

From Egocentrism to Geocriticism: Attempting to Explore James Joyce's *Dubliners*

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Abstract:

Geocriticism designates a wide range of critical practices that focus on the study of geographical space. Its aim is primarily to explore real and imagined places. This paper adopts a geocentric/geocritical rather than an egocentric approach in an attempt to explore the diverse discourses that underpin James Joyce's depiction of Dublin's paralysis in *Dubliners* (1914). While the former refers to an eclectic study of a city, a region, or a territory, the latter is limited only to studying a given author's treatment of that place. A recourse to the geocritical emphasis on what the French critic Bertrand Westphal calls "multifocalization", which implies moving beyond a single author's perspective, can thus be an apt conduit for reading Joyce's text. From the lens of geocriticism the stories included in the collection prove to be riven by heterogeneity and multifocalization, thereby offering a less subjective and a more dynamic perception of space.

Keywords: Geocriticism; egocentrism; Dublin; paralysis; multifocalization

In a letter written by James Joyce on May 5th, 1906, and addressed to Grant Richards, who had agreed to publish the manuscript of *Dubliners* (1914), Joyce explained the reason that had impelled him to write this collection of fifteen short stories: "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" (*Letters*, II: 134). He further stated that by writing these stories, he sought to enable his own countrymen to review themselves in what he called his "nicely polished looking glass", as a prelude to bringing about change in their lives: "I seriously believe that you will retard the course of civilization in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking glass" (34). Nonetheless, to read *Dubliners* only as a hotbed of paralysis, reflected in Joyce's subjective looking glass - "my nicely polished looking glass"- is to adopt

a reductively egocentric approach that annihilates the plurality of discourses that can be discerned in the text. A recourse to the geocritical emphasis on what the French critic Bertrand Westphal calls “multifocalization” (“Foreword” xiv); that is, moving beyond a single author’s perspective, can thus be an apt conduit to read Joyce’s text¹. This paper will accordingly adopt a geocentric/geocritical² rather than an egocentric approach (xiv), in an “attempt”, the term that Westphal himself employs (*Geocriticism* 4), to reveal the diverse reflections that can be gleaned by looking at Joyce’s “nicely polished looking glass”. While the former refers to an eclectic study of a city, a region, or a territory, the latter is limited only to studying a given author’s treatment of that place. It thus becomes essential to give a brief overview of geocriticism before appropriating it to reading *Dubliners*.

As “a dialectical method” of literary analysis (Mitchell and Stadler 54), geocriticism designates a wide range of critical practices that focus on the study of geographical space. Different as they are, all manifestations of geocriticism “converge when considering that ...[its] aim is to explore real and imagined geographies” (Eche 93), and that the primary object of study for the geocritic is not literary texts, authors, or genres, but places (Prieto, “Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism” 24). This does not mean that geocriticism is totally oblivious to the artistic merit of the work. Nor should it be misconstrued as chipping away at the author’s creative role. Issues pertaining to “textual mechanics, aesthetic value, and the author’s world view are considered, of course, but considered in light of their referential relationship with the real-world place, how they shape our understanding of that place” (24). This shift in emphasis, from literary texts to their geographical referents, provides liberation from the perspectival limitations of a single author. This, in turn, makes possible a multidimensional understanding of the place in question; one that incorporates the broadest range possible of perspectives. In Westphal’s viewpoint, geocriticism ceases to privilege a given point of view in order to embrace a broader range of vision regarding a place (“Foreword” xiv). Along the same lines he asserts that “the language of multiplicity enters almost every study of spatiality” (*Geocriticism* 46). In short, a real understanding of any given place can only be adduced from this confrontation between different texts/voices, using multifocalization.

Westphal captures the gist of geocriticism when he states how it “operates somewhere between the geography of the ‘real’ and the geography of the ‘imaginary’... two quite similar geographies that may lead to others, which critics should try to develop and explore” (*Geocriticism* 170). Two focal points about geocriticism can be deduced from Westphal’s words: firstly, rather than drawing a sharp line that demarcates the real from the imaginary, geocriticism seeks to navigate the locus of intersection between both. Secondly, the aim of geocriticism is primarily to “explore” rather than to arrive at a set of theoretical assumptions. This leads

Westphal to describe his approach as merely “an attempt— one trial, among many other possible ones— to answer these questions, to capture if only fleetingly the mobile environment in a cautious, humble way” (*Geocriticism* 4). In his introduction to *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies* (2011), the American theorist Robert T. Tally Jr. reiterates Westphal’s emphasis on the exploratory purpose of geocriticism, qualifying it as an “active exploration— in every sense of the word, for better or worse— of the real and imaginary spaces of literature” (2). Simply put, geocriticism is a study of space that explores real places and their relationship to fictional or imagined places in multidimensional ways, leading Westphal to succinctly assert that “space cannot be understood except in its heterogeneity” (*Geocriticism* 37).

Tantamount to the heterogeneous aspect of geocriticism is the way it propagates what Westphal refers to as “a polysensuous approach to places” (“Foreword” xiv). No longer are places perceived solely through the eyes; rather the parameters of perception are extended “to diversify sensing to include the sounds, smells, tastes, and textures of a place” (xiv). Instead of writing about a place, Tally contends that geocriticism “explores, seeks, surveys, digs into, reads, and writes a place; it looks at, listens to, touches, smells, and tastes spaces” (“Geocriticism” 2). For Westphal, polysensoriality undermines the tendency to circumscribe a particular place in a visual manner of perception. In this way, it serves to “combat the visual bias of many studies of place, reminding would-be geocritics to be open to the auditory, olfactory, and tactile dimensions of place” (Prieto, “Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism” 25). Imbricating different senses in understanding a place enhances not only one’s perception of it, but also one’s connection to it: “Polysensorial activities enhance interconnectedness with the environment by viscerally and subjectively forging a connection with our bodies and the spaces in which they thrive and exist” (Gladwin 50). What ultimately results is a dynamic representation of space that finds its clearest expression in the geocritical concept of transgressivity.

According to Westphal, the principle of transgressivity is inherent in any dynamic representation of space: “the state of transgressivity characterizes the forces continually acting upon heterogeneous spaces, forces that make them a multiple ‘territory of germination’” (*Geocriticism* 46). In today’s postmodern world, transgressivity becomes an inevitable process; “the postmodern world has already been fully explored, and the task that remains to us is that of going back and reexamining the interstices between established domains” (Prieto, “Geocriticism, Geopoetics” 9). Etymologically evolving from transgression, which corresponds to the crossing of boundaries/borders, transgressivity becomes integral to the dynamic perception of spatiality propagated by geocriticism³. In Westphal’s viewpoint, “the state of transgressivity is the name we give to the perpetual oscillation between center and periphery.... It corresponds to the principle of mobility and animates the

examined life” (*Geocriticism* 49). Tally also emphasizes the dynamic potential of geocriticism, describing it as “diverse and far reaching” (“Preface” x). If this means anything, it attests to the fluidity of space and its propensity to flee from a fixed referent.

Any endeavour to define space will accordingly be riven by multifocalization⁴. This is explained by Westphal as follows:

As permanent transgression eventually becomes transgressivity, a territory rendered incessantly mobile will eventually be governed (so to speak) by an almost impalpable deterritorializing and evolutionary dialectic. Therefore, territory is occluded in favour of evolving territoriality, as any attempt to demarcate territory would be ephemeral. (*Geocriticism* 52)

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980), the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the French psychoanalyst Félix Guattari define deterritorialization as a departure from a given space; “the movement by which one leaves the territory” (508). Accordingly, the limited perspectives of individual authors about place give way to heterogeneity, “enabling us to deterritorialize the stereotypical views of place” (Prieto, “Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism” 25). Deterritorialization may thus be said to buttress the aim of geocriticism to attend to all discourses pertaining to a particular place by “study[ing] it from every conceivable angle: over time, across cultures, using multiple senses, and without prioritizing any single perspective, least of all that of the geocritic” (25)⁵. The way geocriticism seeks to create as heterogeneous as possible an image of a particular place renders it an invariably interdisciplinary field.

In his endeavour to highlight the methodological features of geocriticism, Westphal underscores how “geocriticism enters an interdisciplinary field”, explaining that “[b]y interdisciplinarity, [he does] not mean a utilitarian piling up of heterogeneous notions, but a process that produces true interactions among disciplines like literary studies, geography, urbanism and architecture, with pathways to sociology and anthropology” (“Foreword” xiv). Westphal’s emphasis on interdisciplinarity stems from his conviction that “strict disciplinary boundaries have hindered research” (*Geocriticism* 31); hence, the relevance of a discipline that is multifocal, dynamic and heterogeneous. Westphal further accentuates the heterogeneity that inhere in geocriticism by holding that “[g]eocriticism augments (in part) and structures (a bit) the intersection between different arts” (*Geocriticism* 120), and as a result disciplines like “sociology, anthropology, and psychology [among many others] regularly enter into close proximity with literary theory” (121).

Thus, before undertaking any geocritical analysis, it becomes essential to peruse diverse points of view culled from different texts and disciplines about a given place. “The types and genres of the chosen texts will be as varied as the ‘network of politics, culture, ecology, physical space and non-human matter”

(Raimondi 119). Based on the consensus that “[t]he principal concern in geocriticism is the interdisciplinary study of place” (Gladwin 39), it may thus be said that this approach opens up new vistas for reading space, and, as Tally suggests, it allows us “to interpret the ways that we make sense of our own spaces, of our own mappings” (“Geocriticism” 8). In short, by virtue of its interdisciplinarity, geocriticism breathes life into spatial analysis.

From a geocritical perspective, spatial analysis is inextricably bound up with temporality; hence, the concept of spatiotemporality⁶, explained by Westphal as follows: “The temporal and spatial dimensions are rebalanced; in recent decades in literature as in other mimetic arts, they have finally come together” (*Geocriticism* 26)⁷. Westphal further elaborates on this explication by stating how “[a] geocritical analysis locates places in a temporal depth in order to uncover or discover multilayered identities, and it highlights the temporal variability of heterogeneous spaces” (“Foreword” xiv). Time impacts the perception of space to the extent that no spatial analysis is ever possible without temporal considerations. The space-time continuum is in itself multifocal, cutting across real and imagined places and time, both in the actual world and in textual representations. The multifocal aspect of spatiotemporality is also underscored in the conviction that “spatial analysis reveals that the present is asynchronous: our vision of time is not necessarily the same as our neighbour’s (Westphal, “Foreword” xiv). Therefore, although time and space share a common plan, they are “subject to an entirely oscillatory logic”, and are characterized by “indeterminacy”⁸ (*Geocriticism* 37). Simply stated, the spatiotemporality of a given place teems with multiple representations that mirror the referential world.

