent of the same sex represents an extremely important developmental stage for children. Psychoanalysis attributes much abnormal psychology in later life to a failure to successfully emerge from this role, highlights its prevalence in dreams and in primitive societies, and ultimately concludes that it is a central conflict for all of human psychology. Freud began with some ambiguity about the distinction between boys and girls in their enactment of the Oedipal drama, but as his 1916 "Development of the Libido and Sexual Organizations" lecture clarifies, he considered that

things proceed in just the same way, with the necessary reversal, in little girls. The loving devotion to the father, the need to do away with the superfluous mother and to take her place, the early display of coquetry and the arts of later womanhood, make up a particularly charming picture in a little girl, and may cause us to forget its seriousness and the grave consequences which may later result from this situation.

Grave consequences indeed follow for Eveline, in whom the reader notices the key symptoms of an Oedipal complex: major problems in adult sexuality that relate to her parents. Joyce seems to be implying that Eveline has failed to emerge from a childhood attraction to her father, which is a vital element in Freud's analysis of the complex, in a number of ways. First, Joyce makes it clear that Eveline has a rather ungrounded attraction to her father when she says, "Sometimes he could be very nice," and remembers three instances of his tenderness. In fact, it is particularly interesting that Mr. Hill puts on his wife's bonnet because it was an important belief of Freud's that pre-pubescent girls are first attracted to their mothers before they begin their more prolonged attraction to their fathers.

Secondly, there is Eveline's fondness for her brothers, although they have disappeared as possible incestuous partners (consider Freud's remarks later in "Development of the Libido and Sexual Organizations" that incestuous partners are a detriment to emergence from the Oedipal complex: "A little girl takes an older brother as a substitute for the father who no longer treats her with the same tenderness as in her earliest

years.") The fact that Harry and Ernest have departed from Eveline's life would imply, in Freudian terms, that she is now freer to find a non-incestuous, although father-like, sexual partner. For Freud, the only possibility of successful escape from the Oedipal drama is with a father-like lover that will eventually lead the female child to what Freud would consider "normality," or what Eveline might mean by "life." Of course, this lover is Frank; as has already been established, Eveline treats her lover as another version of her father, a new father that will protect her and "perhaps love" her but, more importantly, "give her life."

Perhaps the most convincing evidence that "Eveline" can be read as a Freudian Oedipal drama, however, is the influence of Mrs. Hill on the story. Eveline has taken her mother's place in exact parallel to Freud's theory. She acts as her father's housewife to the point where even Mr. Hill associates her with his late wife when he becomes abusive toward her: "latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother's sake." There is a perverse sense in this phrase, and throughout the story, that sex is always related to a violent exchange of property, that intercourse itself is implied in what he would "do to her." Confrontational with her mother's ghost but unable to disregard the promise to fulfill her duty, "keep the home together," and inhabit Mrs. Hill's own doomed role (including her nervous breakdown), Eveline is condemning herself to a life of Oedipal inhibition.

Joyce supports this idea, which many critics have termed Eveline's "paralysis," with sophisticated symbolism. The author is by no means straightforward in his implication that Eveline has failed to successfully emerge from her Freudian conflict via its only solution, her lover. Many suspicions about Frank's character are implied in the text, including his symbolic association with exile and questionable morality, since Buenos Aires was associated with prostitution and the "Patagonians" he describes were notorious for their barbarity. Also, the night boat journey from the "North wall" may be a reference to the mythological voyage through the river Styx to the Underworld and therefore Eveline's death (as opposed to the "life" of psychological normality she seems to desire).

But the main force of the symbolism in the story, including the sea as spiritual regeneration and baptismal font, is Ireland as Eveline's mother finally sees it: "Derevaun Seraun" (which probably means something like "worms are the only end" and certainly connotes terrifying oppression). Take the climax of Eveline's psychosexual development:

—Come!

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

—Come!

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy.

It is understandable why Leonard sees an orgasm here, but examined from the Freudian lens it is clear that this orgasm is Frank's, and that Eveline's is denied; instead of "Yes! Yes! Yes!" she experiences "No! No! No!" The orgasmic seas of the world, she feels, will drown her, so she grips the phallic alternative to Frank, the iron railing that echoes the first image of her father's "blackthorn stick." It is no surprise that, like her mother, gripping this iron railing representing Mr. Hill sends Eveline into a "frenzy" that reminds us of her palpitations and her mother's nervous breakdown.

Eveline has, in Freudian terms, become entirely frigid and failed to escape from the prison of her own psychology. The only method of emergence from the Oedipal complex, despite his suspect intentions and his own orgasm seeming to drown Eveline, is Frank, so it is no surprise that the final imagery of the story is one of suppression and regression to extreme infancy: "She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal." Joyce is at one of his bleakest moments here, envisioning almost hopeless psychological oppression as Eveline is unable to break free of her abusive father.

Source: Scott Trudell, Critical Essay on "Eveline," in *Short Stories for Students*, Gale, 2004.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay, Florio explores how music informs "Eveline" and how Joyce turns the image of mythic Irish poetry upside down in the story.

The work of scholars such as Zack Bowen, Ruth Bauerle, and M. J. C. Hodgart has done much to illuminate the role that music plays in the works of James Joyce. I have found, however, that in their endeavors the researchers have paid too little attention to *Dubliners*. It is in these tales of grey existence that Joyce truly begins to display the talent for musical allusion that comes to full fruition in his later masterpieces, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. It is my particular belief that their research has overlooked the importance of music in the theme of "Eveline." Although both Bauerle and Bowen cite Joyce's use of "Silent, O Moyle," neither recognized the significant implications of the music and lyric.

Thomas Moore borrowed the music for this song from the traditional tune "My Dear Eveleen" and altered the lyrics so as to convey a story based on Celtic myth. Subtitled "Song of Fionnulla" the song tells the tale of Fionnulla, the daughter of the Celtic god of the sea, Lir. She is transformed into a swan and condemned to wander over Irish lakes and rivers until the first sound of the Christian Mass bell gives the signal for her release.

Moore obviously believed that the song bespoke a "tale of woes," as the marking on the sheet music is "mornfully." Joyce was no stranger to Moore's works; he actually liked "Silent, O Moyle" so much that he recommended it to his son Giorgio, praising it as one of the "lovely arias for deep voices among Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*," and he was familiar enough with the mythological background of the song to have once remarked to his brother George that Fionnulla was one of three girls turned into swans, "condemned to fly over the leaden Moyle till the first Christian bell sounded in Ireland." Since this brother died in 1902, Joyce must have been aware of the myth prior to finishing "Eveline" in the summer of 1904.

