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Original Research

Geographies of Emotions and of Social Relations in *Dubliners* by James Joyce

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Abstract: Landscape is an intangible resource defined by its visual appearance and the sensory experiences it inspires. People and communities shape and are shaped by their environments and by assigning meanings to them. This language of visual expression captures deep emotional ties that evoke memories and the unique "spirit of place," reflecting both positive feelings like comfort and negative ones such as fear. From microscale settings it encompasses unique and distinctive qualities of different areas, like rooms and neighborhoods, to macroscale environments like cities and nations, creating, thus, a sense of place. Emotions intertwined with place structure our experiences and explain the impact of actions. This article proposes an interdisciplinary approach to reading *Dubliners*, blending landscape studies, semiotics, and lexicomteric and cultural analysis to reveal the emotional and spatial layers in the narratives. It emphasizes engaging with places through a "geography of emotions" rather than observing them from a distance, thereby exploring Dublin's emotional topography.

Keywords: *Geography, Identity, Emotions, Places, Landscape, Interdisciplinary*

Introduction

Dubliners is crucial not only as a collection of short stories but also as a mirror reflecting the urban, social, and psychological landscape of early twentieth-century Dublin. In July 1904, James Joyce wrote to his friend Curran about his new project: "Dear Curran: I am writing a series of 'epicleti' for a paper. I have written one. I call the series *Dubliners* to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city. Look out for an edition deluxe of all my limericks instantly" (Ellman 1957, 22). This series initially comprised ten stories, later expanding to fifteen, only published in 1914 after considerable difficulty with publishers and printers, who were hesitant to bring out the work, not due to its bleak themes or unflattering depiction of Dubliners but because of its blunt representation of real locations in Dublin—streets, pubs, shops, churches, among many others. Joyce's intent was to create a vivid, cartographic portrayal of the city, believing that by presenting a clear reflection of their environment, his fellow citizens might recognize their state of paralysis and seek liberation.

In his essay "Drama and Life" (1900), Joyce articulated his belief that truth is the essence of all art: "Beauty is the swerga of the aesthete; but truth has a more ascertainable and more real dominion. Art is true to itself when it deals with truth…Life we must accept as we see it before our eyes… men and women as we see them in the real world" (Ellman 1959, 43–45); this principle led him to derive art from "the dreary sameness of existence" (Mason and Ellman 1959, 43–45). The dedication to truthfulness and realism underpins the narrative and thematic structure of *Dubliners*, aiming to provoke reflection and inspire change within the community.

The realism and demystification with which the author depicted the landscapes of his city in *Dubliners* initially offended and shocked editors. However, many recognized "the beauty, strangeness, and the power of the stories" (Magalaner and Kain 1956, 55). Indeed, his commitment to truth in narrating Dublin was so precise that it enabled the geospatial mapping of hundreds of locations in Jasmine Mulliken's *Mapping Dubliners Project*.[1] Joyce's representation of real places allowed readers to envision Dublin's geography. This approach aligns with his intention to portray modern life as it is, without distortion or alteration, as expressed in his letter to Grant Richards on May 5, 1906.

> 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. The stories are arranged in this order. I have written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction that he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard. (Ellman 1957, 83)

By holding up a mirror to his fellow citizens, Joyce sought to reveal their state of paralysis and inspire a process of self-liberation. His dedication to realism not only anchored his narratives in a tangible setting but also emphasized the profound connection between place and the human experience. James Joyce offered a nuanced examination of the geographies of identities and social relations, depicting how the physical and social landscapes of Dublin shape the lives and identities of its inhabitants. The interplay between place and identity is central to the collection, with each story revealing the profound impact of geography on the characters' experiences and social interactions. "The stories are interested in issues of identity and the self, but they are equally involved with issues of politics and what it feels like to be part of Ireland as a nation with a particular history and a particular place within the British Empire" (Leonard 2004, 90).

[1] https://mappingdubliners.org

The lexicometric[2] method employed in this study, using the digital tool Hyperbase (Brunet 2011), sheds light on the emotional and spatial cartographies within *Dubliners*, enabling a geography of emotions that encapsulates the sensory, mental, and visceral experiences depicted throughout the narratives. This analysis is a quantitative method for examining the words in a text and involves using statistical and computational techniques to measure word frequency, distribution, co-occurrence, and other lexical features. By processing large volumes of text data, lexicometric analysis enables researchers to uncover patterns, themes, and linguistic structures that might not be immediately apparent through traditional close reading.

The interactions of the characters, predominantly male, are influenced by their environments and responses to them, positively or negatively, which elucidates the underlying causes and consequences of events. By mapping the emotional and spatial dimensions, our research, through this method, highlights the intricate connections between place, identity, and emotional experience, offering a nuanced understanding of how literary landscapes reflect and inform human behavior and societal structures, through a narrative technique described by Bulson as "pointing out a location without getting bogged down in extraneous details. Naming streets, not describing them, has the effect of making them more like an itinerary, something that can be easily installed and removed" (2007, 69).