Central to the geocritical model is the assumption that any representation is essentially linked with the referential world. Referentiality is the term used to emphasize “the ability of the fictive imagination to interact with and meaningfully shape the real world in which we live” (Prieto, “Geocriticism, Geopoetics” 20). Referentiality is simply “the relations between reality and fiction, between the spaces of the world and the spaces in the text” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 6). It is only by attending to the referential force of literature that we can grasp the essence of literary creation. In this regard, geocriticism becomes “an important corrective to the structuralist and poststructuralist emphasis on textuality and autoreferentiality” (20). Likewise, referentiality evades “the superficial conception of realism that subdues fiction to the dictates of a restrictive mimetic practice” (Raimondi 114). In other words, it eschews representation that is contingent on verisimilitude. In contradistinction, and in keeping with the overarching aim of geocriticism to explore real and imagined geographies, referentiality affirms the contiguity between fiction and reality without curtailing the heterogeneity of both. Referentiality thus operates in tandem with the innate multifocalization of the geocritical model, making possible

an understanding of real places by understanding their fictionality. Conversely, fictional spaces attain their own measure of reality, becoming part of the real world.

The emphasis on multifocalization and polysensoriality, coupled with the importance given to the referential relationship between texts and the places they describe, are complemented by another principle of geocriticism; stratigraphy. This term is used to emphasize the extent to which a particular place is comprised of an accumulation of past moments coalescing in it, in a manner that is akin to “an archeological layering of successive historical phases” (Prieto, “Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism” 25). If this is deemed an important geocritical concept it is because it unravels the ways in which places have been perceived at different moments in their history. Obviously, the multilayered nature of stratigraphy lends credence to the heterogeneity of spatial entities: “Stratigraphic vision identifies layered and accumulated pasts, histories, and memories that all construct a given place in space and time” (Gladwin 43). However, it is worth noting that

[w]hen these layers are not so visible, observers may fall victim to the fallacy of presentism (i.e., the belief that the current state of a given place is its natural or true state, or, in the case of natural environments, the sense that the place has always been in something like its present state). Conversely, an insufficient attention to the dynamism of place ... can give rise to the nostalgic fallacy, the more or less arbitrary choice of some previous state of the place as its most authentic or true state. (25)

In short, failing to discern these strata is likely to beget an erratic understanding of a given place.

Having thus attempted to outline the major theoretical underpinnings of geocriticism, the city of Dublin, as portrayed in Joyce’s *Dubliners*, will be *explored* from a geocritical perspective, by means of which different yet complementary perspectives can find their way into the text. It is important to note that the geocritical concepts employed in this paper will not be tackled equally in all the fifteen stories. In other words, each and every story will be addressed in light of the relevant concepts, not necessarily by appropriating all of them. Likewise, a disparity in analysis is likely to ensue in terms of length since the stories themselves vary in their very nature, including their length⁹.

Westphal’s assertion that “[g]eocriticism has been theorized ... but it will continue being a work in progress” (“Foreword” xv), suggests that it is an ever-growing approach that does not seek to reach conclusive results. Nor does it attempt to offer irrefutable answers. His explanation of the prime interest of geocriticism may be taken as a starting point for a more dynamic reading of *Dubliners*:

The specificity of geocriticism lies in the attention it pays to a place. The study of the viewpoint of an author or of a series of authors, which inevitably posits a form of identity, will be superseded in favour of examining a multiplicity of

heterogeneous points of view, which all converge in a given place.... A multifocal dynamic would be required for this analysis. Without hesitation, I would say that multifocalization is the chief characteristic of geocriticism. (*Geocriticism* 121)

The attention geocriticism pays to a place can be discerned as early as the title of Joyce's collection of fifteen short stories, and is evident in a conversation Joyce once had in 1930 with the Czech writer Adolf Hoffmeister: "Each of my books is a book about Dublin. Dublin is a city of scarcely three hundred thousand population, but it has become the universal city of my work. *Dubliners* was my last look at that city. Then I looked at the people around me" (qtd. in Hoffmeister 132)¹⁰. The myriad of characters depicted throughout the book, coming as they are from different walks of life, are collectively named after the city, thus attesting to its formative influence. There is hardly a story in the whole collection when Dublin does not wield an instrumental impact on forging the characters' identities, be it directly or indirectly. This lends credence to the relevance of appropriating geocriticism to unravel the intricacies of Joyce's text: "a geocritic would approach analyzing a text by first focusing on its specific places" (Gladwin 39). Everything else "comes secondary"; the cultural production surrounding texts, the writer, and the historical context (39).

In this context, a brief account of Joyce's life and his relationship to Dublin and its history is still imperative even if it "comes secondary", and even if the aim of the paper is to supplant his egocentric perception with a geocritical one. Joyce was born in 1882 in the quiet Victorian suburb of Rathgar. Back then, Ireland was an underdeveloped colony of England, and under England's colonial rule, Irish land had been transferred from the indigenous Gaels, who were mostly Catholics, to Englishmen or transplanted Scots. These new landowners and their descendants came to be known as the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy (Harkness 1-2; Norris and Flint 13). Many important nationalists such as Charles Stewart Parnell, known as the "Uncrowned King of Ireland"¹¹, belonged to the Ascendancy¹² (Harkness 3).

By 1881, Parnell was the recognized leader of the nationalist movement, nonetheless his reputation was tarnished by the public disclosure of his adultery with the wife of a political colleague, Captain William O'Shea (Norris and Flint 26). Much to the disappointment of Irish nationalists, the issue of Home Rule for Ireland was dead by 1895 (Harkness 4). The Parnell scandal also contributed to the financial downfall of Joyce's family, in addition to affecting Joyce's literary career; "Parnell became a mythic figure incorporated into all his prose works" (Norris and Flint 26). This was also the onset of Joyce's questioning of the values upon which Irish nationalism was predicated. On the other side of the spectrum, Joyce's sexual initiation was the spark that ignited his rejection of the teachings of orthodox Catholicism¹³ (33). Throughout his life, and as is reflected in the whole body of his works, Joyce saw his homeland as being restrained by England, the Catholic Church,

and its own deeply factional schisms. Just as he distrusted radical Irish nationalism and orthodox Catholicism, “he had an intellectual distrust of the Irish Revivalist movement led by W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and the poet A. E. (George Russell)” (Seidel 12).

Interestingly, it was in 1904 that Joyce left Dublin for Paris, and never did he set foot in it after 1912, yet for the ensuing twenty-eight years of his life in exile, he wrote about nothing else but Dublin. When he was asked if he would ever return to it, he asserted that he had never left it and that it would be engraved upon his heart after his death (Norris and Flint 11). The intricacies of life in Dublin were to find expression in the corpus of his works. He simply “absorbed much anecdotal information on walks round Dublin with his father.... These colourful eccentricities were later to flit through the pages of Joyce’s work” (Norris and Flint 10). A notable case in point is *Dubliners*. While an egocentric approach is only limited to looking at *Dubliners* as a projection of Joyce’s own feelings towards his homeland, particularly his indictment of its ambient malaise, a geocentric reading, by contrast, would help uncover the array of discourses that bifurcate from Joyce’s subjective viewpoint. Geocriticism allows a wider scope for exploring the text; one that is pivoted on multifocalization rather than a unitary subjective vision.

Although each story can be looked at as a literary work in its own right, the unity of the text is too palpable to be overlooked. The stories are linked together by theme, style, and technique. Characters also seem as if they were migrating from one story to the next. More importantly, “[o]ne of the most apparent of the elements which help to integrate the stories is the city of Dublin itself, and indeed the city emerges distinctly as a character in its own right, single in its plurality” (Blades 39). No longer is Dublin a geographical locale against which Joyce weaves his narrative; rather, it is an omnipresent force that determines and shapes the nature of its people’s existence. In this way, “[Joyce] creates the feeling of a total Dublin landscape” (Seidel 1-2). Its significance may be best understood along the lines of the geocritical perception of place: “Place...extends beyond the restrictive definitions used in cartography (i.e., as a point or shape on a map), or geometry (that of locus, an intersection of lines defining a point in a space)” (Prieto, “Geocriticism, Geopoetics” 14-15). Space thus becomes a meeting point for multifocal discourses; one that is able to transcend the egocentric perspective of an individual author.

Structurally, the text is charted to correspond to four age-conscious stages: “I have tried to present [*Dubliners*] to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories are arranged in this order” (Joyce, *Letters*, II: 134). Joyce deliberately intends the book to deal progressively with these stages¹⁴. However, this division has less to do with the characters’ and Joyce’s own odyssey than with the pervasive impact wielded by their shared setting. In this regard, it is very much in tandem with the way geocriticism

seeks “to focus more strongly on the impact that the environmental constraints of place have on the human psyche” (Prieto, “Geocriticism, Geopoetics” 24). The way Joyce presents Dublin is very much akin to the development of a human’s consciousness:

It is almost as if, in considering the city of Dublin, he was thinking in terms of the growth of a single human person with an identifiable character. Although Dublin at the turn of the century was, in Joyce’s words, the ‘second city’ of the British Empire, its nature was still that of a large, overgrown village rather than an anonymous metropolis, so it readily lent itself to Joyce’s project. (Blades 10)

In other words, human consciousness becomes part of the place in which it is located. In the context of *Dubliners*, and as opposed to an egocentric reading that focuses only on how nuances from Joyce’s own life resonate in the text, a geocritical reading proposes a more dynamic and intimate relationship between individuals and space; one that Prieto describes as “put[ting] the emphasis on place as a manifestation of the dynamic interpenetration of consciousness and world, one that can teach us much about the nature of man’s place within the natural order” (“Geocriticism, Geopoetics” 24). Action and dialogue are reduced to a minimal in all the stories; “nothing much happens at all in terms of action, and little ... is said. Joyce concentrates instead on the minutiae and rituals of everyday life, on the clichés and routine formulas of everyday speech” (Wales 38). The totality of Dublin life is the final outcome, rendering the book “an evolving series of stories, a kaleidoscope in which each story takes a turn as the centerpiece in the pattern” (Schwarz 130). From a geocritical viewpoint, this can be translated into multifocalization.

Multifocalization is evident in the wide range of characters’ viewpoints that coalesce in the text. No character’s voice, not even Joyce’s, is granted an authoritative position. Hardly ever does Joyce envisage himself as a moral guide to the reader, nor does he directly deal with the theme of paralysis: “Joyce is careful never to intrude his authorial voice into the narrative; he never passes a moral comment on characters, at least not directly, but tries to remain outside or beyond what is happening” (Blades 42). It is particularly in this regard that geocriticism proves to be a most apt approach to Joyce’s depiction of Dublin: “Geocritical analysis involves the confrontation of several optics that correct, nourish, and mutually enrich each other¹⁵. Writing of space may always be singular, but the geocritical representation emerges from a spectrum of individual representations as rich and varied as possible” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 113).

The first three childhood stories, to begin with, are narrated through an unnamed child’s point of view, touching upon themes pertaining to children’s consciousness; the luring yet coercive world of adults; religion; education and sexuality. It is a sordid world, replete with frustration for which adults are held

responsible. Nevertheless, Joyce never explicitly denounces them. Even the narrator's denigration of the world of adults can only be obliquely understood and it never seeks to undermine the opposing discourses.