Considering this evidence, it is possible to conclude that Joyce has named his protagonist for the "Dear Eveleen" of the original, traditional song. He contrasts Eveline's situation with that of Fionnulla and has very deftly constructed his "tale of woes" in close relation to the story that is told in the lyrics of "Silent, O Moyle":

Silent, O Moyle! Be the roar of thy water
Break not, ye breezes! Your chain of repose
While murmuring mournfully, Lir's lonely daughter
Tells to the night star her tale of woes. (Moore, lyric sheet)

The picture that Joyce paints of Eveline from the outset can undoubtedly be construed as one of a "murmuring lonely daughter." She is the only girl in the family. The reader is introduced to her "watching evening invade the avenue," leaning her head against the window, telling "the night star her tale of woes." Eveline is awash in the turbulent tides of choice, which the "roar" of the Moyle represents. It is important to keep Joyce's aversion

to Catholic doctrine in mind, as well as his awareness of the role of the poet in Irish history, political and literary. M. J. C. Hodgart astutely points out Joyce's recognition of their contributions. He states that Joyce was very familiar with the ballads and folk verses of his country: "He valued this material not as a minor contribution to serious literature but as the natural expression of the Irish people."

Inasmuch as Joyce realized their importance he also realized the strong irony that could be conveyed by twisting the role of the Irish poet to one of intense self-scrutiny, and he does this by reversing the imagery and intention that Moore had when he altered "My Dear Eveleen." In "Eveline" the Moyle represents freedom, not imprisonment; heaven's "sweet bell" will not liberate, but serve as a call to stultifying obedience; and Joyce does not lament the predicament of his country and blame outside forces for its situation, but sees the paralytic paradigm of Ireland as being self-created. As Moore updated "My Dear Eveleen" to help him express his views on Irish life, so in turn has Joyce used Moore's version as a vehicle for a statement of his own.

When shall the swan, her death note singing
Sleep with wings in darkness furl'd?
When shall heav'n, its sweet bell ringing
Call my spirits from this stormy world? (Moore, lyric sheet)

In the last paragraph of the story, Joyce presents the animal side of Eveline to the reader, Eveline as swan: "She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal." This revelation allows us to strengthen the ties between "Silent, O Moyle," "My Dear Eveleen," and Celtic mythology. Eveline is Joyce's version of Fionnulla. In the end she will still sing "her death note" and will continue to sleep with her "wings in darkness furl'd," primarily because she waits upon the "sweet bell," which actually calls her *to* that "stormy world." Again Joyce turns Moore's imagery around, as well as the traditional image of the Irish poet.

Sadly' O Moyle, to thy winter-wave weeping,
Fate bids me languish long ages away;
Yet still in her darkness doth Erin lie sleeping
Still doth the pure light its dawning delay. (Moore, lyric sheet)

Here we find Moore making the shift from myth to political reality, associating the plight of Fionnulla with the dark, uphill struggle of sleeping Erin. Joyce wants us to view Eveline as a symbol of Ireland, as well as an example of the powerless, grey souls that dot the Dublin landscape of his short story collection. But instead of portraying them as seekers of emancipation through Christianity he ironically conveys an image of a country and its citizenry hemmed in by Catholic dogmatism to the point that their fates and lives are paralyzed. The second and third lines of this stanza comprehensively imbue the reader with the endless hopelessness that engulfs the existence of both Eveline and Eire. Joyce believes, however, that the decision to "languish long ages away" does not rest in the hands of fate, as Moore would have us believe, but rather lies in the inability of individuals and nations to have the strength of heart and conviction to set out on the course that leads to self-determination. It is this lack of resoluteness of

spirit that Joyce scrutinizes and, in the end, scorns. Ireland is a land that has now heard the "sweet bell" of Christianity. Eveline, a symbol of that green isle, still lies sleeping, and the dawn that should have granted her fulfillment and her country freedom still delays its "pure light" solely because Catholic doctrine stands between the luminescence and the receiver of its transforming rays.

When will the day-star, mildly springing
Warm our isle with peace and love?
When shall heav'n, its sweet bell ringing,
Call my spirits to the fields above? (Moore, lyric sheet)

In light of Joyce's own description of his tone in *Dubliners* as one of "scrupulous meanness," and the theme of paralysis that threads through all of the stories, it is easy to conclude that Joyce's answer to the two questions contained in this stanza would be "Never." This could not be more evident than when we look at the closing moments of "Eveline." The "mournful whistle" that blows into the mist (and here Joyce at least retains the tone of Moore's song) sets the stage for the ensuing drama. "All the seas of the world" tumble about Eveline's heart as Frank draws her toward the boat that will cross the forbidden waters of the Moyle. But it is a journey not meant to be, for the "bell" clangs "upon her heart": "No! No! No! It was impossible . . . Amid the seas she sent out a cry of anguish!— Eveline! Evvy!"

By contrasting the stories of Eveline and Fionnulla, Joyce seeks to inform us that we must accept life "as we see it before our eyes, men and women as we meet them in the real world, not as we apprehend them in the world of faery." He insinuates that real life in Ireland could not be further from the glory of myth and goes on to insist that the role of the Irish poet must now change; it is time to pick apart the myths and deal with reality. Joyce mocks the myth by altering the meaning of its imagery. The "bell" that clanged upon Eveline's heart signifies the presence of Catholic doctrine in her life. It does not induce joy and exultation but, on the contrary, dolor and burden, a reminder of the duties that Eveline subconsciously feels are hers. For Eveline, Christianity is an enchaining force. The calm and motionless lakes of Irish life recede from her when Frank takes her hand. The "roar" of the Moyle's "waters" becomes too much to bear; she realizes that escape is beyond her. In recognition of her predicament, she sends a most curious, animal "cry of anguish" out to the sea, curious because it is her own name! Paralysis has completely overtaken this tragic figure who yearns for fulfillment only to find herself unprepared for it. She cries out to her sister self, Fionnulla, to her mother country, where she leads a "life of commonplace sacrifices" that is destined to end "in final craziness." The ultimate irony is that the "sweet bell" calls Eveline to Christianity, but not to "heav'n," and in listening to it she denies her life the possibility of happiness.

The final lines of the story portray a girl totally shaken by the decision that she has made. Whitefaced, like a swan, she is rendered a "helpless animal," not destined for flight, keeping a good distance from the place where the calm lakes and rivers meet the "seas of the world."