The emotional dimension refers to the layers of feeling, mood, and internal experience conveyed through narrative language. It encompasses how characters perceive events, how ambient descriptions evoke a particular atmosphere, and even how subtle cues can trigger memories or emotional responses. In the context of Joyce's work, for example, the inner worlds of his characters are expressed through intricate interior monologues and sensory detail. This approach allows the reader to sense the emotional weight of seemingly mundane encounters, turning familiar Dublin streets and rooms into repositories of personal history, longing, and sometimes regret. In contrast, the spatial dimension relates to the physical and geographical aspects of the narrative. It involves concrete elements such as streets, neighborhoods, and architectural details, as well as the conceptual mapping of these places as symbols for larger ideas. In *Dubliners*, Joyce does not merely set his stories in Dublin; he uses the city's layout—its narrow alleys, busy markets, and modest homes—to mirror the constraints and potentials of the lives unfolding within it. This spatial mapping is both literal and metaphorical, suggesting the physical confinements of the city alongside the social and psychological boundaries experienced by its inhabitants.

Integrating these two dimensions means analyzing how the physical settings (the spatial) interact with the characters' internal states (the emotional). For instance, when a character walks down a familiar street in Dublin, the details of the surroundings can evoke complex emotions—nostalgia, fear of confinement, or a spark of hope for change.

[2] For this study, frequency was the only indicator considered.

Place, Identity, and Emotion

Spatial theory frameworks provide robust theoretical anchors for analyzing the interplay between physical space and subjective experience in Joyce's narratives. We draw on de Certeau's concept of "spatial practices," (1988) which emphasizes how everyday movements and practices enable individuals to re-interpret and reshape their environments. This perspective views space as dynamic and continuously crafted through the lived actions of people navigating it. Similarly, Henri Lefebvre's notion of the "social production of space" (1991) contends that space is not a neutral backdrop but is actively constructed by social processes, power relations, and cultural practices. Lefebvre's framework posits that every urban landscape, such as Dublin, is imbued with meanings that reflect the socio-political conditions and histories of its inhabitants.

Anchoring our analysis in these theories allows us to see Dublin not merely as a static setting but as a dynamic, evolving entity. Joyce's detailed depictions of streets and neighborhoods can be re-read as the tangible manifestations of both de Certeau's spatial practices and Lefebvre's social production of space. This approach illuminates how characters navigate not only the physical urban layout but also their inner emotional landscapes, thereby revealing a deeper layer in the narrative where place and identity are inextricably intertwined.

Joyce's Dublin is a city where place is inextricably linked to personal identity. The physical locations within the city, from the narrow streets to the intimate interiors of homes, reflect the characters' psychological states and societal roles. In *Dubliners*, Joyce uses detailed descriptions of Dublin's streets, pubs, homes, and everyday landmarks to mirror the characters' inner states. His narratives often drift between the external world and the inner world of thoughts and memories. For instance, the settings in stories like "A Little Cloud" and "Eveline" are not mere backdrops but active elements that influence and mirror the characters' inner turmoil and aspirations. In "A Little Cloud," the protagonist's smallness is mirrored by the confinement of his environment, emphasizing his feelings of inadequacy and unfulfilled dreams. Similarly, Eveline's home, filled with memories, domestic chores, and other obligations, represents her inner conflict and the weight of familial duty.

The city is constructed on multiple levels, existing simultaneously in the realms of imagination and emotional experience as well as in the physicality of its built environment. James Joyce's narrative technique in *Dubliners* is inseparable from the portrayal of Dublin itself—a city that is not merely a milieu but a complex, living entity shaping the inner lives of its inhabitants. This multifaceted depiction allows readers to engage with Dublin not only as a geographic space but also as a complex emotional landscape shaped by the characters' experiences and perceptions. Through Joyce's meticulous narrative, the city becomes a tapestry of lived realities and psychological states, weaving together the tangible and the intangible aspects of urban life. This layered construction of the city accentuates the combination between place and identity, revealing how physical spaces influence and are influenced by the emotional

and imaginative lives of its inhabitants. By presenting these richly drawn characters and their interactions with their environment, Joyce reveals the profound impact of place on the formation of identity and emotional experience. The intersection of location and personal narrative is essential to understanding the deeper themes and social critiques embedded in the fictional work. This intimate relationship signifies that the spatial environment is shaped by the individuals and, in turn, defines their existence. The portrayal of characters, marked by positive and negative emotions, highlights this connection.

Throughout the stories, readers encounter a city inhabited by impoverished conmen, failed artists, timid spinsters, bullied shop girls, misanthropic celibates, and belligerent, lonely drunks. These narratives depict desperate lives lived on the margins—lives Joyce intimately understood—which demonstrates how place plays a major role in the construction of identities, as Joyce articulated in his 1900 essay "Ibsen's New Drama": "They [the characters] may be bores, but the drama in which they live, and move is invariably powerful" (Mason and Ellman 1959, 65).