The first sentence of "The Sisters" may be viewed as striking a keynote to the way Joyce portends the fate awaiting the inhabitants of Dublin: "There was no hope for him this time" (Joyce, *Dubliners* 7). In the story, this sentence is meant to describe Father Flynn, the old dying priest. Not long afterwards, the young boy describes his fascination with the dying body of the priest in terms of three words that are imbued with mystical significance: paralysis, gnomon, and simony. Paralysis is to Joyce the worst feature of modern life and at the same time it is the defining feature of his homeland; hence the relevance of the geocritical approach: "Using geocriticism, one places more emphasis on the space than on the specific observer" (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 131). As for "gnomon", it literally refers to the pointer on a sundial but more importantly to the part of a geometric figure, like a smaller parallelogram, that remains after a section has been removed from it (Blades 13; Seidel 44). Applied to *Dubliners*, gnomon suggests Joyce's technique of omitting pieces from his stories, as well as the gaps, silences and ellipses with which the text abounds. His depiction of Dublin is always marked by "a missing piece of information, an event not entirely explained, an image that does not appear whole, an explanation that is incomplete" (Seidel 46). The perception of Dublin may thus be said to be inconclusive, very much in tandem with the exploratory dimension of geocriticism and the way it focuses on real places and their relationship to fictional ones in multidimensional ways, and without a decisive resolution; "[g]eocriticism certainly does not provide all the answers, and it is more likely to generate further questions" (Tally "Geocriticism" 2). Bringing a geometrical figure to bear on understanding a given place is also in line with the geocritical espousal of interdisciplinarity; a process that produces true interactions among disciplines (Westphal, "Foreword" xiv)

Geocritical heterogeneity finds its way in the story as the little boy navigates his way out of conflicting discourses. On the one hand, he feels constricted by the moralizing of Old Cotter and Uncle Jack about exercising and cold baths in a manner that stunts his burgeoning mind. "It's bad for children," said old Cotter, "because their minds are so impressionable. When children see things like that, you know, it has an effect..." (Joyce, *Dubliners* 9). On the other hand, the revelations of Father Flynn represent a whole new world of freedom, offering secret and even forbidden knowledge that fosters his creativity and initiates him into the mysterious realm of grown-ups:

[H]e had taught me a great deal. He had studied in the Irish college in Rome and he had taught me to pronounce Latin properly. He had told me stories about the catacombs and about Napoleon Bonaparte, and he had explained to

me the meaning of the different ceremonies of the Mass and of the different vestments worn by the priest.... His questions showed me how complex and mysterious were certain institutions of the Church. (10)

Father Flynn introduces the boy to a magical world of knowledge, not necessarily religious magic, but the magic of lore, tradition and rituals. His dropping of the chalice and his inability to grasp it in his coffin reveal how the rituals and dogma of religion lead to paralysis. His sisters, after whom the story is named, also attribute his demise to his vocation: "It was that chalice he broke.... That was the beginning of it" (15). Later on, it becomes obvious that the chalice is meant to symbolize the Catholic Church itself, and that Father Flynn, incarcerated in his commitment to an empty faith, had become somewhat deranged: "After that he began to mope by himself, talking to no one and wandering about by himself" (15). Joyce's denigration of religion is even more pronounced with the concept of simony¹⁶. Although this word is used mostly in religious contexts to denote the material debasement of spiritual values (Seidel 48), Joyce employs it in a heterogeneous way to refer to all the acts of debasement that afflicted Dublin.

The paralysis induced by priesthood, a common theme addressed by Joyce and bound up with his feelings about Dublin, connotes a benumbing of human senses; an "inability to perform gestures [one] would like to perform. With paralysis, Joyce took the term for the human body's inability to move, and applied it to the whole culture" (Duffy 197). In geocritical terms, the polysensorial elements that are curbed by Dublin impart to the readers the same sensory experiences felt by Joyce and the characters, rather than focusing only on the visual aspect of Dublin. His endeavour to capture the corruption of Dublin may thus be understood along the lines of the geocritical emphasis on polysensoriality. This is obvious when he wrote to his prospective publisher about the collection: "I think people might be willing to pay for the special odour of corruption which, I hope, floats over my stories" (*Letters*, II: 123). In another instance, he wrote about how the "odour of ash pits and old weeds and offal hang[ed] round [his] stories" (*Letters Full*, 63). Finally, the way geocriticism "operates somewhere between the geography of the 'real' and the geography of the 'imaginary'" (Tally, "Geocriticism" 2), may be said to bolster Joyce's examination of real geographical locations that are mentioned in the story such as Great Britain Street and Meath Street.

In keeping with the geocritical postulation that the spatial referent is the basis for the analysis, not the author and his or her work" (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 112-13), "An Encounter", the second of the childhood stories, hails the city as the real protagonist amid a barrage of imagined events and real geographical referents. The narrator yearns to travel "abroad," hankering after real adventures with his friend: "The adventures related in the literature of the Wild West were remote from my nature but, at least, they opened doors of escape" (Joyce, *Dubliners* 17-18), the

narrator states. In geocritical terms, his sought-after adventures are meant to be an act of deterritorialization. Much to his dismay, however, it turns out to be a thwarted attempt as he remains anchored to Dublin. In venturing to avoid “the restraining influence of the school” (18), the boy sets his plan to escape by following “the Wharf Road until [they] come to the ships, then to cross in the ferryboat and walk out to see the Pigeon House” (19). Beginning in the vicinity of Gardiner Street, the narrator takes a northeasterly route to the Canal Bridge. His destination is toward Dublin Bay, where the Tolka river empties into the bay, to reach the deserted area of the former fort the Pigeon House. They take the Wharf Road, which turns sharply to the right. They spend some time watching the sailors and then move southeast into Ringsend (20).

Obviously, Joyce never misses an opportunity to focus on details that authenticate his description of the city, as if one is following a map with directions. Their plan for Wild-West adventures turns eventually into an exploration of the city itself and the noisy streets of the port; “watching the working of cranes and engines” and sitting down “on some metal piping beside the river, observing the ships in the bay” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 20). Although their adventure amounted to watching “the spectacle of Dublin’s commerce” (20), which is the opposite of their intention to explore the wilderness and reach the Pigeon House, it has acquainted them, first-hand, with the intricacies of Dublin life, ultimately impelling the boy to admit: “looking at the high masts, I saw or imagined the geography which had been scantily dosed to me at school gradually taking substance under my eyes” (20). Different aspects of Dublin come together in the boy’s recounting of their imagined adventure. The constant oscillation between the real city of Dublin and their imagined adventures may be said to enact the geocritical emphasis on transgressivity; “the transgressive gaze is constantly directed toward an emancipatory horizon in order to see beyond a ... territory that serves as its ‘domain’” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 47). In other words, a geocritical approach recognizes that representations of space are often transgressive, cutting across boundaries and redefining new relations among people and places.

The story ends with the boys dismissing the idea of visiting the Pigeon House, and instead they decide to take the train back home to the city. The implied route on the map complements the journey back home; “with its absent closing line, is a visual gnomon to match the narrative gnomon apparent in the missing but implied homeward journey” (Mulliken 80). In fact, they seem to be suffering from the same miasma that shrouds Ireland: “It was too late and they were too tired” (21). Their meeting with a stranger, or more precisely a pervert, marks the end of their adventure (24). An allusion to Irish rebellion brings the story to an end: “My voice had an accent of forced bravery in it and I was ashamed of my paltry stratagem” (25). In short, the geographical space itself becomes the focus of attention; what

corresponds to the geocritical emphasis on referentiality. The boy's adventure becomes inextricably bound with the city: "The adventure is rewritten as [the] grinding and groaning dynamics of modern life conquer the boy's imagination" (Rasmussen 5). In geocritical terms, the boy's adventures become akin to a map delineating Dublin, not in terms of cartography, but rather in terms of its experiential dimension. In this way, it emphasizes "the human, subjective dimension of place, which has often been missing from geographical analyses" (Prieto, "Geocriticism, Geopoetics" 15).

Along similar lines, "Araby", the third and last of the childhood stories, asserts the significance of place as the real protagonist, and accordingly it can be best explored in terms of "the geocritical emphasis on space, place, and mapping [which] correlates strongly to the conviction ... that space is of the utmost social importance" (Tally and Battista 1). This "social importance" can be discerned in the personal aspect of space; that is, in the way the title "Araby" refers both to an exotic bazaar in Sandymount, and at the same time the thwarted desire of the young boy who finds himself constricted by the drab streets of his impoverished city. The story begins with a description of a dead-end Dublin street, thereby portending the debilitating impact of place on the boy. The boy primarily wishes to go to Araby to buy a gift for the girl in whom he is interested. She is the sister of his friend Mangan. Liberation is suggested through both the exotic charm of the bazaar and the attraction to Mangan's sister, who stimulates the narrator's latent sexuality.

Much to his dismay, the dreariness of the bazaar and its dull people overshadows the grace and beauty of the image of the girl in his imagination and he never buys her a gift; "the boy's excitement at going to the bazaar in 'Araby' is crushed ... by the tawdriness he discovers at the marketplace" (Culleton 16). Araby thus transcends being a place the boy plans to visit to become part of his consciousness and the sense of malaise that overtakes him. Moreover, it is transmuted from being an exotic bazaar located in a particular geographical place, to acquire a new personal significance in the boy's consciousness, until it eventually becomes synonymous with the shattering of his dreams. Varied Dublin landmarks such as the North Street, its houses, and the market, become intertwined with the narrator's emotional landscape. This change in the perception of place may be viewed in line with the geocritical concern "with showing how spaces once thought to be self-contained and autonomous, defined in stable, self-evident ways, are in fact in constant flux, loosely delineated by borders that are shifting, permeable, and always open to question" (Prieto, "Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism" 21). Questions related to real Dublin sites are likely to ensue in relation to the fictional events of the story: "How long does it take to get from North Richmond Street to Araby? If the boy doesn't arrive at the bazaar until 'ten minutes to ten', will the trains still be running to take him home? When would trains have stopped running?" (Mulliken

78). Geographical spaces can thus be presented through literary texts; hence, the importance of the geocritical interest in the locus of intersection between the real and the imaginary.

Soon after his disappointment at the bazaar, the young boy takes the train back to Westland Row Station:

I knew my stay was useless.... Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar.... I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark. Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger. (Joyce, *Dubliners* 32)

The story may be said to make more sense when one knows that Mangan is the name of a poet, James Clarence Mangan, whom Joyce revered. At the end of “Araby” the young boy is held in the grip of a kind of Catholic sorrow that Joyce had already addressed in an essay he wrote about Mangan, and is regarded as one of the problems of Irish sentiment and self-pity (Seidel 50). If this means anything, it underscores Joyce’s denigration of Catholicism as a source of paralysis for his homeland even when he does not directly mention that. Primacy is given to the place itself rather than to Joyce’s perception of it. In geocritical terms, “[t]he goal, again, is to get at a kind of dialogical understanding of the chosen place¹⁷... that is able to transcend the limited (subjective, ethnocentric, or self-interested) perspectives of individual authors and the interpretive communities to which they belong” (Prieto, “Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism” 25). Stratigraphy, the geocritical reference to accumulated recollections and memories that construct a given place, may also be said to reflect the multifocal aspect of Joyce’s Dublin. This is effected by evoking a real figure from the past, James Clarence Mangan, who is connected with national Irish literature, and bringing him to bear on the fictional events of the story. The story acquires a broader significance in terms of the geocritical study of literature which is organized not around texts or authors, but around geographical sites. The geographical space itself will become the focus of attention and other texts, in this case Mangan’s poetry and Joyce’s work about him, will be brought “into dialogue with as many other texts as possible that deal with that space” (Prieto, “Geocriticism, Geopoetics” 20). In short, Joyce’s presentation of Dublin in “Araby” is permeated with multifocalization through the convergence of exoticism, sexuality, politics, religion, and literature.