Source: Joseph Florio, "Joyce's 'Eveline,'" in *Explicator*, Vol. 51, No. 3, Spring 1993, pp. 181-84.

Critical Essay #3

In the following essay excerpt, Ingersoll discusses the idea of Eveline embodying the "stigma of femininity."

James Joyce made the intent of his organization of *Dubliners* clear in his famous letter to Grant Richards:

My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis. I tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories are arranged in this order. (5 May 1906)

Joyce's classification of the quartet beginning with "Eveline" and ending with "The Boarding House" as stories of "adolescence" seems patently problematic. At 19, Eveline is technically "adolescent"; however, the central characters of the other three stories in this quartet—"After the Race," "Two Gallants," and "The Boarding House"— are hardly adolescents, unless we associate "adolescent" with "unsettled," or "unmarried." In the last of the quartet there is an adolescent, Polly Mooney, who is the same age as Eveline—19. In a group of stories whose characters' ages are tantalizingly withheld—how old *are* the boys of the first three stories, for example?—the link of Eveline's and Polly's ages cannot be mere coincidence. Instead, it offers an example of Joyce's subtle counterpointing of two women who bear the stigma of "femininity" in seemingly opposing yet perhaps similar fashions.

Before exploring that connection, it might be useful to construct a framework of recent observations about the fascinating relationship between the use of literary tropes and indications of gender. In *Reading Lacan* Jane Gallop explores the gender associations of the two key tropes in contemporary critical theory—metaphor and metonymy. She traces concern with these tropes back to the seminal work of Roman Jakobson, who saw connections between metaphor and poetry, especially the poetry of nineteenth-century Romantics and Symbolists, and connections between metonymy and the realist novel. Jacques Lacan followed Jakobson in connecting metonymy with realism and metaphor with poetry; he asserts: "In a general manner, metonymy animates this style of creation which we call, in opposition to symbolic style and poetic language, the socalled realist style." Gallop hypothesizes that metaphor and metonymy have gender implications as well; she writes:

Metaphor is patent; metonymy is latent. The latency, the hiddenness of metonymy, like that of the female genitalia, lends it an appearance of naturalness or passivity so that realism . . . appears either as the lack of tropes, or as somehow mysterious, the "dark continent" [Freud's term for female sexuality] of rhetoric.

Drawing on the work of the feminist psychoanalyst, Luce Irigaray, who correlates the privileging of metaphor over metonymy in contemporary psychoanalytic theory with a "phallocentric neglect of femininity," Gallop concludes:

The most extreme and explicit form of metaphor's privilege in Lacan's text inhabits its association with liberation, which contrasts with metonymy's link to servitude . . . metonymy's ellipsis can be considered "oppressive." . . . Metaphor, on the other hand, is "the crossing of the bar." The word for "crossing" —"franchissement"—has an older meaning of liberation from slavery, enfranchissement. The "bar" is an obstacle; metaphor unblocks us.

In this way Gallop extends Irigaray's suggestions of a connection between metaphor and the "phallocentric" on the one hand, and between metonymy and the "feminine" on the other, to imply that liberation, movement, and activity are associated with the "masculine," while oppression, servitude, and passivity are associated with the "feminine."

For such readers of Lacan as Barbara Johnson, Shoshana Felman, and Jerry Aline Flieger, the "feminine" represents something other than conventional sexual identity. In her defense of Lacan's reading of Poe's "Purloined Letter" against Jacques Derrida's accusations of misreading, Barbara Johnson, for example, posits femininity as an indication of *position*. Discussing the repeated expropriations of the letter, Johnson comments on how the letter "feminizes its purloiners by being successively purloined from them." In this context "femininity" cannot be attributed to just one sex, since it indicates a position of vulnerability for men as well as women.

One fascinating refinement of this effort at finding gender implications in Lacan's key tropes of metaphor and metonymy is offered by Naomi Schor in her article "Female Paranoia: The Case for Psychoanalytic Feminist Criticism." Following in the male footsteps of psychoanalytic theorists like Lacan and Derrida in reading Poe's "The Purloined Letter" as an allegory of the signifier, Schor argues that Derrida "inadvertently" points out what Lacan missed in his purloined reading of Marie Bonaparte's reading of the Poe story—the little brass knob "between the legs of the fireplace." That knob is the clitoris that male theorists tend to omit in their discourse. If, as Schor argues, "the clitoris is coextensive with the detail," may we not legitimately propose a "clitoral school of feminist theory" "identified by its practice of a hermeneutics focused on the detail, which is to say on those details of the female anatomy which have been generally ignored by male critics. . . . "

Taking off from Irigaray's identification of metonymy with "the rhetorical figure of vaginal theory," Schor would associate her "clitoral theory" with "synecdoche, the detail-figure." She suggests that it is no coincidence that in his reading of Jakobson's seminal study, "Two Types of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbance," Lacan erased synecdoche, which Jakobson had subordinated to metonymy. Schor concludes:

Clearly in Lacan's binary structural linguistics, with its emphasis on the perfect symmetry of metaphor and metonymy, there is no room for this third trope, just as in his rewriting of Bonaparte's analysis of Poe, there is no room for the knob-clitoris. Let us now praise synecdoche!

This framework offers a useful context for a discussion of the *Dubliners* stories as they situate themselves within the dynamic of the metaphoric and the metonymic. It is possible to read *Dubliners* as an expression of the binary oppositions of "symbolist poetry" and "realist prose," since the stories focus on both a "scrupulous meanness" in representing the details of everyday Dublin life and the transformative power of metaphor with which Joyce associated epiphany. It is more advantageous, however, to focus on the clear gender associations of these binary oppositions in the *Dubliners*, where the "feminine" is consistently associated with the constrained, restrained, and repressed position of those in the bourgeois "room," while the "masculine" is associated with the impulse to travel, to organize desire as a quest for a variously defined possession or goal.

In "Eveline" domesticity is clearly associated with details, with metonymy and synecdoche. The detail that will become Eveline's signature is the "odour of dusty cretonne," expressive of the eternal Hausfrau's world: Eveline cleans and cleans, but still there is the inevitable dust that settles in those curtains of cretonne, representing her marginal effort at gentility. This is the "home" she has decided to leave, a home that she associates with its objects: "She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from." Of the many "familiar objects" on which her gaze is fixed, two are foregrounded: the "yellowing photograph" of an absent priest whose name she was never able to identify and a "broken harmonium." In a home now merely a museum of memories for Eveline, it is details that have made her "tired." She has not only all those "familiar objects" to be dusted each week but also the Saturday night quarrels with her father over money, which "weary her unspeakably." She has been "feminized" by a concern for details, since she has become the keeper of the pitifully meager household funds.