James Joyce explores the profound connection individuals have with their surroundings, illustrating how they are more than just external objects; they are integral to the characters' experiences and identities. The spatial object is shaped by the subject, and the subject is embedded within it. Marie-Laure Ryan (1992) introduces the principle of minimal departure, wherein place names borrowed from the real world enable readers to form mental representations based on their actual life experiences and knowledge. This narrative technique allows elements of the real world to enter the fictional world, facilitating readers' imagination and identification with the characters and stories. Joyce's meticulous attention to small details—whether it is the hum of a city street or the distinct buzz of a local pub—infuses the narrative with an authenticity that places the reader directly into Dublin's urban landscape. However, beneath this realistic surface, each detail is loaded with symbolism. The repetitive motions of daily life, the claustrophobic quality of the environment, and even the distinctive sounds of Dublin's vernacular are all emblematic of a broader social stagnation. For instance, the physical confines of Dublin mirror the limitations imposed by societal expectations and cultural inertia. Joyce's narrative technique, then, is not just about depicting a city; it is about using that depiction to question the possibilities for escape, transformation, or renewal.

Another striking aspect of Joyce's technique is his ability to fuse external observation with internal reflection. The narratives in *Dubliners* frequently shift between quiet, descriptive passages of the surrounding cityscape and the inner monologue of characters. This approach creates a layered narrative in which the physical landscape is consistently interwoven with emotional and psychological subtext. For example, when a character wanders through a familiar boulevard or visits a neighborhood café, these physical settings often evoke a cascade of memories or a sudden burst of self-awareness. In this way, Dublin is not just seen; it is felt, its mood and history echoing in the characters' inner voices.

Dubliners is imbued with the theme of paralysis, both physical and emotional, although the term itself only occurs twice. The former is evident in the first story, "The Sisters," where Father Flynn's paralysis sets the thematic tone for the collection.

> Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word paralysis. It had always sounded strangely in my ears, like [the] word gnomon in the Euclid and the word simony in the Catechism, But now it sounded to me like the name of some maleficent and sinful being. It filled me with fear, and yet I belonged to be nearer to it and to look upon its deadly work. (D, 22)[3]

Emotionally, the sense of paralysis is ubiquitous throughout the stories. As Madeleine Hamlin (2016) notes, many critics and readers observe that Joyce's characters are often depicted walking but never seeming to reach their destinations. Walking serves as a means for characters to experience their city and for readers to experience it through their eyes. However, the narratives tend to "begin in the middle of something and stop unexpectedly with what may or may not be a new beginning, ending at the exact moment of climax, paralyzing the character in that moment and leaving the reader to decide what will happen" (Leonard 2004, 87). "Silence" (freq. 26), "silent" (freq. 23), "murmur" (N. freq. 4), "murmur" (V. freq. 8), mentioned from the first story onward, serve as metaphors for this paralysis. As MacCabe argues, "silence can finally appear as the end, the limit, the death of speech, its paralysis" (1982, 45). This thematic exploration amplifies the steadiness and inertia experienced by the characters, reflecting broader social and personal stagnation.

> But the grey face still followed me. It murmured; and I understood that it desired to confess something. I felt my soul receding into some pleasant and vicious region; and there again I found it waiting for me. It began to confess to me in a murmuring voice and I wondered why it smiled continually and why the lips were so moist with spittle. But then I remembered that it had died of paralysis. (D, 23–24)

The same paralyzing silence afflicts Little Chandler, who, unable to assert himself verbally, resorts to drinking as a means of drowning out his voice. The same is mirrored in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," where election canvassers respond to Joe Hynes's romantic ode to Parnell by drinking in silence (D, 109). Little Chandler, much like Freddy Malins in "The Dead," appears to seek solace in an inebriated silence, avoiding voice and action (Pearson 2005).

Additionally, Joyce's pervasive sense of indecision, uncertainty, possibility or likelihood, willingness, duty, and obstruction is frequently observed by the use of grammatical words such as the conjunctions "but" (freq. 268) and "or" (freq. 143), by negative adverbs, namely,

[3] From now on, all quotations from the 1977 edition of *Dubliners* will be indicated as – D, followed by the page number.

"never" (freq. 58), "no" (freq. 100), "not" (freq. 310), "hardly" (freq. 10), negative pronouns—e.g., "nothing" (freq. 51), "nobody" (freq. 11), "no one" (freq. 11), or by modal verbs: "may" (freq. 20), "might" (freq. 32), "can" (freq. 26), "could" (freq. 109), "must" (freq. 41), "will" (freq. 20), "would" (freq. 200), "shall" (freq. 2), "should" (freq. 24). Moreover, Joyce's preference for lexical words like "night" (freq. 35), "tonight" (freq. 13), and "evening" (freq. 46) is notable, as these terms altogether are more frequent than "morning" (freq. 29) or "day" (freq. 41) – freq. *96 vs.* freq. 70, respectively. This emphasis on nocturnal settings further accentuates the themes of paralysis and stasis within the narrative.