Space transcends the boundaries of Dublin, aiming at reaching Buenos Aires in another thwarted attempt at deterritorialization in “Eveline”, the first of the adolescent stories. The constant oscillation between Eveline’s actual entrapment in Dublin on the one hand, and the prospect of escaping to Buenos Aires, on the other, may be viewed as a postulated enactment of geocritical transgressivity. The geocritical emphasis on “permanent fluidity” (Westphal, “Foreword” xv), may be

said to define Eveline's movement between opposing alternatives: Dublin and Buenos Aires; the present and the future; duty and desire; her father and her lover; incarceration and liberation, and, most significantly, the movement between "the geography of the 'real' and the geography of the 'imaginary'" (Tally, "Geocriticism" 2).

The story begins with Eveline standing at her windowsill where she remains immobilized throughout the story. It is worth noting that "Joyce first published 'Eveline' in the very month that he and Nora planned their escape from Dublin¹⁸, so in some sense he must have understood the difficulty of the decision for Eveline and even the odds against her making it" (Seidel 53). Nonetheless, autobiographical nuances are tempered while place is catapulted to the foreground. Along similar lines, Joyce indirectly emphasizes the force exerted by the family; a point that has resonances from his own personal life¹⁹. By shifting attention to place, however, the personal becomes universal as the story explores the general impact of place on forging a character's consciousness.

Outside Eveline's window and typical of Joyce's technique, very little seems to happen: "Few people passed" (Joyce, *Dubliners* 33). However, the possibility of a more liberating life suggests a luring otherness that she eventually evades: "She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her" (37). Geocritical polysensoriality informs Eveline's feelings about her home with its "odour of dusty cretonne", the feeling of the "air that ... should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother", and the "familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from" (33). Therefore, Eveline's sense of place may be enhanced by adopting a geocritical approach, by means of which "we read the work's geography with our entire body.... [A]ll odorous, haptic, auditory, and visual evocations of place combine.... Smells, tastes, hardnesses, softnesses, temperatures, sounds, and sights hit us all 'at one stroke'" (Moslund 35). Colours, such as brown, black and yellow are also evoked in connection with Dublin. To cite some examples: "The station was full of soldiers with brown baggages. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat" (Joyce, *Dubliners* 37); "[t]hen a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it—not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs" (33); 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" (33). In Joyce's work, these colours "usually signify decay and paralysis" (Blades 18), as opposed to the imagined bright houses.

The repetition of the word “home” throughout the story may be said to acquire a more meaningful significance through the lens of geocriticism, particularly referentiality. The concept of home, which is the referent, departs from the traditional perception of it as a haven and a source of security, love and warmth. It is now imbued with new definitions that reveal how “space is inherently heterogeneous” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 41). Eveline’s home becomes a prison, associated with the dust which she has been incessantly cleaning. This sheds light on the limits of what she can achieve. Home is also linked with female oppression and male domination. What exacerbates the perception of home as a prison is the domestic abuses meted out on her through her father’s brutality, formerly towards her brothers as “he used often to hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 34), and presently towards herself. She is exploited by him on more than one level: she is insulted by him; she gives him her entire wages; and she assumes the role of holding together the family. Multifocalization operates throughout the story, and as a result Joyce’s setting bifurcates into a variety of significations related to the concept of home: liberation; dysfunctional family ties; exotic sailor stories; familial duties; religion; abuse, and oppressive male figures, to cite a few examples.

In short, the heterogeneity of setting in “Eveline”, polysensoriality, and the transgressive oscillation between alternatives, may be said to amplify Joyce’s indicting picture of Dublin as a prison house, plagued by inertia and “the internal pressures of urban existence” (Blades 38), without being limited to a unitary authorial perspective. This is made possible through the geocritical shift from “the writer to the place, not the other way around, using complex chronology and diverse points of view” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 113).

Place is accorded supremacy once again in the second adolescent story “After the Race”. The story takes place on the day of the real-life Gordon-Bennett automobile race which took place in 1903 in Ireland, with the aim of showing off the quality of car manufacturing of the participating countries. Reality and fiction are thus intertwined, and so are the geographical referent and its literary representation. Accordingly bringing geocriticism to bear on Joyce’s narrative becomes a most apt conduit, particularly because of the way “[t]he alter-junctions between the text and the space go beyond the radical otherness that separates the world and the library, reality and fiction, the referent and representation” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 168).

The malaise that shrouds Jimmy Doyle as he walks with his foreign friends emblemizes his entrapment in a general mood of paralysis of which he rarely becomes aware: “They walked northward with a curious feeling of disappointment in the exercise, while the city hung its pale globes of light above them in a haze of summer evening” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 41). Because he partakes of the ambient

atmosphere, Jimmy Doyle is portrayed as a victim to the sophisticated Europeans in his racing team. Most of the time he feels like an outsider:

The fourth member of the party, however, was too excited to be genuinely happy. He was ... with a soft, light brown moustache and rather innocent-looking grey eyes. His father, who had begun life as an advanced Nationalist, had modified his views early. He had made his money as a butcher in Kingstown and by opening shops in Dublin and in the suburbs he had made his money many times over. He had also been fortunate enough to secure some of the police contracts and in the end he had become rich enough to be alluded to in the Dublin newspapers as a merchant prince. He had sent his son to England to be educated in a big Catholic college and had afterwards sent him to Dublin University to study law. (Joyce, *Dubliners* 39)

The way Jimmy Doyle is described sheds light not only on his naivety, but also on his being entrenched in Dublin and its culture. Geocritical stratigraphy is also of relevance to understanding the change that has been wrought in Ireland, since it is a concept that denotes how a particular place is comprised of an amalgam of past moments and events. For example, Mr. Doyle sending Jimmy to Cambridge to study is particularly significant as it reveals that he has abandoned his nationalist ideology for a more lucrative career. This point can be understood through the history of Irish nationalism, Ireland's economic crises, British domination and internal political schisms. The father has also "secure[d] some of the police contracts," which reveals that he has no guilty qualms about working with the police even if they participate in upholding British law in Ireland. Jimmy Doyle's fascination with wealth can also be understood in terms of how Ireland was economically lagging behind other European countries. A stratigraphic reading would thus reveal that the race referred to in the title is not merely a car race; rather, it is a race for power that Ireland is incompetently prepared for. In this context, it is worth noting that "[t]he early nineteenth century was ... a bad time economically for Ireland, which hardly felt the impact of the Industrial Revolution. In practice the introduction of free trade did little to help the Irish, because they could not compete with the English" (Wales 5).

Multifocalization occurs in the way the perception of Dublin is pluralized by broaching Irish politics, the repercussions of capitalism, the burgeoning new social class in Ireland, and Irish Catholicism. More importantly, multifocalization is palpable in the wide array of European speeding cars that usher a dynamic force into the stagnant Dublin milieu: "The cars came scudding in towards Dublin, running evenly like pellets in the groove of the Naas Road" (Joyce, *Dubliners* 38). "Poverty", "inaction" and "oppressed" are the words employed in reference to Inchicore, a suburb in Dublin, in contradistinction to "wealth" and "industry" in association with other cities: "At the crest of the hill at Inchicore sightseers had gathered in clumps to watch the cars careering homeward and through this channel of poverty and inaction

the Continent sped its wealth and industry. Now and again the clumps of people raised the cheer of the gratefully oppressed” (38). In conformity with the tenets of geocriticism, a real understanding of place can only be attained through a confrontation between different discourses, using the techniques of multifocalization.

Through this race, a crossing of borders takes place in a manner that enacts the geocritical concept of transgressivity: “In the geocritical context, which is governed by that existential oscillation (or transgressivity) ... space floats It exists only because it renews itself; it is renewed” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 131). This dynamism lends credence to the description of Dublin as hosting “a feast of internationalism” (Rasmussen 6), culminating in its wearing “the mask of a capital” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 42). The use of the word “mask” implies that this eclectic character is only a façade beneath which there lurks a perturbing malaise epitomized by the character of Jimmy Doyle. Nonetheless, he is vivified, very much like both Dublin and the text, by a geocritical crossing of borders. In geocritical terms, the referent and its textual representation enhance one another: “One reads space; one traverses a text; one reads a text as one traverses space” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 168).

Lured by capitalism, Jimmy hails “rapid motion”, “notoriety” and “the possession of money” as cues to happiness: “Rapid motion through space elates one; so does notoriety; so does the possession of money. These were three good reasons for Jimmy’s excitement” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 40). Much to his detriment, this insipid excitement leads to his demise as he loses his money in a gambling: “He knew that he would regret in the morning but at present he was glad of the rest, glad of the dark stupor that would cover up his folly” (44). It is only by taking into account the importance of place that Jimmy Doyle’s predicament as a Dubliner becomes palpable. In short, “[m]ore delicate strands of the Dubliners web become visible when we consider space and geographic labels as signifiers of characters’ distinct political views and circumstances” (Mulliken 89).

The real and the imaginary converge in the ironically entitled story “Two Gallants”, the third of the adolescent texts. The narrative unfolds along a series of real places in Dublin, thereby attesting to the relevance of a geocritical reading. The opening scene stages an inextricable connection between the city and its people on the one hand, and reality and fiction, on the other:

The grey warm evening of August had descended upon the city and a mild warm air, a memory of summer, circulated in the streets. The streets, shuttered for the repose of Sunday, swarmed with a gaily coloured crowd. Like illumined pearls the lamps shone from the summits of their tall poles upon the living texture below which, changing shape and hue unceasingly, sent up into the warm grey evening air an unchanging unceasing murmur. (Joyce, *Dubliners* 45)

Emblematizing this setup are the two characters Corley and Lenehan, portrayed throughout the story through their advancement in the city as Joyce pinpoints one Dublin street after the other. They are first introduced coming down the hill of Rutland Square. The starting point for Corley's usual route of loitering along the streets in search for cheap sexual liaisons is Dame Street, situated at the heart of the city. He proceeds with his route, taking his "slavey" on a tram ride to the Donnybrook suburb (46), and ends with their meeting in a field. More Dublin landmarks are mentioned as Corley recounts his experience to Lenehan: "I was going along Dame Street and I spotted a fine tart under Waterhouse's So we went for a walk round by the canal and she told me she was a slavey in a house in Baggot Street.... Then next Sunday I met her by appointment. We went out to Donnybrook and I brought her into a field there" (46). Similarly, Lenehan "measures his progress through the city by the public houses he visits" (Rasmussen 5), beginning in Dorset Street and proceeding through central Dublin. More Dublin landmarks ensue in connection to Lenehan, Corley and the girl he is dating: "They walked along Nassau Street and then turned into Kildare Street" (Joyce, *Dubliners* 49); "[a]s he approached Hume Street corner he found the air heavily scented" (51); "when they turned to the right, he followed them, stepping lightly in his white shoes, down one side of Merrion Square (51)"; "[h]is gaiety seemed to forsake him and, as he came by the railings of the Duke's Lawn" (51); "[h]e walked listlessly round Stephen's Green and then down Grafton Street" (52); "[h]e left his friends at a quarter to ten and went up George's Street. He turned to the left at the City Markets and walked on into Grafton Street" (54); "[w]hen he reached the corner of Merrion Street he took his stand in the shadow of a lamp" (54); "[t]hey turned down Baggot Street and he followed them at once" (55); and finally "[t]hey ... reached the corner of Ely Place" (55).

