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The Significance of Place in James Joyce's 'Dubliners'

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

In this dissertation I discuss the theme of space representation in James Joyce's collection of short stories *Dubliners* (1914), which offers a bleak yet multifaceted picture of life in turn-of-the-century Dublin. Throughout these stories Joyce employs a multitude of literary techniques, including vivid descriptions of physical spaces, both public and private, which function as a mean of exploring the characters' psychological and emotional state. They reflect the nuanced and often complex relationship between individuals and their surrounding environment, conveying the protagonists' longing for escape and self-fulfilment in a city affected by paralysis, the metaphorical disease Joyce diagnoses his country with.

Chapter 1 will illustrate some useful tools in the analysis of space representation in literature such as the influence of phenomenological philosophy on the Spatial Turn, a movement within social sciences that prompted scholars to analyse space representation with a focus on individual consciousness and experience rather than physical tangible objects. This approach, which rose to popularity in the 1970s, defines space as a by-product of human interaction with their surroundings, influenced by human intention and characterised by a complex system of meanings and emotional values. The concepts of '*genius loci*' and 'sense of place', representing a subjective understanding of place which cannot be measured solely by its physical or objective qualities but rather by the meanings and association attached to that particular environment, will offer a framework for understanding the experience of flânerie. The flâneur, the emblematic figure of the urban wanderer, acts as a detached observer of the urban environment, seeking to experience marginal life practices and capture the *genius loci* of the urban milieu. The defining characteristic of the flaneur and his intrinsic connectedness to the urban environment will be discussed, as well as the relationship between flânerie and gender, focusing on the condition of women within the urban setting and the stereotypes effecting their ability to engage in acts of authentic flânerie. The last concept to be discussed in this chapter will be the theory of the literary chronotope promoted by Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin which is fundamental to the understanding of the relationship between time and space in a variety of literary works.

Chapter 2 attempts to describe, without necessarily determining an unambiguous definition, Modernity and Modernism. My aim is to emphasize the ambiguity of

Modernity as a historical period which is on one hand, characterized by technological advancement, industrialization, urbanization, and secularization, while on the other denoting a time of crisis, marked by a sense of disillusionment and uncertainty, leading to the overturning of pre-existing values and morals. This chapter examines the Modes of Modernism, which include a tendency towards anti-historicism, understood as a philosophical position that truth is neither evolutionary nor progressive and can thus be described independently of its historical and social context. Modernist art and literature favoured complexity and difficulty rather than offering a linear and logical description of the world. In an attempt to better define it, I compare Modernism to Realism: where the latter attempts to provide a precise and transparent account of society through highly descriptive prose forms such as journalism and historical accounts, the former is characterized by a focus on the subjective experience of the individual, rather than an objective depiction of reality. The city, and specifically the modernist experience of such space, will be at the centre of this analysis as it constitutes one of the main themes in James Joyce's *Dubliners* as well as modernist literature at large. Often depicted through elements of fragmentation, dislocation, and alienation, modernist writers were drawn to the energy and excitement of the city and used it as a starting point for exploring new literary techniques and ideas. In this context, the flâneur represents a unique perspective on the city and its inhabitants, emphasizing the act of observation and contemplation, and exploring the complexities and contradictions of modern life. In order to better contextualize the choice of the short story genre in *Dubliners*, the third part of this chapter will discuss the emergence and development of the Modernist short story genre in the twentieth century, focusing on its spatial elements. The rise of literacy in the nineteenth century led to an expansion of the reading public, which initially favoured serialized fiction. However, as the demand for serialized fiction decreased, Modernist writers turned to the short story form as a means of experimentation with narrative technique, style, and theme. The Modernist short story is presented as a spatial genre in which writers employ spatial metaphors to create visual and evocative landscapes. Sexuality is a prominent theme, with spatial symbolism used to comment on human desire and eroticism. The focus will then shift to Ireland in particular, where the Irish Literary Revival, a movement focused on revitalizing Irish heritage, played a significant role in the development of the Modernist short story genre in Ireland, where the decline of Irish as a language and

literary tradition had been exacerbated by historical events such as the Great Famine and land ownership policies.

Chapter 3 features a more in-depth analysis of Joyce's work. Starting from a general overview of the artist's early years and writings, I will then move on to discuss the genesis of *Dubliners* in terms of its relation to the *Irish Homestead,* a weekly publication founded in 1895 by Horace Plunkett which covered a range of topics related to agriculture, rural life and social issues of the time. I then discuss the basic structure of this literary work, focusing on why the author chose to divide it into four sections, each dedicated to a particular period in life and how this establishes *Dubliners* as a sort of diagnosis for Joyce's suffering homeland. Paralysis, the metaphorical disease affecting Ireland is defined and contextualized in Joyce's works as one of the most prominent overarching themes of the collection. The analysis of spatial metaphors and space representation in *Dubliners* will be carried out through the reading of five stories. *An Encounter* follows an unnamed boy's journey on the outskirts of Dublin, prompting reflection on the theme of escape from the city. *Two Gallants* explores the theme of flânerie and masculinity through the character of Lenehan, who represents the urban flâneur. *Eveline* and *A Little Cloud* both provide a good example for exploring the theme of female exclusion from life in the city and highlight the significance of private spaces in Joyce's narratives, focusing on the differences between male and female characters in their experience of the living space. Finally, *The Dead* explores the significance of framed pictures as a chronotopic element, binding together aspects of time and space.

In conclusion, in this dissertation, I attempt to first lay out a comprehensive framework for analysing James Joyce's *Dubliners* by first delving into the theoretical tools that support my analysis, including phenomenological philosophy, the figure of the flâneur, and theory of the literary chronotope. Next, I discuss the collection's relationship with the artistic, social and political issues of the time by laying out the main features of modernism and briefly discussing the rise in popularity of the short story genre in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Finally, I turn to a close analysis of spatial representation in five of the stories in the *Dubliners* tales: *An Encounter*, *Eveline*, *Two Gallants*, *A Little Cloud*, and *The Dead*. In these stories, I explore the ways in which Joyce masterfully employs spatial description to convey his characters' psychological and emotional states, as well as comment on the condition of Ireland at the time. By examining

these stories in detail, I hope to uncover the intricate web of meanings and themes that Joyce weaves throughout *Dubliners*, shedding new light on the significance of place in this iconic work of Modernist literature.

CHAPTER 1

The Experience of Place: interpreting the environment

1.1 Phenomenology and Sense of Place

In the past decades, scholars have been discussing the nature of geography, whether it should be regarded as a purely quantitative science or as a branch of humanities. Two opposing approaches have emerged regarding the study of this subject: the nomothetic approach and the idiographic approach. The first, coming from the Greek word *nomos* meaning 'law', indicates a more quantitative approach to space and spatiality which focuses on identifying significant patterns through the examination of spatial models and quantitative studies; the latter, coming from the Greek word *idios*, meaning 'one's own', 'private', indicates an interest in the relationship that exists between the individual and space. Such research is aimed at identifying which characteristics define a place's uniqueness and character.

The 1950s and 60s are marked by a raise in popularity of the nomothetic approach: geography is viewed as essentially *spatial science*, concerned with the distribution of space and the observation of how physical, economic, and social factors interact within one particular region. This quantitative revolution within the study of geography has at its core some of the values promoted by the Enlightenment during the 18th century: for instance, the belief that men have the ability to shape, master, and control the surrounding environment thanks to rational enquiry and science. The quantitative revolution, when it comes to the analysis of space perception, disregards the Romantic notion of the Sublime, identified with those elements that reveal Nature's divine beauty, majesty, and purpose, in favour of a more Cartesian vision of the world which stresses the authority of human reason over nature. However popular, over the following decades, the quantitative revolution and the strictly logical approach it suggested for the study of humanities were highly criticized: in the late 1800s Humanist and Marxist writers for instance, worried that the attempt at defining social laws was at risk of becoming an instrument for social control and domination as well as reducing human diversity to a series of quantifiable attributes.

In the 1970s the discussion around the method that should be applied within spatial studies was revived. Scholars shifted from the nomothetic to the idiographic approach thus giving rise to the Spatial Turn: a movement within social sciences which sought to modify the representation of place in relation to culture, politics, and society. Phenomenological philosophy was one of the most important influences for this movement. Dermot Moran describes phenomenology as:

> a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising, which emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe *phenomena*, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer.[1]

Phenomenology as a philosophical movement was first introduced in the early 20th century by Edmund Husserl, who is considered the father of this branch of philosophy. At the core of his thought is the belief that a new approach must be taken in analysing our understanding of the world, one that focuses on the structure of consciousness and experience themselves rather than on the objects one encounters in the world as they present. Husserl believed that our experience of the world is not simply a matter of perceiving objects as they exist in the world, but rather that our consciousness actively structures the world and gives it meaning. Philosophers such as Husserl, Lambert, and Heidegger have greatly influenced the philosophical ideas behind the Spatial Turn, supplying some of the founding concept for a new phenomenological theory of place.