But Dublin is inherently paradoxical—at once both stifling and brimming with latent energy. The city represents a static, almost paralyzing force that can trap its inhabitants in routines and old patterns of thought. Yet, at moments, the detailed observation of a city street or a fleeting encounter in a local establishment hints at the possibility of transformation. Joyce's narrative technique uses these moments of contrast to underscore the tension between resignation and the possibility of change. The urban fabric of Dublin, with its everyday monotony and its sudden, sometimes painful revelatory moments, becomes a microcosm of the human condition.

Emotional and Psychological Landscapes

Emotions, as Smith et al. assert, "are not easily located, defined, or measured" (2009, 3). Nevertheless, they are of crucial importance to our analysis of *Dubliners*, to the extent that they lead "to a more complex view of the multiple, shifting, and contested meanings possible in emotional utterances and interchanges, and from there to a less monolithic concept of emotion" (Harding and Pribram 2009, 106), being manifested at different linguistic levels. The emotional and psychological landscapes of *Dubliners* are deeply influenced by the city's geography, as mentioned previously. Joyce uses the physical environment to symbolize the characters' internal states, with dark, often oppressive settings reflecting their emotional paralysis. "Dubliners' characters interact with their environment to represent their societal and emotional challenges. Social position, goals, and disillusionments shape their perspectives and interactions with the world" (Ajmal et al. 2024, 25).

Isolation and loneliness are inescapable themes in *Dubliners*. Many characters experience a profound sense of alienation, both from their environment and from other people. In "A Painful Case," Mr. Duffy lives a solitary life, detached from any meaningful relationships. His solitude is mirrored by his physical surroundings—a drab, lifeless home and a monotonous quotidian. The tragic end of his brief relationship with Mrs. Sinico maximizes the devastating impact of his emotional detachment and rigid adherence to routine. Similarly, in "Eveline," the protagonist's sense of duty and fear of the unknown trap her in a life of domestic servitude. Eveline's longing for escape is palpable, yet her inability to break free from her

obligations and fears highlights her emotional paralysis. The story vividly captures the conflict between the desire for change and the comfort of familiar suffering.

Fear and paralysis are central to the emotional landscape of *Dubliners*. Characters often find themselves unable to act on their desires or confront their fears, leading to a sense of fixedness. In "The Sisters," the young boy's fascination with and fear of death is reflected in his interactions with Father Flynn's corpse. The sense of paralysis in this story sets the tone for the entire collection, illustrating the characters' inability to move forward or change their circumstances. In "A Little Cloud," Little Chandler dreams of escaping his mundane existence and of becoming a successful poet, but his fear of failure and feelings of inadequacy prevent him from acting. His encounter with Gallaher, a successful friend, exacerbates his sense of smallness and frustration, highlighting the gap between his aspirations and his reality. Repressed desires and unfulfilled dreams are recurring motifs in Joyce's depiction of the psychological landscapes.

Despair and hopelessness are emotions that permeate many of the stories. Characters often struggle with unfulfilled dreams and a sense of inevitability about their milieu. In "Counterparts," Farrington's repetitive, soul-crushing job and his abusive home life leave him in a state of constant frustration and anger. His inability to change his situation leads to a cycle of violence and despair. "Clay" presents Maria, a middle-aged woman whose life is marked by routine and unfulfilled desires. Her loneliness and quiet despair are evident in her interactions and the small, hollow pleasures she takes in mundane activities. The clay she touches during the Halloween game symbolizes death and reinforces the theme of hopelessness in her life.

The psychological landscapes in *Dubliners* delve deep into the minds of the characters, exploring their internal conflicts, fears, and desires, as illustrated in graphs 1 and 2, in which the thirty most frequent, explicit, emotions and feelings, and the set of *hapax* (1 occurrence) are highlighted.