The way the narrative is interspersed with real Dublin places may be said to exemplify the geocritical emphasis on the convergence of space and text:

It sometimes happens that the text and the place overlap to the point that they end up merging. The place is then a text that is a place, or perhaps the text is a place that is a text. Reading a place and perceiving a text, the perception of what is read in a place, the multiple interweavings between the page and the stone or the earth— any combination is possible. (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 158)

This "combination" is a feature of the heterogeneity of space postulated by geocriticism. As a result, "the narrative is de-linearized, new structures and relationships emerge" (Mulliken 88). The new "combinations", "structures" and "relationships" that are being forged imbue the geographical referent with a new significance, rendering the author a cartographer in his/her own right, as Westphal suggests, "the referent is no longer necessarily the one you think it is. In short, the

writer becomes the author of the city” (*Geocriticism* 156). Consequently, the egocentrism of Joyce’s repudiation of the mercantilist values that mar romance in Dublin dissipates into his new role as “the author of the city”. If this signifies anything, it reiterates the pervasive impact of space on forging human consciousness. Simply stated, characters become emblematic of their spatial context. Betrayed by the forces of their society, Corley and Lenehan, in their turn, start to exploit others, particularly disempowered female figures.

“Two Gallants” can be read in conjunction with “The Boarding House”, the fourth and last of the adolescent stories. While the former depicts a disempowered girl, exploited by two frustrated men, the latter focuses on a young man, Bob Doran, who is tricked into marriage by the scheming Mrs. Mooney and her daughter Polly. Dublin, the geographical referent of the entire book, plays the very same decisive role. “Dublin is such a small city: everyone knows everyone else’s business”, Bob Doran emphatically states in the story (Joyce, *Dubliners* 61). Interestingly, Joyce himself was so well versed in everyone’s business in Dublin: “Everyone else’s business becomes the stuff of Joyce’s narratives – stories his father told about friends, family, and colleagues, stories local Dubliners tell about each other” (Seidel 2). Joyce’s expertise may thus be said to acquire further significance in the light of Westphal’s conviction that in the geocritical model, “[t]he construction of the place is no longer performed in absentia; the writer maintains an immediate and lived, almost carnal, relationship with the spaces that he then transcribes in his work” (*Geocriticism* 156). Nowhere is this relationship more fully expressed than in Joyce’s relationship to Dublin.

By appropriating the geocritical model, “we opt for a plural point of view, which is located at the crossroads of distinct representations” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 114). In “The Boarding House” multifocalization operates through the myriad geographical references that punctuate the text, each of which is charged with deeper significance. Throughout the story, geocritical referentiality maintains a strong foothold and is thematically related to Bob Doran’s entrapment in his relationship with Polly. For instance, “the local references are associated with the family that is trapping him: Spring Gardens refer to a place connected with Mrs. Mooney, who figures strongly in Doran’s capture” (Mulliken 83). Hardwicke Street, to take another example, is where the boarding house is located. Fleet Street is the one where Polly’s brother works. The other local references near St. George’s Church are related to Doran’s confession and foreshadow his marriage. The sombreness of the Church is also very much in keeping with Joyce’s wariness of religion. Referentiality thus plays a very important role in reflecting the religious practices of the day:

In the story, Mrs. Mooney intends to walk from her establishment in Hardwicke Street south and east 11 minutes to the Catholic Church in

Marlborough Street Although the church is never directly named, the map indicates it could only be St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, the first Catholic Church to be officially acknowledged in Great Britain since the Protestant Reformation. St. George's, on the other hand, located nearer than the pro-cathedral to the boarding house, belonged to the Church of Ireland. The juxtaposition of the two churches in such short textual and geographic proximity invokes the tension between the religious values and doctrines of each church. (83)

Religion, a focal thematic issue for Joyce, is thus broached through referentiality. The "textual and geographic proximity" Mulliken refers to corresponds to the way geocriticism operates between the "geography of the imaginary" and "the geography of the real" (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 158). The organization of the story around factual places that exist on the map instead of a traditional linear sequence narrated by Joyce, makes the narrative unfold in a network-like manner underpinned by multifocalization.

Spatiotemporality can be discerned in the way time impacts the perception of place. Issues pertaining to class division in Dublin at this particular point in its history are brought to bear on understanding place. A case in point is Hardwicke Street, the part of Dublin during that time "where middle-class homes and tenements intermingled" (Rasmussen 7). This is expressed in the residents of the boarding house: "it had a floating population made up of tourists from Liverpool and the Isle of Man and, occasionally, artists from the music halls. Its resident population was made up of clerks from the city" (Joyce, *Dubliners* 57). In short, and in line with spatiotemporality, temporal considerations impact spatial analysis.

Moving on to the four stories of maturity, it becomes evident that they are pivoted on the very same attention accorded to space. To begin with, Little Chandler, the disenchanted character in "A Little Cloud", is depicted in terms of different Dublin landmarks. In this respect, the story unfolds in tandem with the way geocriticism explores the overlapping landscapes of actual geographical referents, on the one hand, and literary representations, on the other. For instance, the story begins with Little Chandler's recollections of North Wall: "Eight years before he had seen his friend off at the North Wall and wished him godspeed" (Joyce, *Dubliners* 65). Soon afterwards, it is revealed that this friend, Gallaher "had got on" (65), and had been thriving in London ever since, in contrast to Chandler's entrapment in Dublin: "As he sat at his desk in the King's Inns he thought what changes those eight years had brought. The friend whom he had known under a shabby and necessitous guise had become a brilliant figure on the London Press" (65). In a moment of epiphany, it dawns upon Chandler that "if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin" (67). This realization reflects the malaise of the ambient setup and is revealed in terms of his crossing Dublin's Grattan Bridge:

As he crossed Grattan Bridge he looked down the river towards the lower quays and pitied the poor stunted houses. They seemed to him a band of tramps, huddled together along the riverbanks, their old coats covered with dust and soot, stupefied by the panorama of sunset and waiting for the first chill of night bid them arise, shake themselves and be gone. He wondered whether he could write a poem to express his idea. (67)

Unfortunately, the poem is never written and never does he leave Dublin. He even shies away from reading a book: “as he sat in the little room off the hall, he had been tempted to take one [book] down from the bookshelf and read out something to his wife. But shyness had always held him back; and so the books had remained on their shelves” (66). Even the park outside his office in the King’s Inns, another important Dublin landmark, offers no relief from the tedium of his work. In fact, he becomes even more sullen as he ponders his life: “He watched the scene and thought of life; and...he became sad. A gentle melancholy took possession of him. He felt how useless it was to struggle against fortune” (65).

Chandler’s pausing to observe sites of urban life for poetic inspiration is in vain and does very little to cheer him up. His misery and incarceration are further exacerbated by his domineering wife, and the only way out for him is to “plunge himself eagerly into self-deceptive daydreams” (Boysen 163). The Dublin routes he traverses and the sites he passes by are always remembered with immediacy that is in line with geocritical polysensoriality and how it “contributes to the structuring and definition of space” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 133). To cite a few examples: “he walked swiftly down Henrietta Street. The golden sunset was waning and the air had grown sharp. A horde of grimy children populated the street” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 66). In another instance, he remembers a Dublin restaurant: “He had never been in Corless’s but he knew the value of the name. He knew that people went there after the theatre to eat oysters and drink liqueurs” (66). The acme of his frustration is also described in terms of the voice of his wailing child: “It was useless. He couldn’t read. He couldn’t do anything. The wailing of the child pierced the drum of his ear. It was useless, useless! He was a prisoner for life” (78). All these sensory images can be read in terms of polysensoriality by means of which “[s]eeing and hearing ... [help] to discover meaning in the text” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 131).

In contradistinction to Dublin, London and Paris are depicted as realms of liberation and movement. Gallaher’s success in these cities may be understood as an act of transgressivity which involves broad “movements” such as “migrations” or “the apparently simpler or subtler border crossings within a society or a language” (Tally, “Geocriticism” 6). These transgressive movements of subjects within space “relate to the mobility of spaces themselves” (6). Gallaher’s attempt at deterritorialization is thus a successful one, as opposed to Chandler’s. In short, the varying spatial ranges of Dublin, with its routes, sites and landmarks, alongside Paris

and London that are represented in “A Little Cloud” may be understood in terms of the geocritical merging of the geographical referent and the literary text.

The second of the maturity stories, “Counterparts”, is primarily pivoted on two spatial categories: the regimented life of the office with its inherent tedium, vis-à-vis the exuberant ambiance of city pubs. Farrington, the main character in the story, is meant to represent how “the typical inhabitant of Dublin upholds the system and its brutality by distributing his own repression and humiliation downwards” (Boysen 162). Being subjected to humiliation at the hands of his boss Mr. Alleyne at the office, he vents his anger on his son at home. As a result, he becomes a *counterpart* to his abuser, triggering a never-ending cycle of exploitation. It all starts with the day Mr. Alleyne had overheard Farrington making fun of his Ulster accent to amuse others; “since the day Mr. Alleyne had overheard him mimicking his North of Ireland accent to amuse Higgins and Miss Parker” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 85). It is in this context that geocriticism becomes a helpful tool in understanding the story through stratigraphy, for it is only by understanding some aspects of Irish history that one can gain insight into the issue of language, particularly as far as the Ulster dialect is concerned. It is also through geocritical interdisciplinarity, which operates through interactions among disciplines, that the linguistic and political debates of the time become more significant.

Ulster is often used as a synonym for Northern Ireland, and Northern Hiberno-English (NHE) is associated with Ulster and its capital Belfast. Irish English, or Hiberno-English, was influenced by Gaelic. By the beginning of the nineteenth-century, half the population of Ireland was speaking English. The increasing use of English was due to oppressive English authority, and also as a result of the desire of the Irish themselves, as Ireland became increasingly identified with deprivation and low status (Wales 4-5). As a literary language, Irish declined and Gaelic culture was seen as barbarous. Outside Ulster, the Protestant religion never gained a firm foothold, although members of the Ascendancy were mostly Protestants. When Ireland became officially annexed to England by the Act of Union in 1800, the use of English increased²⁰. As the nineteenth century progressed, unrest amongst the people persisted, and “English became the lingua franca of political oratory and journalism, and eventually the language of the movement for independence” (5). In Joyce’s writings, “the distinction between northern and southern speech is noted.... Interestingly there is just a hint of antagonism between north and south, reflected in non-flattering descriptions. Dublin, as the capital, has throughout its history been predominantly English-speaking, yet there is no escaping the Gaelic influence” (8).