The first outstanding theory to influence the Spatial Turn is Husserl's *intentionality* which is based on the notion of 'aboutness'. Thought, according to Husserl, is intentional, directed towards or about specific objects. Different thoughts present objects in different ways as they are directed towards different intentional content. Intentional content can be defined as the way in which the subject perceives the object. For instance, the act of seeing implies the seeing *of* something. According to his theory of ontology, things exist on multiple levels beyond the observable world. An object only becomes an object when seen in light of its intended purpose (e.g., an object can be considered a chair when we recognize that its purpose is to sit on it). When Husserl's concept of intentionality is applied to the study of place, it is no longer possible to conceive spaces simply as a set of

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1 Dermot Moran (2000) *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Routledge, London, p. 4.

accumulated data. When observing places in light of their intended purpose, it is crucial to take into consideration human intention. The feelings and experiences associated with a particular location are what allows the human subject to identify the place's purpose and function in relation to his social and emotional background.[2]

The notion of *essence* is also crucial to the development of the phenomenological approach to place. Essence might be described as the set of characteristics that define an object. Heidegger claims that existence come before essence: this means that an object's mode of being is not determined by its nature, rather, it is a mere possibility among many other plausible modes of being. The notion of essence thus defines space as a by-product of human interaction with their surroundings, of the intentions people develop towards a certain location. As human intentions cannot be directed at anything at any time, Heidegger develops the notion of *care*. The individual is a *Being-in-time*, meaning that he experiences a total immersion in the world, but to make sense of it he needs to focus on specific things at different time. The human understanding of the world, much like the understanding of space, is thus organized on multiple levels, built from what is readily available rather than on an abstract schema.[3]

The input of phenomenological philosophy within the study of geography and anthropology has led to the development of the term 'sense of place'. In order to better understand this term, it is useful to expand upon the Latin idea of *genius loci*, or 'spirit of place', which constitutes the conceptual origin for Sense of Place, although the two terms are not synonymous. In ancient Rome the *genius loci* indicated a specific kind of tutelary deity that had the purpose of guarding over specific places and was inherently tied to them. The most popular among this kind of deities was the *Lar* (plural *lares*), a tutelary deity that was thought to guard over the household, usually represented as a young man covered in a short tunic and holding a drinking horn in one hand and a cup in the other, *lares* were usually worshiped in private households but other kind of place deities were thought to guard over outdoors spaces where the natural element was predominant.[4]

The idea of a *genius loci* was first re-elaborated through the lenses of Heideggerian phenomenology by humanist geographers in the 1970s thus coining the modified term

2 Dermot Moran, *op. cit*., pp. 114-118.
3 Dermot Moran, *op. cit*., pp. 222-226.
4https://www.britannica.com/topic/existentialism/Substantive-issues-in-existentialism#ref560657

sense of place which indicated the atmosphere of place, its essence and character. The nature of sense of place, whether it is a matter of subjective experience or objective reality, is a matter of debate: according to Edward Relph the sense of place is 'an innate faculty possessed in some degree by everyone'[5] thus arguing that the sense of place is a universal human experience deeply embedded in our consciousness and emotional well-being. He suggests that the sense of place is not a learned behaviour or acquired skill, but rather a fundamental aspect of our human nature that is present from birth. Relph also suggests that the sense of place is a complex and multifaceted experience that is influenced by a variety of factors, including our physical environment, cultural heritage, personal experiences, and memories. He argues that our sense of place is not just a response to the physical characteristics of a location, but is also shaped by our social and cultural experiences and the meanings and values we attach to particular places. However, according to John Brinckerhoff Jackson, sense of place is 'the atmosphere to a place, the quality of its environment'[6] thus conceiving sense of place as something objective.

As noted by Alexander Neal[7] cultural geographers have focused on the engagement of sensory perception in building geographical awareness which Paul Rodaway defines as 'simply the perception of a world around us, of spatial relationship and the identification of distinctive places, to recognize our situation in a world and to have a sense of a world'[8]. Not only do the senses allow the individual to experience a material encounter with the world, but they also allow him to comprehend and actively make space.[9] Philosopher Michael Serres particularly emphasizes the role of polysensoriality in creating sense of place. In his philosophy of mingled bodies, senses and place are tied together to the point where space is not defined by the borders that circumscribe it but rather by its capacity for associative connection.[10]

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5 Edward Relph (1976) *Sense of Place* in *Ten Geographical Ideas that Have Changed the World*, ed. Susan Hanson, Rutgers University Press New Brunswick, p. 205.
6 John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1995) *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*, Yale University Press, New Heaven.
7 Alexander Neal (2017) *Sense of Place* in *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space*, ed. Robert T. Tally, Routledge, London, p. 40.
8 Paul Rodaway (1994) *Sensous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*, Routledge, London, p. 13.
9 Alexander Neal, op. cit. p. 41.
10 Michel Serres (2008) *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*, trans. by Margaret Sankey and Peter Cowley, Continuum, London.

1.2 *Flânerie* and the *genius loci* of urban space

Globally, cities are often perceived as a place of chaos, detachment, and alienation. At this day and age, with global cities sprawling over many miles, it is even difficult to define what constitutes one and to delineate its boundaries. Amin and Thrift suggest that the city should be looked at through the lenses of everyday urbanism that understands the city as 'spatially open and cross-cut by many different kinds of mobility'[11] with a particular focus on the everyday practices, on the interactions between people and places, and how these develop across the urban space.

Transitivity, the ability to constantly fashion and re-fashion itself, is one of the main characteristics of the urban space, which establishes it as a place of constant variation and improvisation. However, this is something that traditional instruments for geographical inquire, such as maps and descriptions, cannot detect. It takes a special kind of observer to grasp the ever-changing spirit of the city: the *flaneur*, 'the reflexive walker, purposefully lost in the city's daily rhythms and material juxtapositions.'[12] He possesses both poetic sensibility and scientific inquiry which allows him to 'read' the city, understanding how it changes overtime and the different uses and meanings of the urban milieu. The term *flânerie* indicates the act of wondering through the city with no destination, purposefully getting lost in order to experience alternative everyday practices of life, solitude and otherness. Giampaolo Nuvolati[13] describes the *flâneur* as a marginal figure, seeking to navigate the city as a detached observer rather than an active agent. The act of walking should be performed at a slow pace so that the surroundings can be attentively observed and properly interpreted, and it does not have recreative purposes, it is rather a form of atonement, sacrifice and commitment.

Throughout western history the flâneur has been portrayed as a stereotypically masculine figure, often related to themes of sexuality and prostitution. The flâneur, as depicted in the early 1900s by authors such as Walter Benjamin can easily be juxtaposed to the *tombeur de femmes* given his prevaricating attitude. In the eyes of the male flâneur, women are rarely seen as active observers of the urban environment, rather they are perceived merely as objects to which the flâneur's gaze is directed. However, this interest

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11 Ash Amin, Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2002 p.3.
12 Ash Amin; Nigel Thrift *op. cit.* p. 11.
13 Giampaolo Nuvolati (2013) *L'interpretazione dei luoghi: flânerie come esperienza di vita*, Firenze University Press, Firenze, pp. 1-40.

towards women can sometimes become an obsession: Nuvolati argues that prostitution as the commodification of female bodies, puts the male flâneur at risk of becoming merely a consumer who doesn't truly have control over his urban wandering.[14] This lack of female voices and bodies certainly has its roots in a history of prejudice and discrimination: women have been discouraged from wandering around the city unaccompanied for fear they might run into dangerous situations, and this is especially true when the act of flânerie is not limited to mere observation but intended as a first-hand experience of marginalized life practices. Moreover, many stereotypes surround the figure of the lone woman in the streets: she's either perceived as a prostitute or, more recently, as a consumer engaging in the act of shopping. However, the feminist movement and the emancipation of women have given prominence to female flânerie as an act of liberation and reappropriation of the urban space.

The urban space represents the perfect environment for the flâneur, since it can be read and interpreted from different perspectives and experiences. Cities and their surrounding rural areas all over the world are nowadays subject to a process of homologation which puts these territories at risk of losing their uniqueness. In this context, the flâneur seeks to grasp the intrinsic spirit of the urban space, the *genius loci*, which, according to Nuvolati can be approached from two different perspectives.[15] The first has to do with the phenomenological interpretation of space: according to this interpretation, the spirit of place is conceived as an objective and unambiguous characteristic of place which can be experienced through an emotional and sensory experience. Nuvolati further explains:

> il luogo viene considerato nella sua dimensione ontologica, con una valenza naturale e oggettiva che si dispiega in maniera costante, univoca nel tempo, dando appunto vita a quello che potremmo definire uno spirito del luogo, cui i soggetti si avvicinano e che percepiscono sia in chiave sensitiva che emotiva[16]

The second outlook on the observation and experience of the urban milieu, promoted for instance, by British sociologist and geographer Doreen Massey, focuses on the constant variations of meaning associated with urban spaces and the everchanging

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14 Giampaolo Nuvolati, *op. cit.,* pp. 38-39.
15 Giampaolo Nuvolati, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-69.
16 Giampaolo Nuvolati, *op. cit.,* p. 68.

social, political, and cultural practices adopted by their inhabitants. The spirit of place is thus seen as the ultimate result of this process. However, the intrinsic identity of place, as presented by the phenomenological approach to the urban *genius loci*, cannot be considered as something separate from the social identity of the city which is progressively shaped by the different practices and meaning associated with different spaces. In order to properly understand his or her surroundings and experience the urban space, the flâneur needs to take into consideration both his intuitiveness and his cultural background.

In his book *Le Città Invisibilli* Italian writer Italo Calvino writes. 'la città non dice il suo passato, lo contiene come le linee di una mano'[17] thus offering an interesting reflection on the nature of the spirit of place. Calvino suggests that a city's history is not something that can be easily read or interpreted like a book, but is rather something that is deeply embedded within the fabric of the city itself, like the lines on the palm of a hand. In this sense, the city becomes a physical manifestation of its past, with each building, street, and neighbourhood containing within it the stories, memories, and experiences of those who have lived there throughout history. The city is not just a collection of static buildings and structures, but a living, evolving entity that is shaped and influenced by the people who inhabit it over time. Calvino's quote also suggests that while the past may be present within the city, it is not always immediately obvious or easy to discern. Understanding a city's history requires a certain level of interpretation and analysis, much like reading the lines on the palm of a hand requires a skilled interpreter.