Eveline, with her "black leather purse" that she held "tightly in her hands as she elbowed her way through the crowds," recalls the boy of "Araby," who carried the image of Mangan's sister "like a chalice safely through a throng of foes," perhaps on the very same Saturday nights. As a metonymy of her role as housekeeper for her family, the "purse" with its naturalistic function in the narrative is juxtaposed with the boy's metaphorical "chalice," neatly marking the tropological/gender differences in these two contiguously linked narratives. Accompanying his aunt, another woman responsible for the details of household maintenance, the boy of "Araby" may feel burdened by the "parcels" she asks him to carry; however, the loving burden he more genuinely bears is that iconic chalice of Mangan's sister's image. Eveline, on the other hand, has no avenue for such metaphoric transcendence of the marketplace. Instead of the boy's metaphoric "chalice," she clutches that metonymic detail of the "black leather purse," the incriminating stigma of her role as imprisoned housekeeper.

Frank, on the other hand, offers her the prospect of "travel." The narrative makes clear that the possible trip with him to Buenos Aires, where he claims to have a house, is a metaphor for a new realm of experience that his love promises to open for Eveline. In a statement suggesting how she herself might phrase it if this story were first-person narrative, we learn: "She was about to explore another life with Frank." In contrast to the

stasis of her life at home, or at "the Stores" where she is also confined, Frank offers Eveline the possibilities of travel in a variety of modes. He "took her to see *The Bohemian Girl*," just as he has taken her into the realms of desire, for she is "pleasantly confused"—a Joycean euphemism for "sexually aroused"—by the knowledge that others know they are courting, especially when he sings the song of the "lass that loves a sailor."

Most importantly, Frank takes Eveline with him imaginatively by telling her stories of his voyages. As though he fears that he will be the prisoner of the stereotyped sailor yarning a girl into his bed in every port, he offers her a profusion of details that neither her memory nor the narrator now particularizes —"the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services." However, she recalls his telling her of his first voyage on "a ship of the Allan line going out to Canada" and his earning a "pound a month" as a "deck boy." Furthermore, he tells her of having sailed through the "Straits of Magellan" and relates "stories of the terrible Patagonians." These details, which he may offer as a legitimation of his authenticity as a wooer—like some latter-day Othello courting Desdemona with his tales—are metonymies of her desire for his Frank-ness, for his being something more than the sailor of countless jokes with what Lily in "The Dead" will call "palaver."

Juxtaposed to Frank, whose company she has been forbidden after their courtship was discovered, is Eveline's father. Mr. Hill, in contrast to Frank's associations of menace, offers the comfort and security of the familiar. Indeed, now that he is growing old and perhaps less likely to have the strength to abuse her, as he did her mother, he seems to be moving in her consciousness toward another of those "familiar objects" on which the dust will soon be settling in her domestic prison. As the time approaches when she must leave to keep her appointment with Frank, she continues to sit with two letters in her lap —one to her brother Harry, who tends the houses of his Lord, and the other to her father. Eveline recalls details from her life with her father, just as she has recalled similar ones from her new relationship with Frank: the time her father made her toast when she was ill and read her a "ghost story," and the family picnic to Howth when he put on "her mother's bonnet to make the children laugh." Through the letters she has written and the "ghost story" that her father appropriately has read to her, Eveline is also implicated in textuality. However, she is a prisoner of "prose," the servant of metonymy, and thus unable finally to travel, to move from the house of her father.

Even the detail of the returning Italian organgrinder, whom Eveline associates with her mother's martyrdom and who seems to prophesy similar prospects for her own future, is insufficient to save her. The last paragraph of the major section of the story begins: "She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror," and the first paragraph of the last section following a narrative strategy that seems like an extended ellipsis begins: "She stood among the swaying crowd in the station. . . ." However, the reader has no way of ascertaining that Eveline has actually moved to the "North Wall," except in projecting herself forward to that scene of departure. Whether she stands on the quay being "shouted at" to come aboard or stands instead in her room fantasizing her inability to move forward in answer to his cry of desire is not important finally. What is important is the closing image of Eveline as one immobilized, one whose hands are frozen to the

railing, one who loses humanness itself: "She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition."

Central to this last scene is the iron railing "gripped" and "clutched" by Eveline's terrified hands. If the Joycean epiphany allows the subject an encounter with the metaphoric, or the power of movement across the bar, Eveline is a subject as incapable of the epiphanic experience as is conceivable. Offered the possibility of crossing that bar into the metaphoric, she cannot move or indeed even speak. All she can know in the end is the "nothing" to which "all the seas of the world" seem to be opening her up. More graphically than any of the Dubliners to follow, Eveline is the ultimate "feminized" subject. Perhaps because she has been lent for a time a prospect of enfranchisement—whether or not Frank was "frank" is a moot point—Eveline comes to embody the essence of the "feminine" in patriarchy. She has seen the possibility of "travel," but she evades the opportunity of "travel" because she can associate it with only the very vulnerability and loss to which, in the end, she ironically commits herself. Even if she never leaves her room at the end of the story—indeed *especially* if she does not—she has passed a life sentence on herself as a "housekeeper," a servant of details. . . .

Source: Earl G. Ingersoll, "The Stigma of Femininity in James Joyce's 'Eveline' and 'The Boarding House,'" in *Studies in Short Fiction*, Vol. 30, No. 4, Fall 1993, pp. 501-10.

Critical Essay #4

In the following essay, Beck focuses on Eveline's "death of the heart" as being symbolic of the greater theme of Ireland's paralysis and "deadening influence" in Dubliners.

In the story "Eveline" a far journey is projected, but the timid protagonist, paralyzed by ambivalence at the moment of embarking from Dublin's North Wall, never sets out. In the three preceding stories lesser journeys have been proposed, from their adjacent locales in one region of North Dublin, and all with a crossing of the river Liffey to the south. ("The Sisters" locates the priest's house in Great Britain Street, now Parnell Street; "Araby" has its base in North Richmond Street; presumably the boys of "An Encounter" live in the same area, since they meet at the Canal Bridge, proceed to the North Wall, and then cross the river.) Father Flynn had "had his mind set on" a drive down to Irishtown—the poor region just south of Ringsend, adjacent to the harbor—"to see the old house again" where he and his sisters had been Born, and the unfulfilled wish takes on natural pathos in Eliza's mention of it after his death. The boys of "An Encounter" did ferry across the Liffey but did not make it to their goal, the Pigeon House. He of "Araby" not only crossed "the twinkling river" by train, but got to the bazaar, yet to be the more frustrated by coming so close but failing to secure a gift for the girl. Eveline's crisis, more simply narrated, is most severe. On her proposed journey to Buenos Aires she gets only as far as the dock, and while the boy of "Araby" feels an "anguish" that makes his eyes burn, Eveline's mental "Anguish" causes her to cry out, and then reduces her to a state of shock.