From the standpoint of geocriticism, such historical facts about Dublin are never considered a digression, nor are they superfluously read in conjunction with the literary text: “With geocriticism, one emphasizes this inherent spatiality while also focusing one’s critical gaze on those aspects of literature (and other texts not

always deemed literary) that give meaning to our spatialized sense of being” (Tally, “Geocriticism” 6). Space thus becomes inextricably connected with both literary and non-literary texts. In short, the issue of language, addressed implicitly in “Counterparts”, becomes understandable through a stratigraphic reading of the text, and also in terms of interdisciplinarity.

Since multifocalization brings in as many voices as possible, “including both insider and outsider perspectives, and also ... include[s], when possible, nonliterary texts” (Prieto, “Geocriticism, Geopoetics” 20), it may be well-appropriated to read “Clay”, the third of the maturity stories. The story merges factual geographical referents with fictional events and characters, thereby exemplifying the way referentiality “extends literary studies into the domain of the geographical referent in a way that transcends literature’s aesthetic function and seeks to show how it can actually participate in and inflect the history of the places in question” (Prieto, “Geocriticism, Geopoetics” 22). In the story, Maria is depicted in terms of the tram journey she undertakes from the venue of her work and residence in a Protestant charitable institution called Dublin by Lamplight Laundry, to her brother’s place of abode in Drumcondra, a suburb north of Dublin. Reading the text becomes akin to following the routes delineated on a Dublin’s map. However, these places, from a geocritical perspective, transcend being a point on a map to become part of her emotional and psychological makeup. Maria’s journey, like those undertaken by other characters in *Dubliners*, represents a “call for a kind of geographic and geopolitical freedom that Joyce knows the characters simply do not have, not in turn-of-the-century Dublin, not in 1914 Dublin” (Culleton 25). The city looms large throughout the story as the setting of both the psychological and physical journeys undertaken by the disempowered Maria who is held at a disadvantage for being unmarried; who bursts out in tears when she forgets the plum cake she has bought for her brother in the tram; who messes up the song she has chosen to sing; and who is picked on by the children who slip a disgusting piece of clay into her plate.

Interdisciplinarity is another concept that proves to be crucial to one’s reading of the text, not only insofar as the history of Dublin is concerned, but also in reference to Maria’s singing the aria “I Dreamt that I Dwelt in Marble Halls”, taken from Michael Balfe’s opera *The Bohemian Girl* (1843)²¹, when she visits her brother on Halloween. Knowledge about this opera becomes indispensable to understanding Maria’s messing up of the aria she has chosen by singing the first verse twice, and accordingly omitting the second one which imagines suitors proposing to her, like the ones Maria has missed out on having. Her blushing betrays the confusion she seeks to hide; “blushing very much, [she] began to sing in a tiny quavering voice. She sang I Dreamt that I Dwelt, and when she came to the second verse she sang [the first] again” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 98). Her being unmarried is invariably hinted at

by the people she meets, and the fact that she misses out on choosing a ring while being blindfolded in a game she plays on Halloween, seals her fate.

The prevalent religious strife of the time adds another dimension to the multifocal aspect of “Clay”. Written at a time of religious and political turmoil in Ireland, the story addresses this issue when Maria chooses the prayer book in the very same game; another choice that seals her fate to undertake a spiritual vocation. Much to her disadvantage, “Maria would enter a convent before the year was out because she had got the prayer-book” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 98). The story ends on a melancholic note, portending a very dismal life for Maria, very much like Ireland’s: “Failure for Ireland in the story is an accumulation of small things left out – a missing plum cake, a deleted stanza of a ballad – and the primary character is a small, left-out thing herself.... The whole of the action turns sad, sour, and vulgar” (Seidel 47). In short, Maria’s failure reflects the ambient social malaise that can be understood through a geocritical focus on space and its impact on the characters.

While Maria’s celibacy is of no choice of her own, Mr. James Duffy, the central character in “A Painful Case”, the fourth and last of the adolescent stories, remains a bachelor as part of his rebuffing any change in his life: “he abhor[s] anything which [betokens] physical or mental disorder” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 101). However, everything changes when he finds himself emotionally and sexually attracted to the married Mrs. Sinico. Throughout the story, characters and factual geographical locations are inextricably connected, thereby emblemizing the geocritical contiguity between fiction and reality. Geocritical referentiality operates throughout the story, forging relations between the spaces of the world and the spaces in the text. Mr. Duffy’s character is delineated in terms of a series of locations that reflect the change he is going through. Throughout the story, he is incessantly walking and wandering from one place to another:

He had been for many years cashier of a private bank in Baggot Street. Every morning he came in from Chapelizod by tram. At midday he went to Dan Burke’s and took his lunch.... At four o’clock he was set free. He dined in an eating-house in George’s Street where he felt himself safe from the society of Dublin’s gilded youth His evenings were spent either before his landlady’s piano or roaming about the outskirts of the city. His liking for Mozart’s music brought him sometimes to an opera or a concert: these were the only dissipations of his life. (Joyce, *Dubliners* 101)

Geographical places are also the means of introducing Mrs. Sinico: “Her name was Mrs. Sinico. Her husband’s great-great-grandfather had come from Leghorn. Her husband was captain of a mercantile boat plying between Dublin and Holland; and they had one child” (102). Obviously, these personal details endow her character with a geographical extension not only beyond Dublin, but also beyond Ireland. This point may be said to acquire further significance in terms of transgressivity which

“work[s] to map possible worlds, to create plural and paradoxical maps, because it embraces space in its mobile heterogeneity” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 73). In this way, a geocritical approach transgresses geographical boundaries to allow a more dynamic perception of space, and, by implication, characters.

Mr. Duffy’s spiritual isolation is also described in terms of his geographical isolation on the environs of Dublin:

Mr. James Duffy lived in Chapelizod because he wished to live as far as possible from the city of which he was a citizen and because he found all the other suburbs of Dublin mean, modern and pretentious. He lived in an old sombre house and from his windows he could look into the disused distillery or upwards along the shallow river on which Dublin is built. (Joyce, *Dubliners* 101)

The sombre house is nothing but a reflection of the vacuity of his existence, for “he had neither companions nor friends, church nor creed” (101). In tandem with the geocritical approach, setting is a marker of personality, begetting a person who is timid and forlorn. In this context, “space is not [an] empty container” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 1); rather it is endowed with a sense of agency that may be said to find its clearest expression in the geocritical conviction that “[s]pace is stretched to other areas. It becomes the focal plane, a home (which makes it all the more human)” (113). This emphasizes the interconnectedness between Mr. Duffy and his surrounding milieu.

On account of his thorough awareness of his surrounding, Mr. Duffy chooses to live in the suburban Chapelizod rather than in an urban setting, since the latter poses a threat to his inhibited self. Additionally, his chosen place of abode is imbued with a cultural significance that is ironically reflected in his own life:

Chapelizod ... is [noted for] its association with the legend of Iseult of Ireland and her reputed burial place in Chapelizod, giving it the name of ‘Iseult’s Chapel’. In the legend, Tristan is sent to Ireland by his uncle, King Mark, to fetch Iseult and bring her to Cornwall, where he will marry her. On the voyage, Tristan and Iseult inadvertently drink a potion that causes them to fall in love and engage in an adulterous affair. (Norris 34)

When brought to bear on Mr. Duffy’s affair with Mrs. Sinico, the Chapelizod legend serves to emphasize his emasculation as he becomes emotionally and sexually attracted to her. Unlike Tristan and Iseult, their affair amounts to a few clandestine meetings, which are also described in terms of geographical places rather than in terms of their sexuality: “He went often to her little cottage outside Dublin; often they spent their evenings alone. Little by little, as their thoughts entangled, they spoke of subjects less remote. Her companionship was like a warm soil about an exotic” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 103-104). The word “exotic” reverberates with spatial connotations “in the sense of a plant that is not native, that is removed from its

natural environment to be successfully transplanted to another climate” (Norris 38). Nothing happens beyond those meetings, and every time Dublin is mentioned, it is invariably represented as a pervasive force that he seeks to evade, but never does.

Pitted against Dublin’s stultifying background, “the affair does not... occur”, whereupon “A Painful Case” becomes “something quite different, a story with a secret, a hidden life, a hole in its narrative that reflects a hole in the psyche and life of its protagonist” (Norris 34). In other words, the drabness of Mr. Duffy’s milieu extends to his person, which is further described in spatial terms that reflect his self-alienation: “He lived at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side-glasses” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 101). Along similar lines, Mrs. Sinico’s tragic demise is described in terms of geographical referents that blur the demarcation between fiction and reality: “Today at the City of Dublin Hospital the Deputy Coroner ... held an inquest on the body of Mrs. Emily Sinico...who was killed at Sydney Parade Station yesterday evening. The evidence showed that the deceased lady...was knocked down by the engine of the ten o’clock slow train from Kingstown ... which led to her death” (106).

The Chapelizod legend may be also viewed as a manifestation of interdisciplinarity, for it is only by being familiar with Ireland’s cultural heritage and mythology that one can understand its relation to the character’s demise. By adopting a geocritical approach, as Westphal contends, “we come closer to the essential identity of the referenced space” (*Geocriticism* 114). Instead of viewing the story from Joyce’s unitary point of view about Dublin, the text can be read through a “multifocalization of views on a given referential space” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 114). History repeatedly seeps through the narrative through Joyce’s implicit remarks about Irish politics, particularly through Mr. Duffy’s disappointment with the Irish Socialist Party and his apprehensions about the prospect of political progress; “[n]o social revolution, he told [Mrs. Sinico], would be likely to strike Dublin for some centuries” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 103).

Based on the geocritical assumption that “all the senses convey perception insofar as they receive information...and develop that information through a mental process” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 133), polysensoriality may be said to play a crucial role in the story. To mention only a few examples with which the text abounds: “The bed was clothed with white bedclothes and a black and scarlet rug covered the foot. A little hand-mirror hung above the washstand and during the day a white-shaded lamp stood as the sole ornament of the mantelpiece” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 100); “on lifting the lid of the desk a faint fragrance escaped—the fragrance of new cedarwood pencils or of a bottle of gum or of an overripe apple which might have been left there and forgotten” (100); “[h]is face, which carried the entire tale of his years, was of the brown tint of Dublin streets” (101); and “[h]e walked through the bleak alleys where they had walked four years before. She

seemed to be near him in the darkness. At moments he seemed to feel her voice touch his ear, her hand touch his. He stood still to listen” (109). Finally, the story ends on a tragic note with Mrs. Sinico’s accident, which is also underpinned by polysensoriality: “Beyond the river he saw a goods train winding out of Kingsbridge Station.... It passed slowly out of sight; but still he heard in his ears the laborious drone of the engine reiterating the syllables of her name” (110).