The *genius loci* of the urban milieu is not easily identifiable: it is not the architecture or the general look of the city alone that can reveal it. The city offers to mere hints, it is then up to the beholder's emotional and cultural background, his identity and history in relation to that particular space to allow him to experience the spirit of place.

1.3 The Chronotope and the city novel

The concept of chronotope was first introduced by Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin in his article "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in Novels" where he defines it as 'the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationship that are artistically

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17 Italo Calvino (1972) *Le Città Invisibili*, Mondadori, ed. 1993, Milano, p. 11.

expressed in literature.'[18] Chronotopic analysis seeks to mediate between the changing historical conception of time and space and their realisation within literary texts. In Bakhtin's theory neither time nor space is privileged, the two are seen as completely interdependent, unlike traditional literary criticism which often tends to prioritize one over the other.

Both phenomenology and Bakthin's theory of the chronotope are concerned with the relationship existing between experience, time, and space. Phenomenology seeks to understand the ways in which individuals experience time and space, while the chronotope acts as a tool to analyse the way in which these elements are represented in literature.

Both approaches are useful in exploring the ways in which our understanding of time and space is shaped by personal experience and perceptions. For these reasons, the theory of the literary chronotope and a phenomenological approach to literary criticism can be seen as complementary tools in understanding the complex relationship between time, space, and experience.

The theoretical premises for this concept can be found in both the scientific and philosophical realm. When it comes to the scientific inspiration for the concept of chronotope, Bakhtin re-elaborates on the concept of time-space first introduced by scientist Albert Einstein during the twentieth century. Although there are some major differences between Einstein's theory of relativity and Bakhtin's concept of chronotope, the common ground is found on the observation that both in the physical and fictional world, time and space are intrinsically connected.[19]

Bakhtin borrows from Kantian philosophy the idea that time and space are time and space 'are in essence categories through which human beings perceive and structure the surrounding world'.[20] The difference between Kant's and Bakhtin's conception of space and time lies in the different approaches to this matter adopted by the two authors: whereas Kant attempts to shed light on the universal system of human perception of space and time with a scientific approach, Bakhtin is interested in the historical evidence of such perception as expressed through literary texts. The chronotope theory also manages

18 Mikhail Bakhtin (1998) *The Dialogic Imagination,* trans. by Carl Emerson, University of Texas Press, Austin.
19 Luis Alberto Brandão (2006) *Chronotope* in *Problematizing Global Knowledge*, vol. 23, Nos 2-3, p. 133.
20 Nele Bemong (2010) *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*, Academia Press, Gent, p. 4.

to dissolve the Kantian distinction between history and geography and provides a useful tool to explore more broadly the dynamic relationships that exists between time and space in literary texts.[21]

In Bakhtin's theory chronotopes are both fundamentally constructive to literary genres and determined by historical periods. Different genres of writing will most likely display different sets of chronotopes which reflect the conception of the relationship between time and space that is more popular within their historical timeframe. Bakhtin identifies many types of chronotope such as the adventure-time, the idyll, and the road. The latter, for instance, is experienced by characters within the novel as an element of both temporal and spatial nature: it serves as both the physical environment where the action happens, but it also defines the passing of time within narration.

The concept of chronotope can be easily applied to the modern urban novel in European literature. Lieven Ameel[22] suggests that the chronotope might be defined as a particular genre in which the urban space becomes to all effects a character, an active presence within the novel and not merely a setting. One might identify the city as the chronotope within a piece of writing when it influences major aspects relating to time and space within narration, the urban space acts as a spatial and temporal measure to which the characters can connect or be set apart. For instance, a city such as New York, Lieven notes[23], is often viewed as a juvenile and innovative environment which might suggest a new beginning in the character's development. Fragmental elements of the city can also reveal the hybrid spatiotemporal nature of the urban space: a railway station for instance, might represent a joining point or describe the borders of a particular area of the city while at the same time supplying the reader with hints about the temporal dimension of the novel. An empty station might suggest stillness, it might hint to a slower development of events, a moment of stagnation in the character's development.

Modernist European urban novels are particularly significant to the analysis of chronotopes in the urban space, as only after the industrial revolution, with more and more people moving from rural area to the city, have authors focused on city-based narrations. In his article 'The Plurality of Chronotopes in the Modernist Novel: the case

21 Nele Bemong, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.
22 Lievem Ameel (2017) *The City Novel: Measuring Referential, Spatial, Linguistic, and Temporal Distances*, in *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space*, Routledge, London, pp. 233-241.
23 Lieven Ameel, *op. cit.,* p. 238.

of Manhattan Transfer' Bart Keunen[24] identifies some of the most popular chronotopes within the European modernist urban novel.

According to Keunen, in the idyllic chronotope[25], inherited by modernist urban novelists from the Romanticist movement, life and its events are grafted to a familiar space. One recurrent theme of this chronotope is the intimacy of life in a small community away from the chaotic city with character often travelling away from the urban area to a country house. Characters rarely experience the idyllic chronotope within the urban area as it is often limited to small enclaves such as parks, historical monuments, and suburban private houses. The documentary chronotope, instead, can be read as the reverse of the idyllic chronotope as it relies on cultural document rather than the cyclical processes of nature. It has to do with the author's documentary observation of cultural history. By employing this specific chronotope the novel more closely and extensively describes the everyday life of the city in reference to documented history thus transforming the city into a symbol charged with information relevant to cultural history.

Unlike the idyllic and documentary chronotope, where spatiotemporal coordinates are determined by factors outside of the subject, in the self-referential chronotope[26] these are determined by the character's subjective observation and recollection. The subjective experience is central thus reducing the world to a series of impression that are stored in the character's memory and can be retrieved at will. The self-reflective chronotope offers a non-descriptive representation of the city, less documentary, merging the empirical dimension and the psychological universe of the characters.

In the hyperrealist chronotope[27] coordinates of time and space are distorted. The natural causal relationship that determines the flow of events in the empirical world is overturned as the author connects different fragments of observable reality in a deliberately chaotic manner. The hyperrealist chronotope thus creates an artificial collage out of different fragments of observable reality in order to create a sense of speed, pathos, intoxication or dreaming. The multiplicity of rhythms within the urban space, the turmoil and quick flow of traffic and people rushing through the streets, adapts well to the use of

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24 Bart Keunen (2001) *The Plurality of Chronotopes in the Modernist City Novel: The Case of Manhattan Transfer*, in *English studies* vol. 82, issue 5, p. 421.
25 Bart Keunen, *op. cit.,* p. 422.
26 Bart Keunen, *op. cit.,* p. 428.
27 Bart Keunen, *op. cit.,* p. 431.

the hyperrealist chronotope which allows the writer to describe the dynamic nature of the city outside of ordinary modes of experience.

Chronotopic analysis represents a valuable tool in the analysis of modernist literature especially in the context of the modernist city novel. Viewing the city as an active character rather than merely a setting for the plot can help readers to better understand the relationship between the individual and the rapidly changing urban environment. Moreover, chronotopic analysis can offer a valuable framework for exploring the complex interplay between literature, culture, and history in modernist literature.

CHAPTER 2

Modernisms: a multitude of perspectives

2.1 Modernity and Modernism: towards a definition

In his essay *The Painter of Modern Life,* Charles Baudelaire employs the term 'modernity' to describe the transitory and ever-changing aspects of contemporary life, which he sees as the subject matter of modern art. He writes:

> By modernity I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable[28]

This quote provides a framework for understanding the broader context of modernity as a time of profound change and crisis. Modernity determines a new way of living defined by the many changes brought about by industrialization, urbanization, and secularization. Not only does modernity describe a time of profound changes with unprecedented technological advancement and the appearance of factory-line mass production, but it also denotes a time of crisis: at the turn of the century many intellectuals were dissatisfied with middle class values of profit and faith in the progress and radically opposed the human alienation that came with mass factory production. The predominance of reason over emotion had certainly led to material benefits but it left no space for the spiritual life of the human subject. The strive for constant change and progress could produce a temporary sense of satisfaction but failed to foster individuality and a sense of purpose. Moreover, the outbreak of World War I in Europe and beyond, left the general population with a sense of disillusion and uncertainty thus leading to the overturn of pre-existing values.

To this day modernity remains a contested term but in order to define this period of history, it is useful to define it in terms of the attitude associated with it rather than simply describing it from a strictly chronological standpoint: modernity is characterised by the rise of capitalism leading to industrial mass-production, sentiments of faith in progress and innovation, state regulation, institutionalization and surveillance.

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28 Charles Baudelaire (1863) *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, ed. Jonathan Mayne, Phaidon Press, p. 13
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In terms of literary genre, modernism can be more efficiently understood by comparing it to Realism, the most prominent genre in the British novel of the 18th century, as these two modes of narration employ diametrically opposed perspectives. Realism attempts to objectively describe reality; the Realist novel seeks to offer a precise and transparent account of the author's society and is thus modelled after highly descriptive prose forms such as journalism and historical accounts. The spatiotemporal setting of the Realist novel is often very close to its intended reader's experiences, depicting familiar social settings and contemporary history. Modernism, on the other hand, focuses on the subjective: rather than offering a detailed description of reality, Modernism aims at accurately representing human subjectivity, the individual's consciousness, emotions, and relation to society. While Realism requires authority and reliability of the narrative, along with contemporary settings and representative locations, the Modern novel attempts to create a confusing landscape which cannot be immediately understood by the reader. It is thus no coincidence that Impressionism developed alongside Modernism. Both movements are in fact symptoms of an inward turn, a shift from the impersonal and objective realm to the personal and subjective.[29]

Speech is another important element that distinguishes Realism from Modernism. Realism mostly employs linear speech which mimics the usual modes of conversation that the reader might experience in his day-to-day life. The aim is to properly describe reality as it is, speech must follow the laws of logic, the sentences should be correctly structured, highly descriptive, and easy for the reader to fully understand. Modernism, on the other hand is less linear, it follows the natural flow of thought rather that logic. The stream of consciousness, a popular technique among modernist writers, attempts to realistically describe the character's thought process, which cannot be linear nor perfectly logical, it moves freely from one place to the next. The attempt at describing the non-linear nature of human thought reflects on the modernist use of syntax which often exudes from traditional laws of grammar employing incomplete sentences, unusual wording, and phrase structure.