This third-person story is continuously sustained in the brooding consciousness of its main character. Of its seven pages, almost six are given over to her eddying recollections as she sits by the window at dusk, and her only overt act there is finally to stand up, with impulse to escape. The last page shows her at the North Wall but unable to go up the gangplank to the ship that would carry her away with her lover. This scene too is realized in her consciousness as she subsides through painfully conflicting emotions into a rigidity that marks the numbing of feeling. At the last it is as if not only self-possession but self-awareness have been drained from her; here the point of view changes from her anguish to the climactically worded image of what Frank saw as he called in vain for her to follow— "She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition."

Who and what is Eveline that her life, in this most vital sense, should be ending before she is twenty? She is in one way a widely representative figure, in her presumable fate as one of that underprivileged and put-upon minority, the spinsters for whom love's proper tide is reversed and chilled into filial dutifulness, and whose care is required for the offspring of others' passion. More particularly, though, this is an Irish story; most pointedly it is Joyce's Dublin with its special injunctions and encirclements that holds Eveline and will not let her go. Religion is part of it, inculcating the pious obligations of family life, no matter how harsh its demands. On the wall is "a coloured print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque"—she who will bless a home where her picture is exhibited—and at the dock Eveline's last act before she lapses into a fixed

inaction is to murmur prayers "to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty." The neediness that stalks so many of Joyce's Dubliners is in this story too. "She always gave her entire wages—seven shillings" to the family's support. Family demands in addition almost the whole of her life. Eveline's promise to her dying mother has left the nineteen-year-old girl responsible for two younger children, and subject to a domineering father.

This parental figure, from Joyce's view, is authentic Dubliner. Given to drink, he "was usually fairly bad on Saturday night." Then he would be capriciously tyrannical, first refusing money for the household and finally giving it but blaming Eveline for the delay in buying Sunday's dinner. When as children she and her older brothers had played in the adjoining field, their father "used often to hunt them in . . . with his blackthorn stick," and "he used to go for Harry and Ernest." Now Ernest is dead and Harry, "in the church decorating business," is away from home, and there is no one to protect her from this man who had treated her mother badly and whose threats have "given her the palpitations." Like most autocrats, he is insular, damning the Italian organ grinders for "coming over here," and he plays the proper heavy father, forbidding his daughter "to have anything to say" to that sailor chap, Frank.

Thinking of herself as "over nineteen," Eveline looks back to what in her wearisome life seems "a long time ago," before houses were built on the field where she and other children had played, and before those playmates had died or moved away. Then "they seemed to have been rather happy," she recalls. This moderate memory, centers on two things—"Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive." Since then Eveline has gone to work in the Stores, to bring back all her wage for the family's support, while it also devolved upon her to see that "the two young children . . . went to school regularly and got their meals regularly." She knows it to be "hard work—a hard life," yet habit has so captured her that "now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life." At an enervated pause there by the window in the little brown house, looking about the room, she is reminded chiefly of dutiful toil, regarding familiar objects as things she "had dusted once a week for so many years." It is with such and like details that Joyce has gone on to substantiate the story's remarkable opening paragraph of three sentences:

She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired.

The word "invade," especially connoting the dusk, suggests a suspended mood without stressing it; "was leaned" conveys her passivity, and that effect is sustained by the parallel verb structure of "in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne." The rhythms of the first two sentences make way for the epitomizing of her lassitude in the simple brevity of the third.

Eveline's fatigue was more than physical; it was a dreadful weariness of spirit as she approached the verge of impasse. With the odor of dust in her nostrils and with bits of the distant and nearer past alternating in her mind, she was trying "to weigh each side

of the question" of leaving her home and family. Against all her hardships she could find almost nothing to persuade her to stay. She made herself recall that sometimes her father "could be very nice." Not long before, when she was ill, he had read her a ghost story and made toast for her; but for more on that positive side she must go back to once when her mother was alive and they went to picnic on the Hill of Howth (her widest excursion, probably, no further than those few miles to the northern tip of Dublin harbor) and the father had donned the mother's bonnet to make the children laugh. There is little enough of past felicity to summon up in the room with the broken harmonium and the yellowing photograph of a priest notable for having gone to Melbourne. Of only one thing is she certain—"She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores," where her superior is inclined to be severe. Eveline can explicitly reject the impersonal claims of a job, but obligation to family is not to be put aside without painful questioning.

Circumscribed by harsh authority and onerous necessity, in meekly complying she has developed timidity as a fixed characteristic, much like others among Joyce's Dubliners, such as Little Chandler, Maria, Jimmy Doyle, and Gabriel Conroy in their variously diffident ways. But Eveline is not simply timid; she is racked by inner conflict, finally to the point of distraction. Her father's inconsiderateness and the hardness of her laborious life are not, however, primary factors in this ambivalence. Its poles are a young girl's desire for the assurances of love with the security of marriage and, on the other hand, her submission under the weight of a promise made on "the last night of her mother's illness" that she would "keep the home together as long as she could." Furthermore, in her very remembrance of that pledge she is of two minds.

While she continued to sit by the window, though "her time was running out," still leaning her head against the dust-impregnated curtain, a street organ was playing outside, sounding from the world beyond Dublin "a melancholy air of Italy," just as on the night of her mother's death. Under music's spur to association she recalls not only her promise but her mother's "life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness," and with this "pitiful vision" she hears again her mother's insistent cry, "Derevaun Seraun!" The words constitute a puzzle. To an inquiry one Irish scholar said that whatever this is, it isn't Gaelic. Another informally put it that it sounds something like what might mean "one end . . . bitterness" or, more closely, "end of riches . . . bitterness." Tindall, in *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce*, reports that Patrick Henchy of the National Library in Dublin "thinks this mad and puzzling ejaculation corrupt Gaelic for 'the end of pleasure is pain.'" Marvin Magalaner writes that the words "seem to be crazed ravings, the meaning of which I have been unable to determine." The phrase doubtless is to be read as unintelligible to Eveline, but that would have made it the more disturbing to her, and whatever the senselessness, the tone of despair would have been clear. Thus the memory triggered by the street organ's air involves both the solemn promise her mother had extracted from Eveline and the inference that if the promise is kept, she like her mother will be misused and deprived, and perhaps even driven to distraction. And the latter fear, for the moment, tips the scale in this ambivalence. In "a sudden impulse of terror" Eveline stands up, knowing she "must escape!"