The geocritical emphasis on spatiotemporality, which provides a “way to examine time (histories or memories) in geographical spaces through literary texts” (Gladwin 43), may be viewed as a most apt tool for reading the three stories of public life – “Ivy Day in the Committee Room”, “A Mother”, and “Grace”. In broad terms, these three stories address issues related to Dublin’s politics, culture and religion. It is particularly in these three stories that Joyce’s intention to write a chapter of “the moral history of Ireland” becomes conspicuous (*Letters*, II: 134). However, the conflation of temporal and spatial categories through spatiotemporality allows a heterogeneous perception of Dublin without being subsumed under Joyce’s political stance towards Ireland and the Irish Nationalist movement.

For instance, in “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” not for once does Joyce directly take sides with the thorny issue of Irish nationalism; rather, the story unfolds through multifocalization as different campaigners discuss political candidates and issues pertaining to Irish nationalism and Home Rule. Multifocal viewpoints also surround the character of Mr. Tierny, a nationalist candidate. While Mr. Henchy views him as a devious opportunist, Joe Hynes regards him as a hypocrite. Others contend that he is going to make use of the money owed to them for canvassing. Spatiotemporality is of paramount importance in presenting the thematic concern of the story and is even revealed in the title. Ivy Day is recognized on October 6th in Ireland, and commemorates the memory of Parnell’s death. It is marked by a dark glossy ivy leaf on the canvassers’ lapel (Rasmussen 11). In the story, it coincides with a gloomy day: “It was the sixth of October, dismal and cold out of doors” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 12). The Committee Room, the headquarters for the Irish Nationalist party, is where Parnell’s political fate was eventually determined, and he was voted out of office by party members. It thus “recalls Committee Room 15 of Westminster which Ireland watched with anxiety from December 1 to 5, 1890” (Stern 228). The main focus of the story is thus spatial; the Committee Room in Wicklow Street. The various campaigners’ discussions of political candidates, Irish nationalism and Home Rule give way to talking about Parnell, who has both allies and detractors in the committee room, thereby enhancing the multifocal dimension of the narrative. Eventually, Joe Hynes reads a sentimental poem dedicated to Parnell. The poem hails him a hero and undermines all those who were disloyal to him, including the Catholic Church. A stratigraphic reading of the story becomes a helpful means of viewing how the setting is composed of an accumulation of past

moments that have their bearing on the present. Stratigraphy thus reveals how the story is bound up with Irish politics without explicitly revealing Joyce's own viewpoint.

A geocritical reading of the story would also view Joyce's broaching Irish politics alongside other literary works that share the same thematic concern. Based on the consensus that geocriticism resorts to "as many texts, and as many different kinds of texts, as possible, emphasizing especially the juxtaposition or confrontation of texts written from different perspectives" (Prieto, "Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism" 24), it becomes insightful to read "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" in conjunction with Yeats' poems about Ireland and Ireland's mythic past such as "The Stolen Child" (1889), "Easter 1916" (1916), and "The Second Coming" (1919), to cite only a few examples out of a multitude. Their very different approach to Ireland's history and future may be best explored in terms of multifocalization. Joyce and Yeats, "two of the most respected literary minds of the early twentieth century, approached a shared problem—how do we build an Irish nation— from different directions" (Culleton and Scheible 5). It is worth mentioning that "the recapturing of the Irish mythic past by the Gaelic language movement or the revival literature of ... Yeats was for Joyce an impediment to cultural achievements rather than a vehicle for them" (Seidel 12). In his viewpoint, it served to "cast a delusive myth over the harsh realities of Irish life for the majority of the island's inhabitants and indulged in fanciful language" (Attridge 16). From a geocritical perspective, their opposing viewpoints add to the heterogeneous perception of space, and accordingly liberate the literary text from the author's egocentric voice. In a similar vein, it becomes interesting to read Joyce's story vis-à-vis James Stephens' and Padraic O'Conaire's works about Dublin, to mention two examples of Joyce's contemporaries²². Finally, a geocritical reading would even read the story in the light of more recent and less formal perceptions of Dublin/Ireland, since it is "interested in the relationship between spatiality and such different media or genres as film or television, music, comics, computer programs, and other forms that may supplement, compete with, and potentially problematize literary representation" (Tally, "Preface" ix-x). In this regard, songs such as "So Cold in Ireland" (1994), "Zombie" (1994), and "God be with You" (1996), by the Irish band The Cranberries, provide good examples²³.

Art, politics and gender relations are interwoven in "A Mother", the second of the public life stories; hence the relevance of geocritical interdisciplinarity. Although Mrs. Kearney deviates from the stereotypical denigration of women's abilities by venturing outside the domestic realm, she is still held at a disadvantage and has to rely on marriage for social survival on account of her being anchored in Dublin at this particular point in its history:

She had been educated in a high-class convent, where she had learned French and music. As she was naturally pale and unbending in manner she made few friends at school. When she came to the age of marriage she was sent out to many houses, where her playing and ivory manners were much admired. She sat amid the chilly circle of her accomplishments, waiting for some suitor to brave it and offer her a brilliant life. (Joyce, *Dubliners* 129)

In so describing her, Joyce addresses the social and economic position of middle-class women in Dublin at the turn of the century; a point that becomes all the more evident in terms of spatiotemporality. Irish politics is introduced in the text through mentioning the Irish Revival. Nonetheless, reading the text from a geocritical perspective catapults Dublin itself to the foreground, rather than focusing on Joyce's own attitude towards the movement. The result is a less subjective account that opens up new heterogeneous vistas to perceive Dublin and the Irish Revival:

When the Irish Revival began to be appreciable Mrs. Kearney determined to take advantage of her daughter's name and brought an Irish teacher to the house. Kathleen and her sister sent Irish picture postcards to their friends and these friends sent back other Irish picture postcards. On special Sundays, when Mr. Kearney went with his family to the cathedral, a little crowd of people would assemble after mass at the corner of Cathedral Street. They were all friends of the Kearneys—musical friends or Nationalist friends; and, when they had played every little counter of gossip, they shook hands with one another all together, laughing at the crossing of so many hands, and said good-bye to one another in Irish. (Joyce, *Dubliners* 130)

Issues pertaining to politics, religion, culture and language are accordingly addressed without a blatant indictment from Joyce's part.

Geocritical referentiality is also evident in the story through mentioning Greystones, a small fishing village that became in reality a popular summer holiday retreat and is the vacation spot for the Kearney family in the story. Skerries and Howth are two other geographical places mentioned in the text: "Every year in the month of July Mrs. Kearney found occasion to say to some friend: 'My good man is packing us off to Skerries for a few weeks. If it was not Skerries it was Howth or Greystones'" (130). The way geocriticism postulates a proximity between the referent and its literary representation blurs the distinction between both, allowing a more accommodating view of space that is less subjugated to the author's egocentric voice.

As implied from the title of "Grace", which is a theological concept²⁴, the last and final of the public life stories primarily deals with religion through multifocalization rather than by explicitly giving voice to Joyce's own denigration of Irish Catholicism. In this way, the multifocal dimension of geocriticism "contribute[s] to the process of determining a common space, born from and

touching upon different points of view” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 114). When the Protestant Tom Kernan faints and falls off the stairs leading to a bar lavatory, he is visited by his friends Power, M’Coy, and Cunningham. Together, they indulge in a discussion of religion, each from his different and often erroneous perspective, primarily planning to entice him to be back to the Catholic creed through a Catholic retreat. Interdisciplinarity also underpins the story in its parodic proximity to Dante’s *Commedia* (1320):

Joyce consciously tried for parodic reasons to structure his narrative on the basis of a pre-existing epic structure, in this case the three-part division of Dante’s *Commedia*. Mr. Kernan suffers his epic descent or inferno on the pub floor, undergoes his cleansing in the purgatorial hospital, and finds paradisiacal grace in the Gardner Street Church. (Seidel 57)

It is obvious that spatial references, such as the pub, the hospital and the Gardner Street Church, are markers of the stages he goes through, emphasizing the impact of space on a character’s consciousness and cementing the connection between both. The attempt to make “a new man” out of Mr. Kernan is ironically through a “retreat” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 155). If this means anything, it reveals Joyce’s skepticism about the therapeutic impact of religion. A geocritical reading would relegate Joyce’s authorial voice to the background, focusing instead on Tom Kernan’s rootedness in Dublin as a decisive factor in his downfall.

It is also significant to observe that the word “grace” itself adds another multifocal level to the story, since it has “varied meanings.... Besides the conventional religious sense of a spiritual state of purity, it also carries the sense of dignity or ‘social decorum’. Both meanings are clearly relevant here, and so is the meaning of the word in the business expression, ‘a period of grace’, an extended period of time allowed to an individual to settle a debt” (Blades 28). From a geocritical point of view, “multifocal reticulation enables a (peaceful) confrontation between different alterities, or a surplus of alterity in the heart of a common space” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 130). The meaning of grace is thus pluralized and diversified in tandem with the heterogeneous perception of place. Geocritical referentiality also finds its way into the text through Crowe Street, the location of Tom Kernan’s office: “Modern business methods had spared him only so far as to allow him a little office in Crowe Street, on the window blind of which was written the name of his firm with the address—London, E. C.” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 146). Mentioning real places in the text is in line with the geocritical endeavour to explore real places and their relationship to fictional or imagined ones.

“Grace” was intended by Joyce to be the last story in *Dubliners*. Yet, having felt he was a bit too hard in his denigration of Dublin and how it bore the yoke of British colonialization and Roman Catholicism, he decided to add “The Dead” to take the edge off the severity of his tone: “He wrote ‘The Dead’ to try to restore

some balance, showing its more positive aspects, especially its hospitality and conscience, to set against the meaner side, with its pettiness, timidity and fatigue” (Blades 11). In fact, a geocritical reading of *Dubliners* would not give much attention to Joyce’s changed tone as much as it would explore spatial categories. The events of the story center around a Christmas dinner party given by two elderly ladies and their niece Mary Jane, and held in a house on Usher’s Island, an area located around the Dublin quays. Attending the party are Gabriel Corny and his wife Greta. Other geographical locations are mentioned in the story such as the ones frequented by Gabriel: “Nearly every day when his teaching in the college was ended he used to wander down the quays to the second-hand booksellers, to Hickey’s on Bachelor’s Walk, to Web’s or Massey’s on Aston’s Quay, or to O’Clohissey’s in the bystreet” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 179). Right from the outset, attention is given to the setting in a manner that emblemizes geocritical referentiality and how it offers “a way of looking at the spaces of literature” (Tally, “Geocriticism” 8). Tantalizing to space are issues appertaining to politics, nationalism, religion and social customs, discussed at the party. The heterogeneity of space postulated by geocriticism can be discerned in the characters’ opposing viewpoints about these issues, instead of limiting the story to Joyce’s own egocentric stance. Even when Gabriel appears to be a mouthpiece for Joyce in his proclamation that “Irish is not [his] language” (Joyce, *Dubliners* 180), it is related to space rather than to Joyce’s own rejection of the Irish Revivalist movement and Irish nationalism. The conversation in which Gabriel makes this statement is worth quoting: “And why do you go to France and Belgium,” said Miss Ivors, “instead of visiting your own land?”, “Well,” said Gabriel, “it’s partly to keep in touch with the languages and partly for a change.” “And haven’t you your own language to keep in touch with—Irish?” asked Miss Ivors. “Well,” said Gabriel, “if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language” (180). Along similar lines Gabriel asserts: “I’m sick of my own country, sick of it!” (181). Although this statement gives voice to Joyce’s own feelings about Ireland, a geocritical reading may be said to divest it of its personal tone, aligning it more with Dublin and Ireland as geographical referents, rather than with Joyce’s own viewpoint.