Writer Norman Cantor attempts to analyse modernist thought and attitude by defining the Modes of Modernism. According to Cantor, in Modernism there are elements

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29 Peter Childs (2000) *Modernism: the new critical idiom*, Routledge, London pp. 3-6.

of anti-historicism as truth is not considered evolutionary or progressive, it does not evolve, nor can it be discussed in terms of absolutes: truth requires thought and analysis. Moreover, while Realism focuses on the macrocosm realism focuses on the microcosm thus centring the individual rather than the social, the character's internal struggles and workings rather than an overarching and cohesive plot. If compared once again to Realism which is highly representative, Modernism is less representative and more self-referential, producing more self-contained works, art that is essentially about itself. Modernism is also more elitist, as it favours complexity and difficulty rather than offering a linear and logical description of the world. Previous genres followed a poetic of mimesis, aimed at imitating nature and reality as closely as possible, while modernism is marked by increased sophistication, technical display and anti-representationalism. Because of its complexity Modernist prose should be read with the same attention that is usually reserved to poetry of philosophy. It is highly allusive, with short sentences often expressing highly complex concepts or hinting at philosophical systems.

In Cantor's analysis Modernism also comes as a response to the restraints of Victorian thought. For Modernist artists morals are not superior to art, the latter is instead considered the highest form of human achievement. Art must have no moralistic intent but should be more concerned with aesthetics. The Victorian search for harmony is replaced by elements of disjointedness and disintegration.[30]

2.2 The Modernist experience of urban space

The physical spaces depicted in modernist novels are often symbolic of the psychological and emotional states of the characters. For example, a character may feel trapped or claustrophobic in a small room, while another may feel lost and disoriented in a sprawling city. The city in particular is one of the most prominent themes of modern literature in a time when a growing portion of the population moved into the urban areas.

The urban milieu became a catalyser for the rapid social and cultural changes of the early 20th century, such as the growth of cities and the emergence of new forms of technology. In modernist literature, the city is often depicted through elements of fragmentation, dislocation, and alienation, with characters often feeling lost and

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30 Norman Cantor (1988) *Twentieth Century Culture, Modernism to Deconstruction*, Peter Lang, London, p. 35.

disconnected. However, much like the flaneur, the modern subject in the urban context can also experience a newfound sense of freedom and liberation. Many modernist writers were drawn to the energy and excitement of the city, thus using it as a starting point for exploring new literary techniques and ideas. The city becomes the narrative space that best embodies the creative potential of modernity, offering to the modern individual a new mean of experiencing new forms of self-expression and discovery in a time of profound cultural changes. For instance, in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom finds within the urban space many opportunities to explore his own identity.

Overall, the city can be read as one of the most prominent chronotopes in modernist literature, reflecting the changing social and cultural landscape of the early 20th century, and the tension between fragmentation and possibility, alienation and self-expression, that characterized that period.

Richard Lehan argues that the modernist city is a space that is both exhilarating and unsettling, used by modernist writers as a way to explore the themes of individual consciousness and cultural transformation. Modern literature represents the urban milieu in two ways: the city as constituted by the artist, whose inner feelings and impressions embody a unique vision; and the city as constituted by the crowd, which is not seen merely as an ensemble of individuals but rather, as a separate entity with an urban meaning of its own. The artist and the crowd, although separate, necessarily interact with each other. On one hand, alienation and loss of individuality are inevitable consequences of mass culture but on the other, the crowd offers many opportunities. For instance, in Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du Mal, notes Lehan, the flaneur, the artist, becomes 'an observer who brings a distinct consciousness in the city'[31] and seeks to be stimulated by crowds which offer potentiality for new experiences. As the city becomes more and more complex, the artist inevitably becomes disconnected from it as he is overwhelmed by the large number of stimuli he is exposed to in the urban context. Lehan suggests that this tension between the individual artist and the collective crowd was a central theme of modernist literature and this can be seen in works such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as these works often use techniques such as fragmentation, allusion, and stream-of-

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31 Richard Lehan (1998) *The City in Literature, an Intellectual and Cultural History*, University of California Press, Berkley, p. 77.

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consciousness to create a sense of dislocation and alienation that reflects the individual's struggle to maintain a sense of identity in the face of larger social and cultural forces.[32]

Lehan's analysis of the relationship between the artist and the crowd draws from the concepts proposed in Charles Baudelaire's collection of essays *The Painter of Modern Life* where he also touches on the relationship between the artist and the crowd. Particularly, Baudelaire makes a clear distinction between the artist and the 'man of the world'[33]: The latter is 'a man who understands the world and the mysterious and lawful reasons for all its uses'[34] whereas the first is compared to a 'childhood recovered'[35] who has managed to harness, by means of reason, the sensibility typical of childhood in such way that it may become a resource for self-expression. The artist is further compared to the flâneur:

> for the perfect flaneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. to be away from home and yet to see oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world and yet to remain hidden from the world.36

The flâneur represents a unique perspective on the city and its inhabitants. He or she emphasizes the act of observation and contemplation, he explores the complexities and contradictions of modern life thus finding beauty and meaning in the urban environment.

2.3 The Modernist short story

An increase in the provision of schooling during the nineteenth century brought about a general rise of the level of literacy in all levels of society thus exponentially expanding the reading public. An increasingly larger public for fiction, which soon established itself as the leading literary genre of the time, allowed serials such as the London Magazine and Bentley's Miscellany to become increasingly popular. The novel thus became the most prominent genre of the 19th century, while the short story, often referred to as 'miscellany' or 'sketch' remained for the most part unexplored and undefined as scholars

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32 Richard Lehan, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-82.
33 Charles Baudelaire, *op. cit.,* p. 7.
34 Charles Baudelaire, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
35 *Ibid.*
36 Charles Baudelaire, *op. cit.* p. 9.

and writers could not reach consensus on what exactly constitutes the short story as a genre. The publishing industry encouraged writers to serialize their fiction rather than concentrating on shorter-form content as publishing an author's collection of short stories was often assumed to be bad business.

As the serialized fiction of the Victorian era fell in popularity, a number of magazines dedicated to the publishing of modernist serious fiction emerged. Writers of this new genre found that short fiction was a very flexible genre which lent itself very well to the technical, stylistic and thematic experimentation that modernist writers sought. Later on, collections of modernist short stories such as Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914), Woolf's *Monday or Tuesday* (1894) and Mansfield's *Bliss* (1920) showed a growing interest in this genre. At the turn of the century, not only was short fiction establishing itself as a valuable contribution to the literary marketplace, but it also offered a space for modernist writers to experiment with the technical and thematic transformation of the narrative genre.[37]

Dominique Head argues that the modernist short story is fundamentally a spatial genre. It thus is no coincidence that modernist short stories developed alongside impressionism, which emphasizes visual perception and a subjective experiential representation of landscape. Head notes that painting is primarily a form of spatial representation whereas writing is primarily a temporal one. Nevertheless, modernist short story writers manage to incorporate a large number of spatial metaphors into their writing thus highlighting the 'spatial' aspect of the text and making it more visually evocative.[38] For instance, in his short story *The Dead*, which concludes Joyce's collection of short stories *Dubliners*, the writer describes a snow-covered landscape to suggest a sense of isolation and estrangement. The image of falling snow also creates a sense of stillness as Gabriel reflects upon his own life and the lives of those around him, but it also suggests purity and potential for renewal as the well-known landscape is hidden by a thick layer of snow which erases the shapes and outlines of an otherwise familiar setting.

Peter Childes points to Henry James as one of the most important innovators both in regard to the modernist novel and short story. His novels

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37 https://literariness.org/2022/09/25/modernist-short-stories/
38 Dominic Head (1992) *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 9-11.

show an unprecedented degree of attention to aesthetic detail and intense reflection and his prefaces to his novels expound a theory of fiction whose claims elevated the form to a new height of artistic integrity[39]

whereas his almost plotless short stories concern art and its form as well as its relation to society at large. For instance, in his most famous short story *The Figure in the Carpet*, the intricate design woven into a Persian carpet becomes a metaphor to comment on the relationship between art and its audience, as well as the artist's intentions and how these are perceived.

Childes also argues that sexuality, 'freed from the confines of Victorian morality into the open spaces of sensuous desire and erotic carnality'[40], is a prominent theme in modernist short stories. Spatial metaphors and symbolism are often employed to comment on the nature of human desire and eroticism. For instance, in Katherine Mansfield's *Bliss*, a pear tree becomes the most powerful metaphor within the narration. At first the pear tree seems to point to Bertha's fulfilment as she enjoys the company of the guests she has chosen for her dinner party but later on, as Bertha and Pearl, a young, strange woman to whom Bertha has taken a liking, observe it, the tree becomes a metaphor for their emotional connection as well as Bertha's possibly repressed homosexual desires. The latter is suggested by the shape of the tree's fruits which resembles the body of a woman.

In the context of Ireland specifically, the growing popularity of the short story as a genre can be largely attributed to the work of the Irish Literary Revival, a literary movement started in the 1890s and growing in popularity during the 20th century deeply engaged in a renewed interest in Ireland's linguistic and cultural heritage. The Irish Literary revival was merely part of a broader movement called the Gaelic Revival which aimed to revitalize Irish heritage on the intellectual, political, athletic and linguistic levels.