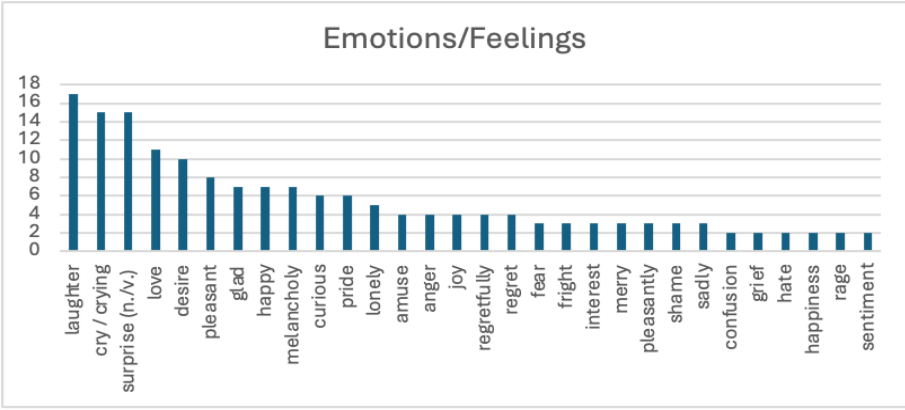

Figure 1: Emotions/Feelings

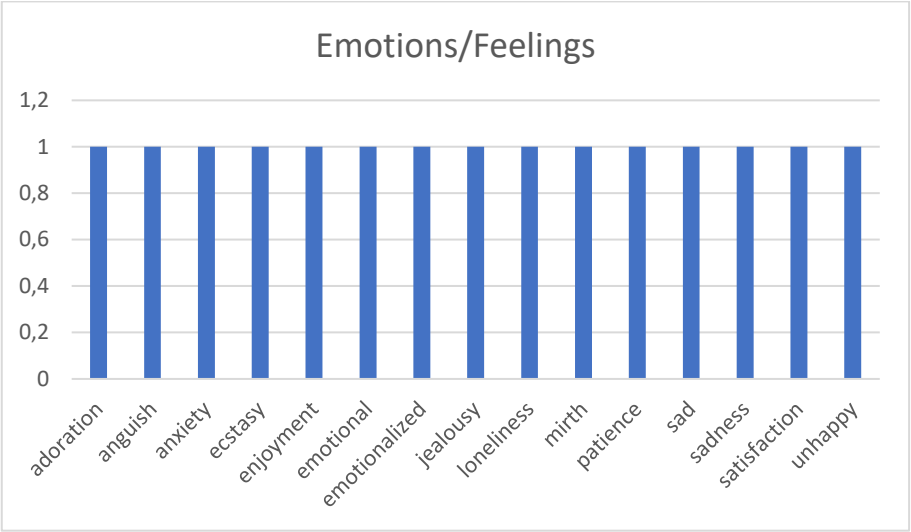

Figure 2: Hapax

Joyce's use of stream of consciousness and free indirect discourse allows readers to experience the characters' thoughts and emotions intimately. Internal conflicts are a significant aspect of these landscapes. Characters often grapple with conflicting desires, moral dilemmas, and unresolved issues. In "The Dead," Gabriel Conroy's internal struggle with his identity and his place in society is a central theme. His epiphany at the end of the story, spurred by his wife's reminiscence of a past love, forces him to confront his own insecurities and the superficiality of his social *persona*.

Moral and ethical dilemmas are prevalent throughout the stories, reflecting the complexities of human nature and social expectations. In "Two Gallants," Lenehan and Corley's morally dubious scheme to exploit a young woman reveals the characters' ethical conflicts and the influence of their environment on their actions. The story paints a grim picture of the moral decay and widespread opportunism in the city.

Dubliners remains a timeless exploration of the human condition, offering profound insights into the ways in which environments shape emotional and psychological experiences. Joyce's portrayal of Dublin and its inhabitants continues to echo, providing a rich, multifaceted understanding of the intricate dynamics of identity, place, and emotion.

The Imagetic Symbolism

The use of darker settings is closely tied to the frequent mention of the color dark. Colm Tóibin aptly noted that "*Dubliners* shows a city filled with the colors and shades of autumn and winter" (2012). Despite this, the stories are rich in color and shades of colors, each contributing to the atmosphere and thematic depth of the narratives. The ten most frequently mentioned colors are illustrated in Figure 3.

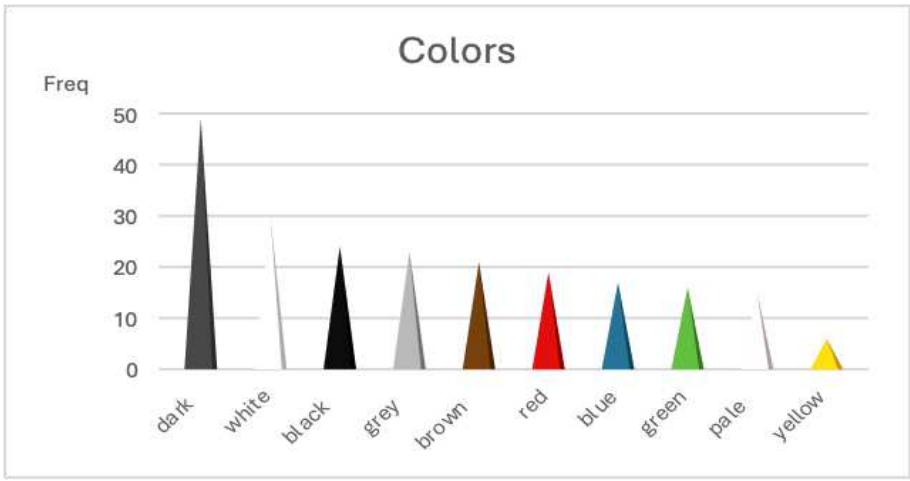

Figure 3: Colors

This use of color symbolism helps to reinforce the hue of the stories, reflecting the characters' physical traits and lives, their domestic realms, and the broader social context of Dublin at the time. The interplay of colors, together with a nuanced color palette (e.g., "greyish," "reddish," "greenish-black," "crimson," "bluish," "slate-blue," "light-brown," "light-blue," "golden"), adds layers of meaning and enhances the readers' immersive experience in Joyce's world. As indicated in Figure 3, against "dark," "white," for example, traditionally a symbol of purity and peace, is used in the "The Dead" to interrelate the somber atmosphere of Gabriel's introspection on death with the whiteness of the snow falling outside (Schilling 2014). In "The Dead," the presence of dust in the Morkans' house— "She was standing right under the dusty fanlight and the flame of the gas lit up the rich bronze of her hair" (D, 165)—illustrates the common paralysis. Only by leaving Dublin and heading west can Gabriel—and by extension, every Dubliner—experience the possibility of breathing fresh, free air.