She believes too that a way to life and rightful happiness is open—"Frank would save her." He is Irish, but is in Dublin "just for a holiday" in "the old country," from which he

had shipped out as a deck boy, to Canada; since then he has seen the world and reports himself "fallen on his feet" in Buenos Aires, where a "home" awaits Eveline if she will go with him. This bronze-faced sailor had been attentive, he would meet her outside the Stores every evening to see her home, and he took her to *The Bohemian Girl*. At first for her there was the excitement of having "a fellow," and "then she had begun to like him." Primarily, though, he is a refuge and her salvation. She believes he "would give her life, perhaps love, too" but certainly "would . . . fold her in his arms . . . would save her."

Such details allow a supposition that Eveline's father might not have been all wrong in forbidding her to see Frank, though the reasons were mean—a stereotyped distrust of "sailor chaps" and an unrelenting claim upon his domestic drudge. As Eveline sees Frank, he is not only spirited but "very kind, manly, open-hearted." Yet it is not quite as one reader puts it: "Marriage and flight across the sea promise life and 'perhaps love too.'" For her to be a bride before the flight would require, if not a secret marriage in Dublin, an immediate ceremony in the captain's cabin—a most unlikely thing in the Catholic context of this story, and one which, had it been pending, surely would have entered into Eveline's reverie. Instead this inexperienced nineteen-yearold about to "run away with a fellow" thinks simply that she "was to go away with him by the night-boat to be his wife" and believes that "tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres." However, "the nightboat" from the North Wall is probably the regular one to Liverpool, and while passengers might sail to Buenos Aires from there, Liverpool could be the sordid end of this journey for Eveline; or she could reach South America still unmarried and find Frank's promises false.

Joyce has given no further or more substantial grounds for suspecting Frank besides these slight implications in the details and phrasing. If the inference is made, it merely stresses the pathos of Eveline's situation; and to leave it at that would accord with the narrative's tone and intent. For Frank to have given Eveline more precise assurance or for the hint of possible betrayal to have been stronger would have made it another story, or an infringement upon the integrity of this one. It is one of its many delicate balancings, both in Eveline's mind and in the total effect itself, that Joyce makes it a matter of "perhaps love, too" but allows some uncertainty as to just what kind of escape is open to Eveline. There is a great deal of such selective economy and particular focusing in all the *Dubliners* stories, and in this technique they are still quite modern, sixty years after their composition. Indeed, in comparison it is Joyce's later and more experimental works that may seem "dated" by uniqueness and by a fixity less within the literary period than in the artist's own history.

More to the main point in "Eveline" is the nature of her indecision and her eventual paralysis. This intimidated girl perceives in sailor Frank's vitality and amiability something more pleasing and reassuring than anything in the Dublin life she has known, and it is not implied that she doubts him. What she doubts is herself. Too many burdens and restrictions have conditioned her to abandon hope and merely endure, with those bare consolations she weighs as "shelter and food" and "those whom she had known all her life about her." Ellmann reports, on the word of Joyce's sister, Mrs. Mary Monaghan, that an Eveline of North Richmond Street "did fall in love with a sailor" but "settled down

with him in Dublin and bore him a great many children." Joyce did not locate the story on that street or any other but only in a neighborhood where an adjacent field had made a place for the children to play until "a man from Belfast"—a foreign invader of a sort—"built houses in it." Apparently for this story all Joyce borrowed from North Richmond Street was a first name for a Dublin instance of early inescapable stunting, this downtrodden young woman who in her twentieth year already is girded about narrowly by what she "had known all her life." To that dead center she returns from her fluttering endeavor to escape, and there she is left, fixed in a confinement as strict as any in Joyce's several illustrations of Dublin's rigorous effect.

As Tindall has put it of this story, "The end is not a coming of awareness but an animal experience of inability." Thereby "Eveline" sounds a somewhat different note from the three tales preceding it. Derived from Joyce's boyhood and told retrospectively in first person, those all show a "coming of awareness," though with some differences. In the first two the boy knows a liberation—in "The Sisters" from clerical and social domination into intellectual detachment, and in "An Encounter" from the contagious staining of a sense for adventure into a real knowledge of honest comradeship. Something positive is thus achieved in both stories, and they imply that where limitations are incidental and particular they may be evaded or transcended. "Araby," based more deeply on universals in addition to the presence of obstructive environmental factors, suggests that ultimately limitation inheres in the tearful nature of things, discovered between the spirit's inordinate projections and reality's unaccommodating welter. "Eveline" merges such elements, in a most economical and pointed story, toward a most acute crisis. The barely more than one page which is the simple concluding scene sketches with urgent directness her descent through conflicting emotions into an almost cataleptic state, with her hands clutching the iron railing in something like a death grip.

What precipitated this ultimate seizure as Frank tried to draw her with him was the indefinable but terrifying sense that "all the seas of the world" in its strange far regions and ways are only an extension of what she already knows—the multiplicity of the disparate and unamenable which has brought her to a neurotic fatigue beyond any remedy but one, apathy. When she sends her "cry of anguish" from "amid the seas," these are real depths; nor is she out of them. Compared to the anguished boy in "Araby" she is more pathetic, and a much grimmer example of frustration, since her whole life has already fallen into so harshly restrictive a mold. The boy's grief is sharp but not paralyzing; he has a lively anger to arm him for the rebellion latent in his nature; the environmental pressures upon him are less direct and insistent; and he has somewhat more time, since his crisis has come earlier; and as a manchild he has more scope. His frustration is of a kind many have suffered in early adolescence and recovered from; Eveline's moment at the North Wall is crucial, with implication of lasting defeat. Passing beyond stories based in his own childhood, Joyce defined in Eveline not only a characteristically limited Dublin life but traced psychologically the onset of impasse, through conflict to submission, and from the unrest of a divided mind to the barren refuge of inaction.