The 17th century witnessed a change in land ownership from local Irish people to English settlers thus establishing English as the language of government and administration. The minority status of Irish in comparison to English was further reinforced in 1801 with the passing of the Union Act, which effectively abolished the Irish Party. The Great Famine was another huge factor in the decline of Irish as it resulted in 1 million deaths followed by the loss of 2 million more people in the following wave

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39 Peter Childes, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
40 Peter Childes, *op. cit.*, p.85.

of immigration. By this time, not only was English the language of power, but it was also associated with success in conquering the New World thus encouraging people who remained in Ireland after the Great Famine to ensure that the following generations chose English over Irish as this would grant them with more possibility for land ownership and success in business. By the time the Irish Literary Revival movement had begun, there was little left of the Irish literary tradition: a large tradition of oral storytelling and a small number of written original works.

Four years after its founding in 1893, the Gaelic League, a social and cultural organization founded to retrieve the Irish culture and heritage, initiated an annual literary competition in hopes of encouraging writer to employ Irish more as the language of literature. Its short story section proved to be very popular and successful as it allowed writers to draw from the large oral tradition that existed in Irish language thus making their stories immediately accessible to a large audience.[41]

According to Ingman however, the Irish Revivalists only had a limited influence on modernist short story writers, instead their inspiration appears much more international drawing from the French writers Flaubert and Maupassant and the Russian Chekov rather than from local Irish folklore. Flaubert inspired the modernist emphasis on style and sentence rhythm whereas from Maupassant, who often focused on a single, revealing moment in his story when the mundanity of everyday life is disrupted, Modernist writers learned the value of brevity and concentration. Like Maupassant, Russian writer Chekov also relies on moments of revelation within his narrative. These, however, do not have the intent of conveying a specific message; on the contrary both Chekov and Maupassant as well as modernist writers stress the importance of objectivity and impartiality of the author. Moreover, Maupassant informs the modernist writers' view of the world as disjointed, partial and fragmented. Altogether these international influences help establishing the as a 'self-consciously stylized work of art rather than a mimetic portrayal of life.'[42]

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41 J. Joe Cleary, Claire Connolloy (2006) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 245-248.
42 Heather Ingman (2012) *A History of the Irish Short Story*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 84-88.

CHAPTER 3

'Dirty old Dublin': urban spaces and identities in *Dubliners*

3.1 Young Joyce and the making of *Dubliners*

James Joyce was born in 1882, the eldest of 10 children by a middle-class family in Dublin, Ireland. At the age of six he was sent to Clongowes Wood College, a prestigious Jesuit boarding school, but his father's neglect of affairs soon led Joyce's family to a rapid decline, sinking them deeper and deeper into poverty. Unable to support the expenses of schooling at Clongowes, Joyce tried to educate himself at home for a short period of time until, in 1893, him and his brother were admitted without fees to Belvedere College, a Jesuit boarding school in Dublin where he did well academically, but was murmured to have lost is Catholic faith. He later entered the University College of Dublin where he studied languages and ultimately confirmed his resolution to become a writer. After graduating college, Joyce decided to try a medical career in order to support himself while writing but, after attending a few lectures in Dublin, he abandoned medical training and went to Paris where he supported himself writing book reviews and studied in the Sainte-Geneviève Library. In 1903 he returned to Dublin to attend to his dying mother. Here he tried various occupation such as teaching and begun writing a lengthy novel based on the events of his own life titled *Stephen Hero* which can be considered a precursor of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as the former was only partially published after his death. In fact, after many failed attempts at getting his *Stephen Hero* published, Joyce burned part of his work out of distress. [43]

From his early youth, James Joyce always had a contrasting relationship with his motherland: his sentiments towards Ireland, suggests Seamus Deane, are marked by a feeling of betrayal which emerges throughout all of the author's works. In his early childhood, Joyce had witnessed first-hand the upheavals of Charles Stewart Parnell's political rise and downfall, prompting the author to develop a sense of distrust in the Irish government and, even more significantly in the unity and cohesion of the Irish people. In

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[43] https://www.britannica.com/biography/James-Joyce

Joyce's eyes Parnell was 'a heroic spirit brought low by his own people'.[44] Parnell entered politics as a member of the Irish Home Rule Party, which advocated for Ireland's self-rule under the United Kingdom. He quickly gained popularity as he proved to be a skilled orator and organizer. In his line of action, Parnell focused on building a broad coalition of Irish nationalists and working-class supporters and was known was known for his ability to negotiate with British politicians. However, Parnell was quickly brought to his downfall after he got caught into a personal scandal when captain William O'Shea, an Irish nationalist colleague of Parnell's, filed for divorce from his wife, Katherine O'Shea claiming that she had been Parnell's mistress since 1880. The divorce was granted in November 1890, ultimately leading to Parnell's loss of political leadership.

Similarly, when Joyce looked back at his predecessors in the history of Irish literature, poet James Clarence Mangan represented an emblem of the alienated artist, scorned, and humiliated by his own people even after his death. The two authors share a strong detachment from the Irish nationalist movement that started the late 1800s. Both authors perceived Irish nationalism not as a movement for liberation of their country but rather, as an equally bad alternative to British imperialism.

Like Joyce, Mangan also manifests a strong interest in foreign languages and cultures: his poetry is mostly presented as a translation, often from more exotic languages like Arabic, Turkish or Coptic. In his writings and in the lectures he held about Mangan in Dublin and Trieste, Joyce paints his predecessor as a much more competent linguist than he really was, but Mangan's competence in the languages that offered the base material for his translation was nowhere near this level, thus bringing back the theme of betrayal, Deane further explains:

> Mangan is a characteristic nineteenth-century Irish author in his fascination with translation as an act of repossession. He betrays other languages into English, the better to possess both them and the English in which he writes; but his ultimate 'betrayal' is that of his own authorship. He is not the original author, merely a secondary, intermediate author. He is an artist whose relationship to his material is oblique, regarding it as something rare and strange which passes over into language that cannot but be secondary, insufficient.[45]

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44 Seamus Deane (2004) *Joyce the Irishman* in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, second edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 29.
45 Seamus Deane, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

Joyce's famous collection of short stories *Dubliners*, begun taking shape, in 1904, when George Russel, an older man of letter who wished to give the young precocious writer a chance at being published, offered him a small compensation for a few simple stories with Irish background to be published in farmer's magazine *The Irish Homestead* where Russel served as an editorial adviser. The short stories published in *The Irish Homestead* were meant to celebrate the virtue of the Irish countryside and its presumed ability to meet the spiritual and physical needs of any man or woman of the nation. They were in other words, a form of propaganda,

> a mass-produced fantasy insisting that the rural life in Ireland was the only source of true salvation and anyone who turned their back and left would regret it for the rest of their life. In many of the stories, characters about to emigrate suddenly realize, just in the nick of time, all their happiness is in Ireland, and only heartache and despair abroad.[46]

In the three stories he wrote for *The Irish Homestead* (*The Sisters*, *Eveline* and *After The Races*), Joyce expressed his strongly felt wish to tell the truth how he saw it, sanding against the wave of nationalism promoted by the *Homestead*. Particularly the story of Eveline appears as anti-emigration propaganda fiction, as the protagonist seems to eventually realize her only chance at true happiness is in Ireland and yet us, the readers know very well she has very little to come back to in her motherland: an increasingly abusive father whose children have all left him except for her and an exhausting job which hardly grants her any reward. In fact, Joyce would later become an immigrant himself and flee from Ireland with his partner Nora Barnacles, declaring his voluntary exile from the country.

Exile, argues John McCourt, marked a significant turning point in Joyce's career as a writer, as it ultimately allowed him to put some distance between himself and Ireland: a place, in his view

> largely untouched by the modern world, by the industrial revolution, bereft of economic means, of a conscience, an identity, overwhelmed by the contrasting dogmas of British colonialism, the Roman Catholic Church and the demands of Irish nationalism.[47]

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46 Garry Leonard (2004) *Dubliners* in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, second edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 7..

47 John McCourt (2003) *Joyce and Ireland: Home Thoughts from Abroad* in Radharc, Vol. 4, p. 64.

Joyce's early works, and especially *Dubliners* are in this sense both local and international. On one hand, the short stories in *Dubliners* deal specifically with Ireland and life in Dublin, while at the same time being largely informed by the author's 'divorce' with his motherland and his internationalist sentiments, which granted him an outsider's outlook on the Irish nationalist movement.

My aim in the following paragraphs of this chapter is to demonstrate how the representation of place influences the modes of narration in the *Dubliners* tales, and how Joyce uses place to comment in the societal and cultural issues of his time. This analysis will be achieved by looking at the spatial metaphors and representations in five of the fifteen stories, exploring themes of escape, representation of public and private places, and the relationship characters develop with these locations, focusing on the different approach to place displayed by both male and female characters.

3.2 Pathologizing Dublin: Paralysis and epiphany

It is worth noting that by the time Joyce had started writing his *Dubliners* tales he was already attending medicine lectures in Dublin and was thus becoming increasingly interested in the use of medical language. In organizing his collection of short stories, Joyce divided the *Dubliners* tales into four sections, each corresponding to a specific period in life: Childhood, Adolescence, Maturity and Public Life. The choice of this specific scheme implies a personification of Ireland as a sick individual. By describing life in Dublin throughout his narratives, Joyce is effectively trying to make a diagnosis. Paralysis is the name of the disease affecting Ireland.[48]

> My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin
> for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis. I have tried to present
> it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and
> public life.[49]

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48 Florence L. Walzl (1961) *Pattern of Paralysis in Joyce's Dubliners: A Study of the Original Framework*, in College English, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 23-25.
49 James Joyce (1992) *5 May 1906* in *Selected Letters of James Joyce*, Faber and Faber, London, p. 83.