"The Boarding House" encapsulates the confined and oppressive atmosphere of Dublin's houses, a microcosm where different social classes are intermingled within a closed space. Similarly, in Maria's workplace ("Clay") and Little Chandler's house ("A Little Cloud"), dust symbolizes the monotony and stagnation of their lives. Dust (freq. 8) not only exists in physical spaces but also metaphorically represents the city's static and paralyzed state. In Eveline's case, the invasive dust symbolizes death, reflecting Christian imagery. This use of color and metaphor accentuates the themes of paralysis and decay, depicting the existential and emotional balance of its characters.

> She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains, and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired….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. (D, 40–41)

Concerning the quotidian experiences of Dublin's primarily lower-middle class citizens, the stories move through the stages of childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and public life. These narratives trace the routines, desires, inadequacies, and delusions of the city's inhabitants. *Dubliners* is also a portrayal of personal growth, often intertwined with themes of suffering, immobility, and the incapacity to move forward, reflecting an inner imprisonment regardless of the characters' age, social standing, or professional environment. The collection highlights the metamorphosis of everyone, collectively painting a portrait of Dublin itself. The interrelation between the stories provides a thematic unity, granting structural cohesion to the book. As Fritz Senn (1997) elucidates, these interconnected tales weave a comprehensive depiction of Dublin life, underscoring the shared struggles and aspirations that define the city's identity.

> Later stories reflect on the preceding ones. What happens to marriage in "A Little Cloud" and in "Counterparts" makes Mr. Doran's trap in "The Boarding House" seem worse. We can match "Little Chandlers," Farrington's, and Maria's respective nights out, and then see the Conroy's as yet a final study in disillusion. (Senn 1997, 37)

Joyce's use of emotional restraint and realistic detail emphasizes the enduring impact of place on personal and collective identities, making *Dubliners* a timeless exploration of human experience and societal dynamics.

Social Relations

Joyce presents a vivid picture of the hierarchical social structure in early twentieth-century Dublin. The characters are often constrained by their social positions, which dictate their interactions and opportunities. The rigid class system is evident in the contrasts between characters of different socioeconomic backgrounds, such as the humble lives depicted in "Clay" and "Counterparts" compared to the relatively privileged circles in "A Little Cloud."

The social relations are intricately tied to the city's geography. The characters' interactions are often shaped by their environments, with social classes and community dynamics playing a significant role in their lives. For example, in "The Boarding House," the claustrophobic setting of Mrs. Mooney's boarding house reflects the constrained social interactions and the characters' limited opportunities for escape. The story highlights the entanglement of personal and social spaces, where private lives are scrutinized and manipulated within the bounds of societal

expectations; in "Counterparts," the protagonist's oppressive work environment and his dysfunctional home life illustrate the broader social and economic pressures that define his existence. The physical spaces he occupies—his office and his home—serve as extensions of the social hierarchies and power dynamics that confine him.

Gender roles and power dynamics are central to the social relations in *Dubliners*. Women often find themselves in subordinate positions, constrained by societal expectations and the patriarchal framework of the time. For example, in "Eveline," the protagonist's sense of duty to her family and the fear of societal judgment seize her in an oppressive domestic life. Similarly, in "The Boarding House," Mrs. Mooney exerts control over her daughter Polly's romantic life, orchestrating a strategic marriage to secure her future. This story highlights how women navigate power within their constrained roles, using the limited agency they possess to influence their circumstances, which show how economic constraints influence the social relations. Characters like Farrington in "Counterparts" are depicted as victims of their economic circumstances, entangled in monotonous, low-paying jobs with little hope for advancement. Farrington's frustration and anger stem from his inability to escape his oppressive work environment, reflecting the broader economic stagnation of Dublin. The economic pressures exacerbate social tensions, leading to strained relationships both at work and at home.

As mentioned previously, many characters in *Dubliners* experience profound alienation and isolation, reflecting the social fragmentation of Dublin. This theme is explored in "A Painful Case," where Mr. Duffy's self-imposed isolation results in a tragic and lonely existence. His incapability to form meaningful connections underscores the emotional barrenness that permeates the social landscape of the city. Similarly, in "A Little Cloud," Little Chandler's feelings of inadequacy and his yearning for a more fulfilling life are intensified by his estrangement from the literary and social elite. Despite the frequent themes of isolation and alienation, *Dubliners* also captures moments of community and solidarity. "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" depicts a group of men sharing their political sentiments and nostalgic memories, creating a temporary sense of camaraderie amid the bleakness of their surroundings. This story highlights how shared experiences and common goals can foster a sense of unity, even within an oppressive environment.