Eveline's is a simple story, simply told, but it is not slight, nor in any sense skimped. The vividly dramatic closing scene can be brief because it is well based. The preceding

pages, concerning Eveline as she muses by the window with the farewell letters to father and brother in her lap, are a masterful narrative deployment to bring a whole life into plain view, and by its own light. The movement is that of casual association, suggesting by its shifts the recurrent alternations in Eveline's ambivalent mood. There are brief passages of chronologically ordered detail, but the total order is that of discursive mental process, for realistic characterization and for thematic penetration. Eveline remembers childhood, then looks at this room now, then weighs the question of leaving home, but from that prospect she returns to her past, caught in an eddy of inconclusive reconsideration. In thinking of what they would say at the Stores, where she works, that more immediate situation led her to suppose "it would not be like that" when she was married—"People would treat her with respect then." The next sentence —"She would not be treated as her mother had been"— carries her back to her father's bullying, but as she thinks of hardships she is about to escape, the habitual makes its claim, for "now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life," and the imminence of a decisive break wakens timidity and indecision, sounding again the fatal note of ambivalence. Still she projects "another life" which she "was about to explore" and that returns her to her first meeting with Frank, his continuing attentions, and intimations of the great world his tales brought her; then her mind swings to her father's opposition to the sailor chap, and to her farewell letters in her lap for father and brother, and so to her father's increasing age and dependence, and thus to remembrance that sometimes "he could be very nice," as when "not long before" he had been considerate of her in her illness or when, much longer before, he had been playful at their picnic on the Hill of Howth.

This is the point at which her repetitious medley of recollections is broken into by the streetorgan music with its reminder of her mother's death; hence Eveline's wrench, from her remembered promise "to keep the home together as long as she could" to an impulse to escape that brings her to her feet. Yet while her musings have been freely associative and inconclusive, the narrative itself has not lapsed into rambling. The details of Eveline's history accumulate into shape and implication as unobtrusively yet solidly as the silting that shallows a river and underlies its meanderings. Unobtrusive yet crescive as thematic effect is the recurrent sway of Eveline's wavering regard. This prepares so well for the climax that Joyce can move into it directly, to show the pendulum finally stilled at dead center. It is not told what steps Eveline took after her standing up, "in a sudden impulse of terror" with intent to escape her present life, and until she stood in "the swaying crowd" at the North Wall at sailing time. The ellipsis is allowable, for evidently the impulse had sufficed to carry her straight on thus far, and her real story is not of direct progress but of haltings and stalemate.

Earlier in the evening, though she was aware that "her time was running out," Eveline had "continued to sit by the window"; now time has run out, she is at the point of embarcation, physically and psychologically. It is now that "a bell clanged upon her heart" as she feels herself about to be engulfed in "all the seas of the world." Now Frank, who she had thought "would save her," appears as one about to draw her into those seas and "drown her." This cannot be taken to mean she suspects him of bad faith. The story has given no hint that she had ever doubted him, and if she had, the probable reaction would have differed from that which follows, her freezing into a

complete negation and unresponsiveness, to avoid taking the finally decisive step. This is marked by the fact that here her consciousness fails as the medium of the narrative. The rest beyond her silence can be said, however, in one paragraph of four short sentences. No longer seeing, she is seen in a helpless isolate animal passivity, with eyes that give her lover no sign, not even of "recognition."

Of all the traumatic experiences suffered by Joyce's Dubliners, this is the worst. Herself, too severely beset, has lost the sense of self with loss of volition. The boy of "Araby" at least can say "I saw myself," though only as "a creature driven and derided by vanity." Old Father Flynn in the double darkness of his confession-box was at least "wideawake and laughing-like to himself." And even Mr. James Duffy's painful case of isolation is of another order, since as he "gnawed the rectitude of his life" he knows his own coldly wilful withdrawals are to blame for his finally feeling "outcast from life's feast." For Eveline the possibility of "life, perhaps love, too" has been eroded by an exacting sense of obligation. Self-sacrifice, inculcated as filial regard, has undone her even more severely than selfishness did for Mr. Duffy. At the quayside, glimpsing "the black mass of the boat" and hearing its "long mournful whistle into the mist," she prayerfully centers her mind on "what was her duty." This for her is the primary dilemma, of which her timidity is the effect not cause; she shows how frustration can produce indecisiveness. She proves too how the subservient finally have no point of reference except the authority which has dominated them; evil becomes what little good is left them, and their only pleasure, if any, would be a martyr's masochism. Frank held her hand and "she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again," but she scarcely heard these promises of liberation, and she "answered nothing," meanwhile silently imploring "God" to "show her" the clear path of "her duty." Hitherto basically guided by her promise to her dying mother, and conscious that her father, aging of late, "would miss her," now while her urgent lover is holding her hand what she thinks of is not love, even for him, but of something owed here too—"Could she still draw back after all he had done for her?"

Thus her life has come at last to nothing but a stark dilemma of duties, and either way will be a self-reductive subordination. Yet not to choose is to remain divided, which in the end is self-annihilating. So her final cry of "anguish" is not to Frank or to mother or father or God; if anything more than the scream of a trapped animal, it is to her dying identity amid those "seas of the world" that tumble in all their smothering contrariety "about her heart." She is paying an ultimate price, in unresolved paralyzing ambivalence, as that may be induced by too severe limitations and exactions. Concerning Eveline it has been observed by Hugh Kenner that "she is not a protagonist . . . but a mirror," placed in a "masculine world (Dublin)" which has "given" what her mind must "feed on." It is a nice point, and the more so if it be allowed that Dublin as a masculine world includes the Church's authoritarian impact, especially on family life. It is also true that in some degree all of Joyce's Dubliners are pseudo-protagonists, in subjection to an environment insular, strict, and dominant. There is neither hero nor heroine among them, but whether or not they may be called "protagonists" they are actors; and all spirits, playing out illustratively Joyce's critical, melancholy view of life in Dublin, where degrees of paralysis are traceable to ambivalence more or less induced by various repressions upon the vulnerable.

The story does not tell whether Eveline's frenzied grip on the iron railing was held until the boat put off, or whether even then she had to be torn away from her clutch on an inanimate stability. If at the very best she could have found her way back to dutiful routines as housekeeper and store clerk, would other Dubliners (themselves relatively passive in a fatalistic acceptance) have seen anything about her "that made them think that there was something gone wrong," as was so mildly observed of Father Flynn? Joyce the artist, who has brought his account to a full stop with terrifying impact, states no prognosis of Eveline's case, but there is dark implication in the descending order of those closing words fixing her at that moment as one in whose eyes is "no sign of love or farewell or recognition." Had love's promise been strong enough and she not too enervated to answer to it, she would have followed Frank up the gangplank to at least something more than paralysis. Had she been capable of an unenforced, self-expressive decision not to go, at least she could have called farewell to the person who had persuaded her this far. The absence of recognition is the death of the heart.