The metaphor of paralysis in artistic context had been previously used by British Victorian literary critics to describe a state of 'intense spiritual or intellectual malaise'[50]. The Victorian experience of paralysis related to the fear that the traditional religious moral, spiritual and intellectual convictions could become obsolete in an age of scientific advancement. For Joyce however, paralysis coincides with

> a condition of spiritual torpor caused by what he perceived to be the oppressive religiosity of the catholic church.[51]

Paralysis is the overarching theme in the 'Dubliners' tales which Joyce applies in each section according to the specificities of the life period he is describing. In Childhood, which should correspond to a time of naivety and innocence, where reality should appear better than it actually is, paralysis brings disillusionment. In Adolescence, which should be a period dedicated to the development of the individual, where crucial choices are made, paralysis inhibits the characters' free will and leaves them unable to take action. In Maturity, when productivity should peak and the individual is expected to enjoy the fruits of his hard work, paralysis brings sterility and lack of achievement. Finally, in Public Life, which should celebrate the ethical and intellectual achievements of each individual, ultimately resulting in a cohesive and functioning society, paralysis brings up images of corruption.[52]

As the narratives progress, argues Walzl, there is a decline in the characters' perceptivity. In the first half of *Dubliners* characters come to a painful realisation of their condition, whereas in later stories they remain in a state of almost total unawareness. According to Walzl's analysis, the stories in the first half of the collection can be seen as epiphanies, total or at least partial. However, argues Scholes[53], Joyce never used the term 'epiphany' neither in or in relation to *Dubliners*. From 1900 to 1904 Joyce had written a series of paragraphs recording 'the most delicate and evanescent of moments'[54] which he called epiphanies and later used as the base material for writing some key passages in *Stephen Hero* and *Ulysses* but there is no recording of any known epiphany being referenced in 'Dubliners'.

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50 Douglas Kanter (2004) *Joyce, Irish Paralysis, and Cultural Nationalist Anticlericalism*, in *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 2004, p. 381-396.
51 *Ibid.*
52 Florence L. Walzl, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
53 Robert Scholes and Florence L. Walzl (1967) *The Epiphanies of Joyce*, in *PMLA* vol. 82 No. 1, p. 152.
54 James Joyce (1955) *Stephen Hero,* New Directions, Cambridge, p. 175.

Despite this, the term 'epiphany' in literary criticism is largely applied to Joyce's collection of short stories. Walzl suggests that the epiphanies in Dubliners should be read in terms of their liturgical and religious signification as Mass liturgy had certainly influenced Joyce, especially in his earlier writings.

> The liturgical epiphanies, in general, employ a narrative method in which a sequence of details in a simply told story effects a sudden revelation of spiritual or moral meaning, usually as to the essential being of a person or thing.[55]

Similarly to what happens in biblical stories, characters in the *Dubliners* tales represent a moral prototype whose actions can be interpreted on various levels of meaning.

> Such a narrative approach seems relevant to Dubliners, where each story leads to a moral manifestation and where each character is a social type also.[56]

3.3 Escaping Dublin in *An Encounter*

The second narrative in *Dubliners*, *An Encounter*, prompts a reflection on the theme of escape from the city. As this narrative is found in the first section of the collection, the one dedicated to Childhood, it introduces many themes that will also feature in the following stories. The story follows the journey of an unnamed narrator, a young boy fascinated with detective novels and American adventures of the Wild West. The boy, along with his friend Mahony, is set out to a day-long adventure at the Pigeon House. The final destination for boys' trip, immediately hints at their inability to escape the city. The carrier pigeons held captive at the Pigeon House in fact, despite being able to fly long distances, will inevitably return to their starting point. The characters wander on the outskirts of Dublin, where they see a possibility for escape but ultimately experience a sense of disappointment and disillusionment when their day-long trip is interrupted by a strange old man.

In this narrative, the description of landscape and the system of meanings attributed to it are extremely significant: the city centre represents control, expressed in the restraints of catholic schooling which Joyce experienced first-hand during his Belvedere years. Opposed to the oppressive presence of the city lying behind the boys'

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55 Robert Scholes and Florence L. Walzl, *op. cit.*, p.153.
56 *Ibid.*

footsteps, is the outskirts of Dublin where the protagonists seek some form of escape. Particularly the Liffey Quays, where River Liffey meets the sea, brings the boys to a moment of revelation.

> And even I, upon looking at the high masts, saw, or imagined, the geography which had been scantily dosed to me in school gradually taking substance under my eyes.[57]

Upon viewing the Liffey Quays, the protagonist imagines the distant geographies lying beyond the city's borders which he has been told about in school, thus offering a reflection on the relationship between real and imagined place. In this passage Joyce blurs the line between what is imagined and what is actually seen, thus undermining the authenticity of the boys' escape and hinting at the circular nature of their journey, which is a recurring theme in other tales such as *Two Gallants*, where, similarly to what happens in *An Encounter,* the character's journey traces a circular path. The repetition of "seemed" and the slippage between "saw" and "imagined" create an ethereal and uncertain atmosphere, leaving the reader to question the extent of the boys' actual liberation.[58] The scene at the Liffey Quays also resonates well with the scene in *Eveline* where the protagonist eventually renounces to her last chance of escaping Dublin. Both scenes feature a physical location that represents a possible escape but ultimately reflect the theme of paralysis, leaving both characters trapped in their circumstances.

The moment of epiphany in *An Encounter* is represented by an ambiguous old man who approaches the boys as they lay in a field contemplating the possibility of returning home by train. His physical appearance suggests he is a symbol of corruption, mirroring the city's moral and physical decay.

> He was shabbily dressed in a suit of greenish-black and wore what we used to call a jerry hat with a high crown. He seemed to be fairly old as his moustache was ashen-grey[59]

As he approaches the boys, the old man immediately arouses feelings of weariness and discomfort which progressively intensify as he starts asking questions about the boys' love life asserting that 'every boy has a little sweetheart'[60]. Despite agreeing to some

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57 James Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
58 Madelaine Hamlin, *Geographies of Mobility in James Joyce's Dubliners*, in *Literary Geographies*, vol. 2, No 2, pp. 130-132.
59 J. Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
60 J. Joyce, *op. cit.*, p.17.

extent with what the old man is saying, the narrator can't help feeling a sense of unease as he recalls his own experiences with women.

> There was nothing he liked so much as looking at a nice young girl, at her nice white hands and her beautiful soft hair. He gave me the impression that he was repeating something which he had learned by heart or that, magnetised by some words of his own speech, his mind was slowly circling round and round in the same orbit.[61]

The old man's monologue acts as a build up to the moment where he eventually wanders further into the field to masturbate after which Mahony addresses him as 'a queer old josser'[62]. After coming back again the man starts another monologue, this time directly contradicting his previous libera statements. He asks the narrator whether his friend Mahony gets whipped often in school as he is a rough and unruly boy. The old man seems to be caught up in his own speech, almost hypnotized, detached from reality and unable to distinguish truth from falsehood.

According to Degnan, The Pervert in *An Encounter* functions as a symbol of decadence which represents a direct consequence of over-civilisation. By means of symbolic actions, Joyce successfully dramatizes the inner conflict experienced by the narrator and the universal problems of the civilised man in the city, warning about the psychic dangers of over-civilization. The narrator at one point finds himself in league with the pervert as the two watch savage Mahony run after a stray cat; but he will ultimately need Mahony's help to escape the pervert and his obscure hypnotizing speech. The man represents a cautionary figure warning about the narrator's future destiny as

> the boy becomes to some extent conscious of the irony that his virtues-sensitivity, intelligence, conscientiousness, and imagination- have in them the seeds of the vices the old man embodies; that, in short, he (the narrator) could become what the old man is[63]

Furthermore, the old man, despite being relegated to the edges of Dublin, is still a profoundly urban encounter in the context of *Dubliners*. His early liberal statements about sexuality possibly represent a distorted reflection of the boys' desire for escape, their longing for freedom from the control of the institution in Catholic Dublin. On the other

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61 James Joyce, *op. cit.,* p. 17-18.
62 James Joyce, *op. cit.,* p. 18.
63 James P. Degnan (1998) *The Encounter in Joyce's "An Encounter"*, in *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 35, No. 1, p. 93.

hand, his sudden change of opinion, going from celebrating sexual freedom in youth to encouraging corporal punishment for unruly youngsters, reflects the repressive measures of Irish society that the boys are trying to escape. The old man thus also incarnates paralysis as, while wandering the edges, he successfully pushes the boys back into the city.[64]

In conclusion, the title of the story *An Encounter* can be interpreted on multiple levels: the boys' encounter with the old man serves as both a literal and symbolic representation of their attempts to escape the confines of Dublin. The old man can be seen as a physical manifestation of the city's moral and physical decay, while also representing a potential future version of the boys themselves, morbidly affected by his surroundings. Through these multiple readings, Joyce underscores the theme of the futility of escape and the inescapable nature of Dublin's physical and cultural decay.

3.4 Circular movement and masculinity in *Two Gallants*

Two Gallants introduces the theme of walking as a key act in the *Dubliners* tales. Walking is how characters primarily navigate the city thus creating a literary map of its streets, place markers and significant locations. Joyce himself was an avid walker, a habit which allowed him to precisely describe many locations in the city of Dublin, especially those in the area Mountjoy Square, where he lived through his years at Belvedere college.[65] Through the character of Lenehan which represents an example of Joycean flânerie, *Two Gallants* also introduces the theme of masculinity in turn-of-the century Dublin, with all of its limitations determined by the oppressive nature of the environment in which the characters are immersed.