Social expectations and the pressure to conform are recurring themes that shape the characters' interactions. In "The Dead," Gabriel Conroy's internal conflict and his struggle to live up to the expectations of his family and society reflect the broader societal pressures faced by many Dubliners. The climactic revelation about his wife, Gretta, confronts the superficiality and the emotional paralysis that define his life. The gathering at his aunts' annual dance serves as a microcosm of Irish social life, where family ties and social expectations interplay to create both connection and conflict. Gabriel Conroy's interactions at the party, particularly with his wife, highlight the intricate dynamics of social and familial bonds. The relationships within families often reflect the complexities and tensions of broader social interactivities. Similarly,

in "Eveline," the protagonist's sense of duty to her family corners her in a life of domestic servitude, illustrating how familial obligations can both connect and confine individuals.

In *Dubliners*, James Joyce offers, thus, a rich and complex portrayal of social relations, revealing the combination between individual identities, societal structures, and geographical contexts. Through detailed character representations and evocative settings, Joyce explores how economic constraints, gender roles, social expectations, and personal aspirations shape the interactions and relationships within Dublin. The stories collectively illustrate the profound impact of social environments on personal development and the intricate web of connections that define human experience. Joyce's nuanced depiction of Dublin's social fabric not only provides a historical snapshot of the city's life but also invites readers to reflect on the enduring themes of alienation, conformity, and the quest for meaning in a complex world. *Dubliners* remains, hence, a timeless exploration of the human condition, offering valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of social relations and the geography of emotions.

Conclusion

James Joyce offers a multifaceted exploration of the interplay between place and identity, particularly through the lens of paralysis and emotional entrapment. The narrative is constructed with thorough attention to the geography of Dublin, transforming it into a vivid cartographic space that reflects the inner lives of its inhabitants. The principle of minimal departure, as described by Ryan (1992), allows readers to project their real-world experiences onto the fictional setting, thereby enhancing their identification with the characters and their struggles. This technique is particularly effective in *Dubliners*, where the precise naming of locations creates a tangible sense of place. Joyce's intention was not merely to depict Dublin's physical landscape but to convey the emotional and psychological states of its residents through their interactions with it.

The thematic focus on paralysis, both physical and metaphorical, is evident from the outset. The word itself opens the collection and serves as a recurring motif throughout. Joyce's portrayal of paralysis extends beyond individual characters to encompass the entire city, which he saw as afflicted by a broader societal and cultural paralysis.

The synergy of emotions within this paralyzed setting is critical to understanding the narrative's depth. Joyce's depiction of emotions—emphasized by the sparse use of terms like "emotionalized," "emotional," and "emotion"—allows him to depict the harsh realities of Dublin life without succumbing to sentimentalism, reinforcing the themes of inertia and entrapment.

Colors further enrich the narratives, with darker hues like dark, black, brown, and gray symbolizing decay and stagnation. Moreover, the frequent use of words like "but" and "or" underlines the sense of indecision and uncertainty, reflecting the characters' inner turmoil and the obstacles they face. Joyce's preference for nocturnal settings, indicated by the high

frequency of words like "night," "tonight," and "evening," further accentuates the themes of darkness and paralysis. This emphasis on the night aligns with the narrative's exploration of the subconscious and the darker aspects of humanity.

The cyclical structure of the narratives, where stories often begin in *medias res* and end abruptly, leaving characters and readers in a state of suspended animation, reinforces the sense of paralysis. This technique reflects the characters' inability to escape their circumstances and move forward, capturing the existential stasis that defines their lives.

Joyce's cartographic narrative not only maps the physical spaces of Dublin but also charts the emotional landscapes of its inhabitants. This approach contributes to the broader fields of narratology and the geography of emotions, offering a rich, interdisciplinary framework for analyzing literary texts. The "cross-fertilization of methodologies" (Ryan et al. 2016, 3) underscores the interdisciplinary nature of analyzing *Dubliners*. The blending of narratology with cultural geography allows us to see the urban environment as more than a passive stage—it is a co-creator of emotional landscapes. The idea of *Dubliners* as a geography of emotions emphasizes how Joyce transforms Dublin into a literary space of psychic and moral paralysis. The urban spaces are not neutral backdrops but active participants in shaping and mirroring the characters' internal struggles. They are spaces of disillusionment, where the ideals of family, religion, and community fail to provide solace. Each story's setting encapsulates specific aspects of this unhappiness: "Araby," the boy's idealized vision of the bazaar, crumbles, transforming a place of wonder into a site of bitter disillusionment; "A Painful Case" uses spatial distance—the lonely Mr. Duffy's rigidly ordered suburban life—to symbolize his emotional detachment, culminating in his realization of irreversible isolation, and "The Dead," arguably the collection's pinnacle, situates Gabriel Conroy's epiphany within the dichotomy of bustling life at a party and the silent snow-covered graveyard, uniting themes of mortality and emotional paralysis with the geography of Dublin.