And it is read as such through the eyes of one about to depart from Dublin. "Eveline," the second of Joyce's stories to be published, appeared in the *Irish Homestead* on September 10, 1904, and on October 8 Joyce sailed from the North Wall with Nora Barnacle, on a questing that was also in flight from deadening influence. Degrees of approach to the heart's death by various Dubliners are to be seen and shown by Joyce in the subsequent stories. In placing "Eveline" at their head, as example of the endemic Dublin disease in a classic, extreme, and in one sense fatal form, Joyce prepares for recognition of its less violent but at least partially disabling instances. Besides that, "Eveline" is a high particu lar artistic achievement of controlled intensity, a clearly implicative document in the onset of apathy, and a tragedy in the modern mode, brimming with the pathos of a little person's defeat under the pressures of an inimical order.

Source: Warren Beck, "'Eveline,"' in *Joyce's "Dubliners": Substance, Vision, and Art*, Duke University Press, 1969, pp. 110-22.

Topics for Further Study

Many critics and readers wonder what would have happened had Eveline left Dublin with her lover. What is the significance of the destination of Buenos Aires in the story? Research the history of Argentina to discover what life might have been like in Buenos Aires for an Irish immigrant sailor and his wife. Were the economic and social conditions for Catholics better than they were in Dublin?

Read Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1920). How do you think Woolf's vision of a young woman's awakening differs from that of Joyce? Do you think Eveline would have undergone a similar fate to Rachel had she left with Frank for South America? Woolf and Joyce are both considered major modernist writers; what do their debut works have in common?

Most critics now consider *Dubliners* a unified work of fiction. Read the other stories in the volume. How does "Eveline" fit into Joyce's greater scheme? Does it express or develop a certain theme common to the surrounding stories? Is it an extreme story, or does it fit subtly into the whole? Read a variety of critical essays proposing theories about *Dubliners* in order to formulate your answer.

Research Irish history by examining books such as R. F. Foster's *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972*. What position does Joyce's text seem to take on the turbulent politics of the time? What kind of Dubliners would have read and enjoyed "Eveline?"

What do you think is the key to Joyce's status as perhaps the chief writer in changing literary style during the modernist era? Start by examining some basic techniques, like symbolism. Joyce was extremely well versed in both Christianity and mythology, and there are symbols from both of these in "Eveline." Explore the symbolism in the story and discuss how it relates to the meaning.

Compare and Contrast

1900: Dublin is second to Belfast and is firmly under English rule with Catholics in an oppressed majority.

Today: Dublin is the capital of independent Ireland, non-inclusive of Belfast and the northern counties that remain part of the United Kingdom.

1900: Having endured a century of economic decline, Dublin's unemployment is massive and prospects are bleak. Although many Protestants enjoy relative prosperity, the Catholic majority in the city are poor and live in overcrowded districts, and the city has an extremely high infant mortality rate.

Today: Ireland has the fastest growing economy in Western Europe and is held as a worldwide model for dramatically improved social conditions. Dublin is at the center of it all, with a high level of education and job prospects that have attracted a large immigrant population.

1900: Ireland has a very religious culture. Christian Christian values are pervasive in legal and social norms, although the population is divided between Catholic and Protestant interpretations of correct belief and practice.

Today: Christian influence has somewhat declined. Abortion is still illegal in Ireland, but the government finally legalized divorce in 1996. Church attendance and membership has dropped dramatically in the last decade, and Ireland's large foreign community has brought an influx of new religions.

1900: English publishers were liable to legal penalty if they allowed works considered offensive or immoral to be published. Joyce's Ulysses is banned in the United States until 1933 when the court declared it not obscene.

Today: Although the Irish and British governments infrequently ban books outright, each government has provisions similar to the telecommunications bill passed by the United States Congress in 1996 that renders it illegal to make "indecent" material generally available.

What Do I Read Next?

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Joyce's autobiographical first novel, was serialized between 1914 and 1915 in Ezra Pound's magazine *Egoist*. One of the most influential early modernist works, the novel took much critical attention away from *Dubliners* because of its radical innovations in form, and it is perhaps more accessible than Joyce's famous *Ulysses.*

Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts*, a domestic drama in which an ill young man returns to his mother's home and begins to uncover some of their dark family history, was very influential over Joyce's efforts to forge a new literary style. Written in 1881, *Ghosts* is a landmark in modern literature.

Virginia Woolf's first novel *The Voyage Out*, published in 1915 but revised and republished in 1920, is the story of a young woman's emigration from England to South America and her confrontation with a patriarchal society. It shares many stylistic similarities with *Dubliners*, and its plot resonates strongly with that of "Eveline."

Edited by T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, *The Course of Irish History* (2002) offers a variety of essays by prominent historians on each major period of Irish history, evoking a broad understanding of Ireland's turbulent politics and social conditions.

In Our Time, Ernest Hemingway's debut collection of short stories, published in 1925, employs a style very distinct from that of Joyce and reveals some of the further innovations in fiction prevalent when literary modernism was at its height.

Further Study

Ellman, Richard, *James Joyce*, Oxford University Press, 1983.

Originally published in 1959, Ellman's biography of Joyce remains the definitive insight into the life of the writer. It includes anecdotes about Joyce's notorious drinking bouts and selections from his letters.

Foster, R. F., *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972*, Penguin Books, 1990.

Foster's book provides an excellent survey of Irish history since the seventeenth century, detailing the background and key figures of Irish independence.

Garrett, Peter K., ed., *Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Dubliners": A Collection of Critical Essays*, Prentice Hall, 1968.

This thorough collection of analytical essays is helpful for further study on Dubliners.

Joyce, James, *James Joyce's "Dubliners": An Illustrated Edition with Annotations*, edited by Bernard McGinley and John W. Jackson, St. Martin's Press, 1993.

With vivid illustrations and helpful notes, this edition of *Dubliners* contains a useful version of "Eveline."

Mosher, Harold F., ed., *ReJoycing: New Readings of "Dubliners,"* University Press of Kentucky, 1998.

The collection of critical essays in this book, by a variety of key Joyce scholars and from a number of different schools of thought, are accessible for readers of any background.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Short Stories for Students (SSfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, SSfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of SSfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of SSfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in SSfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by SSfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

SSfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Short Stories for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Short Stories for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Short Stories for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from SSfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from SSfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Short Stories for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Short Stories for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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