Joyce's approach to the exploration of Dublin stands in stark contrast to what Michel De Certeau defines as the voyeur's approach to urban landscape, characterized by the desire of seeing the city from a higher perspective, one that is possibly unexplored.[66] Instead, Joyce's characters are 'ordinary practitioners of the city'[67] living 'below the

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64 Madelaine Hamlin, op. cit. p. 133.
65 Louis M. Cullen (2009) *Dublin* in *James Joyce in context*, ed. John McCourt, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 5.
66 Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 2011 pp. 92-95.
67 Michel De Certeau, *op. cit.,* p. 93.

threshold where visibility begins'.[68] The characters' way of navigating the city is characterized by their blindness: each path corresponds to a form of 'writing' the city that has little significance by itself, rather

> The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alteration of spaces[69]

As seen in section 2 of chapter 1, the act of walking in the context of flânerie can be a liberating act that allows the individual to experience the city freely, with no constraints, choosing his or her own route and traveling at his or her own pace. The urban milieu offers the perfect environment for the flâneur wishing to experience marginal life practices and discover the *genius loci* of the city he dwells. Joyce overturns this concept: characters like Lenehan do engage in acts of flânerie, wishing to experience Otherness, but their movement is ultimately circular thus revealing their everlasting state of paralysis. The sixth narrative featuring in *Dubliners*, *Two Gallants*, features two men, Corley and Lenehan, frustrated with the lack of achievement in their lives. Corley has arranged a meeting with a woman but plans to meet his friend Lenehan later in the evening. The two men part and Lenehan is left on his own as he wanders aimlessly around the city. Joyce writes:

> Though his eyes took note of many elements of the crowd through which they passed they did so morosely. He found trivial all that was meant to charm him and did not answer the glances which invited him to be bold. [70]

In his passage, the relationship between flânerie and male sexuality is apparent: the crowd is, by definition, made of people: it is thus logical to assume that the protagonist is refusing to let himself be distracted by the women in the crowd whose charms appears as a merely a trick or illusion. Lenehan thus establishes himself as a solitary, lone figure in direct opposition to the crowd full of potential distractions.

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68 *Ibid.*
69 *Ibid.*
70 James Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

In this complicated web of viewers and viewed, Lenehan is a 'morose' observer, an individual disenchanted with the crowd in all of its potential excitements and thrills, which he finds to be merely trivial.[71]

In light of the protagonist's approach to the surrounding crowd of people, some connections can be drawn between the character of Lenehan and the figure of the flâneur as described by Walter Benjamin: for Benjamin, identifying himself with the flaneur is a form of self-reconciliation, it gives fashionable legitimacy to the writer's feelings of marginality and peripherality.[72] Like Benjamin's flâneur, the characters in Dubliners are also a projection of the writer. They represent what Joyce himself would have become had he decided to stay in Dublin.[73] Lenehan comes off as a somewhat aimless and opportunistic individual, always on the lookout for some ways to improve his situation but ultimately unable to make any real progress. The character, inevitably afflicted by paralysis, has become as corrupted as the city which he wanders. Lenehan's path through the city is also significant as it is ultimately circular thus representing a kind of stasis and inertia. By tracing back on his footprints, Lenehan's metaphorically fails to make any significant changes.

In its circularity, Lenehan's walking functions metaphorically, conveying the state of cultural frustration that Joyce aims to uncover. By doubling back on himself, Lenehan physically enacts this paralysis[74]

The inability for self-fulfilment and self-improvement which characterizes the male characters of *Dubliners* offers some insight on Joyce's representation of masculinity in the city of Dublin. Masculinity is indeed a recurring theme in Joyce's fiction and especially in *Dubliners*. In turn-of-the-century Ireland, idealized masculinity was oftentimes linked to mythical Gaelic qualities and opposition to political subjugation embodied in the Romantic Irish rebel. The city of Dublin however, with its limited employment and socio-economical restrictions, offered little to no opportunities for male characters to enact the masculine prototype of courage, honour and resourcefulness. Instead, male Dubliners are frequently confronted with moments of encounter with the Other which leaves them experiencing feelings of shame and anxiety. The latter, anxiety,

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71 Madelaine Hamlin, *op. cit.,* p. 138.
72 Sven Birkertz (1982) *Walter Benjamin, flâneur: A Flânerie*, in *The Iowa Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3/4, p.169.
73 William Y. Tindall (1995) *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce*, Thames and Hudson, London, p. 5.
74 Madelaine Hamlin, *op. cit.,* p. 138.

or more precisely anguish, particularly characterizes Joyce's masculine characters as it relates to 'a sense of inability to respond to compelling or crucial situation'[75]. Joyce often references his character's anxious response which is often reflected in a clear physical response.[76] Numerous references to the character's anxious physical response can be found in *Two Gallants*. For instance, as Corley leaves with the woman, Lenehan is left to observe the two. Immediately, upon catching sight of the woman, the collision of the masculine subject (Lenehan) with alterity, in this case identified in the female counterpart, causes feelings of distress.

> Lenehan observed them for a few minutes. Then he walked rapidly along beside the chains at some distance and crossed the road obliquely. As he approached Hume Street corner he found the air heavily scented and his eyes made a swift anxious scrutiny of the young woman's appearance.[77]

Through this collision, Joyce illustrates the way in which masculine characters in *Dubliners* struggle with feelings of inadequacy and shame when confronted with situations that challenge their sense of self. Overall, the physical response to anxiety serves as a powerful tool for Joyce to convey the psychological complexity of his male characters in Dubliners.

3.5 Femininity and private spaces in *Eveline* and *A Little Cloud*

The theme of escape that Joyce explored in the section dedicated to Childhood in *An Encounter*, comes back in *Eveline,* the opening narrative for the section dedicated to Adolescence. Unlike the boy in *An Encounter* Eveline has a real opportunity to truly escape Dublin as her boyfriend Frank, a sailor, convinces her to emigrate to Argentina with him where they can live a new happier life.

Eveline is the first narrative in *Dubliners* to feature a female protagonist, who, unlike her male counterparts in *An Encounter* and *Two Gallants,* has little direct contact with the urban space. As a woman in turn-of-the century Dublin, with little possibility for employment and economic independence, Eveline is for the most part relegated to the household where she is obligated to take care of her abusive father. 'Although physically

75 Susan Mooney (2017) Interrupted Masculinity in Dubliners, in Joyce Studies Annual, p. 223.
76 Susan Mooney, *op. cit.,* pp. 221-225.
77 James Joyce, *op. cit.,* p. 46.

embedded in the city, Eveline is socially isolated, removed from the opportunities extended to male Dubliners.'[78] She cannot actively take part in the city's life and can only observe from afar.

> 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[79]

She is a voyeur, a passive observer of the urban milieu, contrary to Lenehan in *Two Gallants* whose masculinity affords him the opportunity to wander the streets of Dublin freely. Eveline's location behind the window acts as a metaphor for her social condition. On the one hand she is by all means an element of the urban environment and yet she is separated from her male counterparts whose explorations around the city Eveline cannot partake in.

One element that sets Eveline apart from the male characters in *Dubliners* is her understanding of the city map. In *Two Gallants* for instance, Joyce describes Lenehan's tour 'round Stephen's garden and then down Grafton Street'[80] thus providing the reader with specific place markers that are true to the Dublin's original toponymy. Eveline instead relies on family names to build her own mental map of the city, for her the streets of Dublin are made of people and memories associated to those people rather than universally recognizable place markers.

> In this way, we can read these people as part of Eveline's own urban text, where the city exists primarily as a cognitive construct for her, created and re-created in the spaces of her imagination and memory.[81]

The difference in how characters understand and navigate the city reflects broader societal differences between men and women in turn-of-the-century Dublin. The character of Lenehan in *Two Gallants* is free to explore urban spaces, using recognizable place markers to create a mental map of the city. In contrast, Eveline is confined to her home and views the city as a collection of people and memories associated with them. This fundamental difference in understanding place reflects the social status of men and

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78 Madelaine Hamlin, *op. cit.,* p. 134.
79 James Joyce, *op. cit.,* p. 27.
80 James Joyce, *op. cit.,* p. 47.
81 Madelaine Hamlin, *op. cit*., p. 136.

women in Dublin at the time. Through Eveline's story, Joyce highlights the restrictive and oppressive nature of gender roles and societal expectations in turn of the century Dublin.

In 'Eveline' home is a very significant location especially when seen in light of its opposition to the street. 'Our home is our corner of the world'[82] and thus the analysis of the living space can offer interesting insight on the character's life and experiences. In Victorian culture and literary discourse, the house is the place for comfort, nurturing and healing. It is the basic unity of society. In *Dubliners* on the other hand, the conception of the house as a place where the individual can feel protected and sheltered is subverted. Like the public spaces in Dublin (streets, squares, the houses' facades), private space is also ultimately corrupted.[83]

> Home! 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.[84]

In this paragraph, as Eveline contemplates her house for the last time before departing to Argentina, the image of dust is extremely revealing in light of Joyce's subversion of the home environment from a space of comfort and self-fulfilment to a place where paralysis is pervasive. The dust becomes a symbol for the accumulated years of unmet expectation and frustration: it is the embodiment of paralysis. Further along in his description of Eveline's living space Joyce adds:

> And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the coloured print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque[85]

The past is an imposed nightmare which, in the case of Eveline is imposed on her in the form of her own memory of her father's abuse. The yellowing picture of the unnamed priest possibly symbolizes the constraints of Catholic morals in turn-of-the-century Dublin which contributed to the inhibition of the characters' willpower which will ultimately result in Eveline being unable to leave Ireland. The past in 'Dubliner', argues Williams is not a source of inspiration for the future, it remains a mere object of

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82 Gaston Bachelard (1975) *The Poetics of Space,* Beacon Press, Boston, p. 7.
83 L. Wong (2003) *Home and Elsewhere: Fated Spaces in James Joyce's Dubliners*, in Hypermedia Joyce Studies, vol. 10.
84 James Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
85 *Ibid.*

contemplation. [86] The broken harmonium is a key metaphor in this sense as, through the image of interrupted melody, it conveys to the reader the idea of a happy past which is never directly experienced by Joyce's characters but merely mentioned and sometimes mourned.