By fusing discourse analysis with literary and cultural studies, this work highlights how physical locations, mapped against emotional states, provide a profound understanding of unhappiness, death, and moral failure, a map of pervasive emotional and spiritual malaise.

The *Dubliners* collection serves as a powerful commentary on the interplay between place and identity, highlighting how environmental and social conditions shape and constrain human experience; it is a profound exploration of how place, identity, and emotion are intertwined. Joyce's depiction of Dublin, combined with his thematic focus on paralysis and his portrayal of emotions, creates a complex and resonant representation of early twentieth-century urban life. Through his innovative narrative techniques, Joyce invites readers to reflect on the ways in which their environments influence their identities and emotional states, making *Dubliners* a timeless and insightful work. "What unites all of these is his uniquely perspicacious grasp on the true complexity of the modern world and a corresponding ability to translate it into radically innovative literary fiction" (Stewart 2006, 150). Dublin is not merely geographically described, but it constitutes a profound

commentary on the human condition, "a dense medium for all that goes on" (Alter 2005, 84). Sicher's review (2007) of Robert Alter's *Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the Language of the Novel* (2005) underlines that Joyce's linguistic innovations are central to understanding how the urban milieu influences literature. In *Dubliners*, language captures the city's rhythms and moods. Through free indirect discourse, fragmented syntax, and deliberate lexical choices, Joyce brings Dublin alive as an emotional and sensory entity, allowing the readers to reflect, in Alter's words, on "the moment-by-moment experience—sensory, visceral, and mental—of the main character or characters" (2005, x).

Dubliners serves as a timeless exploration of urban life and its complexities, offering insights into the coaction between place, identity, and emotion, and stands as a testament to Joyce's literary genius, capturing the essence of Dublin and its inhabitants with unflinching realism. The geometric metaphor of "parallelograms" suggests how each story operates as a discrete yet interconnected piece of the whole. While each narrative explores a different aspect of paralysis or moral failure, they collectively form a coherent critique of the societal, religious, and personal forces that ensnare the characters. This structural integrity is a hallmark of Joyce's modernist narrative strategy, starting with three introductory words: *gnomon* (an incomplete figure)—reflects the fragmented lives of characters and the elliptical storytelling method; *paralysis*—frames every story as an iteration of stagnation, whether physical, moral, or existential; and *simony*—invokes the moral decay within the institutional and personal spheres, from corrupt clergy to transactional relationships. These terms, conceptual and thematic anchors for the entire collection, are not only anchors but also tools for Joyce to deconstruct and critique Dublin's social and moral environment. They echo throughout *Dubliners*, reinforcing the interconnection between moral failures and the city's geography. For example, the settings often align with the tone of the stories: dimly lit streets, stagnant rivers, and confining rooms symbolize the internal and external constraints that the characters face. The narrative trajectory of *Dubliners* can also be seen as an emotional map of descent, moving from the innocent confusion of youth to the deeper disillusionment of adulthood and culminating in the existential despair of old age and death. Joyce's Dublin is not just a city but a labyrinth of emotional and moral entrapments, where every street corner and shadowed room reinforces the weight of human failure. The city's spaces—sometimes dark alleys, other times the warm yet suffocating interiors—mirror this psychological arc. Death haunts many stories, not only as a literal event ("The Sisters," "Clay," "The Dead") but as a metaphorical presence, signaling the death of hope, ambition, or faith. This cartographic aspect reveals how locations associated with death—churches, cemeteries, or even family homes—become loaded with emotional and symbolic weight.

Joyce's vivid and layered depiction of Dublin continues to resonate with readers, providing a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of place, emotion, and human experience. Joyce's method revolutionizes urban narratives, setting the stage for

future literary explorations of city life, "representing the modern city in novelistic space as a playground for the imagination" (Alter 2005, 102).

By embedding emotion and moral critique within Dublin's geography, Joyce offers a template for understanding how spaces shape human experience—a method that reverberates in later urban-focused literature, from Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* to Teju Cole's *Open City*.

The idea that only by looking at the language of the novel can we understand how the city experience impacts literary traditions (Sicher 2007) is particularly resonant in *Dubliners*. Joyce's narrative style, characterized by detail and linguistic precision, imbues places with emotional and symbolic weight. Streets and landmarks are more than mere settings; they become carriers of historical and cultural memory, reflecting the collective despair of Dublin's inhabitants.

The opening up of pathways to unpack the layered relationship between narrative technique and the portrayal of place deepens our understanding of both Joyce's art and the city he so vividly evokes. Building on these foundations, future research could employ spatial and digital humanities methods to further unpack how Dublin's geography interplays with Joyce's narrative structure. For instance, mapping key locations from the stories using GIS combined with digital text analysis could reveal patterns in how specific urban spaces trigger narrative epiphanies or symbolize broader societal constraints. This interdisciplinary approach holds promise for enriching our understanding of how place—and its digital reconstruction—continues to influence literary art.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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