A Little Cloud, the opening narrative in the section dedicated to Maturity follows an evening in the life of Little Chandler, trapped in his mundane life as a clerk. When he meets an old friend, Gallaher, now a successful journalist in London, Chandler experiences feelings of jealousy and disillusionment. Gallaher's account of his life abroad prompts him to fantasize about a potential career as a poetry writer. Fantasy is Chandler's own attempt at escaping 'dear dirty Dublin'[87] and the bustling city of London functions as a symbol for freedom and escape. Like in *Eveline*, for Little Chandler too the place of escape is inevitably foreign.[88]

> Every step brought him closer to London, farther from his own sober inartistic life. A light began to tremble on the horizon of his mind. He was not so old – thirty-two. His temperament might be said to be just at the point on maturity. There were so many moods and impressions he wishes to express in his verse.[89]

Despite his vivid fantasies on his life as a writer, upon returning home, Little Chandler is confronted with his own reality. He's faced with the disappointment of his wife, prompted by his forgetfulness of household chores, and his own crying son who Little Chandler is unable to comfort. Unlike Eveline, whose conception of her living space stems primarily from the emotional connections she harvested in those spaces, the protagonist in *A Little Cloud* struggles to create meaningful connections even with his own family. Moreover, Little Chandler's relationship with his living space is in direct opposition to his wife's, hinting again at the profound differences in the experience of place that separates male and female characters in *Dubliners*. For Chandler's wife, home is a place of self-expression where she experiences her emotions freely. This highlighted in the passage where Chandler recalls gifting her a cowl, which arouses in his wife contrasting feelings.

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86 Trevor L. Williams (1989) Resistance to Paralysis in 'Dubliners', Modern Fiction Studies, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 441-443.
87 James Joyce, *op. cit.,* p. 65.
88 Linda Wong, *op. cit.,* p. 4.
89 James Joyce, *op. cit.,* p. 63.

Chandler, on the other hand is absorbed by his own fantasies which prevent him from seeing anything in his living space but its meanness.[90]

As the evening wears on, Chandler's inner turmoil increases, and he begins to showcase signs of anguish and unrest.

> He caught himself up the question and glanced nervously round the room. He found something mean in the pretty furniture he had bought for his house on the hire system (…)
> A dull resentment against his life awoke within him. Could he not escape from his little house?[91]

Through the representation of private spaces as presented in the stories of *Eveline* and *A Little Cloud* Joyce both subverts the Victorian notion of the home as a shelter from the busy and uncomfortable life out in the city and opposes the idea of home being a haven for both men and women. Home thus becomes a place of confinement, which traps the individual and keeps from fulfilling his aspiration.

3.6 Framed pictures in *The Dead*

The Dead is the last and longest story to feature in the collection and acts as a sort of coda for the entire work, binding together its overarching themes and central images. Gabriel Conroy, the protagonist, along with his wife Gretta, is invited to a party at the Morkans. All the forms of psychological paralysis that emerged in previous narratives are here blended together: the party, in which the events are merely a repetition of a void yearly tradition, functions as the climactic account of Dubliners' endless paralysis and cycle of pointless routines.

Immersed in the domestic environment of the Morkans' house, the reader is confronted with several description of framed images, represented either by actual photographs and artwork or imaginary ones. This framed pictures within the context of *The Dead* act as *ekphrases*, defined as the 'literary and rhetorical trope of summoning up—through words—an impression of a visual stimulus, object, or scene.'[92] Such *ekphrases* can help to illuminate spatial relationship between different elements of the

90 Arthur E. McGuinness (1968) *The Ambiance of Space in Joyce's Dubliners*, in *Studies in Short Fiction*; 11, 4, 1968, pp. 349-351.
91 James Joyce, op. cit. p. 73.
92https://oxfordre.com/classics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.001.0001/acrefore-9780199381135-e-2365.

story, between characters and their environment.[93] Moreover, the concept of chronotope, previously discussed in chapter 1, is crucial to understanding the complex relationships between time and space in *The Dead*, as the various ekphrases and temporal disruptions in the story serve to highlight the characters' emotional states and their struggles to come to terms with both their pasts and their present.

The first instance of ekphrasis in *The Dead* can be identified in the moment when, during the party, as cousin Mary Jane is performing a complex piano piece, Gabriel's attention is captured by two pictures hanging on the wall, both painted by Aunt Julia Morkan in her schooldays. One depicts the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliette, and the other portrays the two princes murdered in the Tower of London, Edward and Richard.

> A picture of the balcony scene in Romeo and Juliet hung there and beside it was a picture of the two murdered princes in the Tower which Aunt Julia had worked in red, blue and brown wools when she was a girl.[94]

It is significant that the actions in the story take place under these two images which represent a warning for future events, foreshadowing unrequited love, a harsh fate and ultimately death. Soon after, Gabriel notices a framed picture of his own mother which brings back memories of her opposition to his marriage with Gretta. Spatial stimuli in James Joyce's fiction, such as the images hanging on the Morkans' wall or the picture of Gabriel's mother function as chronotopic element binding together aspects of time and space: they do not function as mere description of the story's setting: they become important symbols, a catalyser for the character's memory and emotions, thus providing the reader with a nuanced and multi-faceted insight on the protagonist's psyche and thoughts.

Later on, Gabriel observes his wife standing on the staircase as she listens to Bartell D'Arcy playing 'The Lass of Aughrim'.

> He was in a dark part of the hall gazing up the staircase. A woman was standing near the top of the first flight, in the shadow also. He could not see her face but he could see the terra-cotta and salmon-pink panels of her skirt which the shadow made appear black and white. It was his wife. (…)

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93 Tomàs Monterrey, *Framed Pictures as counterpoint in James Joyce's 'The Dead'*, in *Atlantis*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2011, p. 62.
94 James Joyce, *op. cit.,* p. 176.

> There was grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something. He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of.[95]

This is another example of ekphrasis. Gabriel does not immediately recognize his wife as her face is partially obscured in the shade, the colourful panels of her skirt turning to grey suggest estrangement, again foreshadowing future events, as Gabriel will later be unable to understand his wife's emotions as she bursts out crying on the way home after the party and reveals that the song brought back the memories of her deceased past lover Michael Furey. Gabriel's attempts to interpret the scene symbolically also suggest that a larger chronotope is at play in this scene. The protagonist is confronted with the timeless questions of human connection and understanding, but within the specific temporal and spatial constraints of his own experience. The tension between the universal and the particular is an important feature of the chronotope and contributes to the richness and complexity of Joyce's writing.

As Gretta recalls the image of Michel Furey, standing in the rain outside her window, the reader is once again faced with another instance of ekphrasis. In his case the window through which Gretta observes the scene functions as a frame. As in Eveline the window possibly represents separation and estrangement while at the same time implying a level of involvement. Michel is the object of Gretta's desire, a cherished memory which is metaphorically enclosed in the window frame.

The image of the snow falling outside of the Morkan's house is also relevant to the theme of ekphrasis. The snow cancels out the familiar outline of an otherwise recognizable landscape, hiding any recognizable place markers. This lack of a frame, or the absence of a clear reference point, relates to the theme of ekphrasis, where the viewer is attempting to frame a moment or object in a way that makes sense to them. The snow also evokes a temporal and spatial disruption, by blurring the familiar outlines of Dublin, it creates a sense of temporal dislocation. The characters are forced to confront the past and the present simultaneously, as the falling snow serves as a reminder of the transience of time and the inevitability of change.

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[95] James Joyce, *op. cit.,* p. 199.

Overall, the theme of ekphrasis in *The Dead* is present throughout the story, from the painted pictures on the wall to Gabriel's attempt to frame his wife's moment on the staircase. These instances illustrate how individuals attempt to understand and control the world around them by framing moments in a way that makes sense to them.

Conclusions

In this work I have discussed the significance of place representation in fiction and more specifically in James Joyce's *Dubliners* as a literary device for the exploration of the characters' psyche and emotional life. I have touched on the influence of phenomenological philosophy on the Spatial Turn and how this offers a framework for understanding the experience of flânerie. As I hope to have successfully demonstrated, the concept of flânerie, the act of wandering the city, purposefully getting lost in order to in order to uncover the multi-layered system of meaning which characterizes the urban space, is strongly connected to Joyce's *Dubliners*. The characters in the book are inherently urban figures who move through the city at a slow pace, inviting the reader to join them in their acts of flânerie. Through their eyes, Joyce paints a bleak picture of his country, using symbolic depictions of the urban space to reveal an overwhelming sense of paralysis. As such, flânerie becomes a powerful tool for the reader to explore and comprehend the complex themes and ideas present in *Dubliners*.

Through the analysis five stories in *Dubliners* I hope to have shed light on the different experiences of place across different genders and ages. In terms of gender, the opportunistic and yet anxious city wanderer represented in the character of Lenehan stands in contrast to his female counterpart, Eveline, relegated to the role of the observer. In terms of ages, on the other hand, while Eveline and the unnamed young narrator in *An Encounter* seek to escape the city, more mature characters such as Gabriel Conroy in *The Dead* are unable to escape even their past, which lives on in the spaces they dwell.

Overall, I hope to have demonstrated the power of place representation and flânerie as tools for understanding the complex themes and ideas presented in *Dubliners* and in literature at large. By immersing in the experiences of characters of *Dubliners* as they navigate through the urban landscape, the reader can access a deeper understanding of their inner worlds and the larger social, cultural, and historical contexts that shape their perception and attitudes.

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