The title of the story is indirectly linked to space by hinting at the paralysis that shrouds Dublin, begetting characters who are metaphorically dead. On the other hand, Gabriel’s traveling to France and Belgium may be said to enact the geocritical emphasis on transgressivity, which is integral to a dynamic perception of spatiality. Greta’s nostalgic reminiscing about her past, and her deceased beloved, brings about a juxtaposition between the symbolically living and the symbolically dead: “The most compelling and haunting element...is undoubtedly Greta’s poignant memory of her teenage love, Michael Furey and the effect that her tearful sharing of this recollection with her husband Gabriel has on the couple” (LeBlanc 27). The snow

that falls upon the living and the dead is remembered by Gabriel with great precision, overwhelming his senses and exemplifying how “polysensoriality is ...a quality of all human spaces” (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 122). The story ends on a poignant note, with snow all around, and Gabriel feeling spatially, physically and emotionally incapacitated:

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight.... Snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried.... His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead. (Joyce, *Dubliners* 214)

The living and the dead prove to be similar, and the snow serves as a reminder that everyone will eventually meet the same fate.

Summing up, this paper has endeavoured to break away from the egocentrism of an authorial vision of space by bringing the geocritical model to bear on Joyce’s *Dubliners*. Although *Dubliners* is primarily meant to be Joyce’s “nicely polished looking glass”, by means of which he seeks to reflect his personal stance towards its “moral history” (*Letters*, II: 34), from the lens of geocriticism the stories included in the collection prove to be riven by heterogeneity and multifocalization, thereby offering a less subjective and a more dynamic perception of space. From Westphal’s viewpoint, “when the territory [is] seen in a multifocal perspective, it begins to move” (*Geocriticism* 130). This postulation is particularly relevant in so far as the theme of paralysis is concerned, which is the reason behind Joyce’s choice of Dublin as the setting of his book. In other words, by dint of the multifocalization that inhere in the geocritical model, a more dynamic perception of Dublin is rendered possible, and one can discern as many themes and topics as possible throughout the book, to cite only a few: childhood, adolescence, maturity, religion, gender relations, politics, myths, literature, Irish nationalism, music, marriage, liberation, entrapment, exploitation, nostalgia, sexuality, family ties, love, corruption, education, money, and priesthood.

Joyce’s perception of Dublin is thus no longer viewed in terms of a single trajectory coinciding with a single perspective. By dint of the geocritical emphasis on multifocalization, literature is recontextualized in a more liberating realm that attends to different disciplines such as geography, urban planning, religion, history, among many others. However, this should not be misconstrued as undermining the essence of Joyce’s thematic concern; rather, it is a proposition to review both the

book and the city from a more dynamic standpoint that attends to multifarious discourses instead of focusing solely on the theme of paralysis. Chipping away at Joyce's authorial voice is by no means the aim of this paper. In tandem with the geocritical approach, his viewpoint is inextricably connected to space without assuming supremacy over it, or over any other discourse or discipline included in the text. From a geocritical standpoint, Joyce's authorial voice is stripped of any authoritative dimensions and Dublin itself becomes more complex and diversified, as does Joyce's narrative. Similarly, the autobiographical elements that inform many of the stories become more universal and less subjective. While a monolithic conception of Dublin is the spawning ground for a limited egocentric representation, a multifocal one opens up new vistas for perceiving it. As a result, Dublin, the spatial object of Joyce's subjective representation, becomes all the more universal.

Different geocritical concepts such as polysensoriality, transgressivity, interdisciplinarity, spatiotemporality, referentiality, and stratigraphy have been employed in this paper to address Joyce's perception of Dublin from a wider scope. The paradoxically unified yet disparately distinct fifteen short stories that make up *Dubliners* acquire a new significance when these geocritical concepts are appropriated to explore their common thematic concern with Dublin. New insights are brought into the significance of characters' locations, not only in terms of maps, streets, buildings and landmarks, but also as part of their consciousness. Hardly anything of great significance happens in the stories, yet the book addresses serious issues that pertain to morality, politics, religion and humanity; themes that become all the more palpable when explored from the broad spectrum of space postulated by geocriticism. The monolithic authority that Joyce abhorred in Dublin and from which he sought to escape, first by abandoning the Church, and eventually by quitting Dublin altogether through his self-imposed exile in Europe, may be said to be contested by the heterogeneity of the geocritical perception of Dublin.

Appropriating the geocritical model to explore the locus of intersection between the geography of the real and the geography of the imaginary renders factual Dublin places and their literary representations in *Dubliners* inextricably connected. The wide array of *Dubliners* themselves are no longer fictional characters inhabiting Joyce's textual world. From a geocritical perspective, the characters and the plot are both viewed in light of their referential relationship to Dublin. In a similar manner, the Dublin depicted in Joyce's *Dubliners* is no longer constricted by the textual boundaries of his narrative. A geocritical approach would bring in as many disciplines and perspectives as possible to provide liberation from Joyce's authorial voice. A multidimensional understanding of Dublin is thus rendered possible in lieu of a mere egocentric one.

Since geocriticism, by its very eclectic nature and as an ever-burgeoning approach, does not seek to provide irrefutable answers, it becomes befitting to

conclude that this paper does not in any way seek to offer a conclusive analysis of *Dubliners*. Capturing the kernel of the geocritical approach, and employing Westphal's terminology, it is only an *attempt to explore* Joyce's egocentric portrayal of Dublin in terms of a more heterogeneous approach.

¹ This paper relies mostly on Bertrand Westphal's theories, but other geocritics are also mentioned and cited such as Robert T. Tally, Jr. and Eric Prieto, among others.

² Westphal uses the two terms "geocentric" and "geocritical" interchangeably, yet while the former is more general, the latter has to do with the critical model he proposes, and is accordingly more commonly used in this paper.

³ Westphal employs the term "third space" in relation to transgressivity, defining it as "the spatial formulation of transgressivity, which is itself a movement, transition, or crossing in defiance of established norms. Third space appears as a floating concept" (*Geocriticism* 72).

⁴ According to Westphal, and related to multifocalization, is the way point of view alternates between endogenous, exogenous, or allogeneous characters. The endogenous point of view characterizes an autochthonic vision of space; that is a familiar space. The exogenous point of view reflects the vision of the traveler and is imbued with exoticism. Finally, the allogeneous point of view lies in between and is characteristic of those who have settled into a place, becoming familiar with it, but still remaining foreigners in the eyes of the indigenous population (*Geocriticism* 128). Joyce's point of view is definitely autochthonic.

⁵ Westphal emphasizes the relevance of deterritorialization to the dynamic potential of geocriticism: "As in Deleuze's deterritorialization process, permanent fluidity is the characteristic of representations and, consequently, of identities" ("Foreword" xv).

⁶ Westphal explains the concept of spatiotemporality in relation to the Second World War: "After the Second World War, time and space became less ambitious, more tentative: the instants do not flow together at the same duration; in the absence of hierarchy, durations multiply; the line is split into lines" (*Geocriticism* 13).

⁷ The interconnectedness of time and space is very much related to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, enunciated in his essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel", one of the four essays that make up his groundbreaking book *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981).

⁸ The term "indeterminacy" is often associated with Jacques Derrida's view of meaning as always changing. Derrida also uses the term "undecidability" to convey that meaning is always in a state of flux.

⁹ For example, the analysis of "A Painful Case" is way longer than "Grace". This difference is not a matter of inconsistency as much as it is an outcome of how far each of them lends itself to a geocritical reading. Besides, the length of the stories themselves is not the same.

¹⁰ The primary source of Joyce's quote could not be found.

¹¹ Although Parnell was aristocratic, Protestant and Anglo-Irish, he was immensely popular with the ordinary people (Norris and Flint 25).

¹² In this context, it becomes important to highlight the repercussions of the potato famine:

Small farms and almost total dependence upon the potato crop made the potato blight of the forties disastrous. In 1847, at the height of the famine, England ceased famine relief... The English failure to continue poor relief exacerbated Irish antipathy and encouraged increased agitation over land ownership, tenants' rights, and fair tenants... The agitation found its focus in the Irish Land League, formed officially by Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell... Parnell called for...boycotting of predatory landlords and those who took leases on land. (Harkness 3-4)

¹³ Sexually and intellectually precocious, Joyce had begun to experiment with prostitutes in his early teens. He lived near Dublin's then thriving red light district, known locally as Monto (Norris and Flint 32). This point is also of great significance in his autobiographical Künstlerroman *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).

¹⁴ The stories of childhood with which the book opens are: "The Sisters", "An Encounter" and "Araby". The next four stories dealing with adolescence are: "Eveline", "After the Race", "Two Gallants" and "The Boarding House". The four stories of maturity are: "A Little Cloud", "Counterparts", "Clay" and "A Painful Case". The three stories of Dublin public life are "Ivy Day in the Committee Room", "A Mother", and "Grace". Finally, the fifteenth story, entitled "Death", stands somewhat on its own.

¹⁵ Westphal's explanation is very much in keeping with Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism.

¹⁶ The term simony, which denotes the material debasement of spiritual values, is adapted from the name Simon Magus, a Samaritan sorcerer "who tried to buy the apostles' 'tricks' in the New Testament" (Seidel 48).

¹⁷ The word "dialogical" emphasizes how geocriticism is very much informed by Bakhtin's dialogism, and his championing of multiplicity, heterogeneity and decentralization.

¹⁸ In June of 1904, Joyce met the great love of his life, Nora Barnacle, and he tried to convince her to leave Ireland with him for good. He wrote to her what he believed was present in all the stories of *Dubliners*: "There is no life here – no naturalness or honesty. People live together in the same houses all their lives and at the end they are as far apart as ever" (*Letters*, II: 53).

¹⁹ Joyce's rather strained relationship with his family is a central theme in his *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, portraying this relationship as an oppressive force that shackles the burgeoning artist in him.

²⁰ In Joyce's own days, the use of English in Ireland was firmly established, but there was no variety of Irish English. Today, "a broad division can be made between 'northern' and 'southern' varieties, i.e. Northern Hiberno-English (NHE) and Southern Hiberno-English (SHE). In Ulster too in some north-coast areas is spoken Ulster Scots, from the descendants of Lowland Scottish settlers at the beginning of the seventeenth century" (Wales 7).

²¹ Michael Balfe's opera *The Bohemian Girl* (1843) is an Irish romantic opera, based on the Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes' novella *La Gitanilla* (1613).

²² James Stephens was an Irish poet and storyteller who was famous for his fairy tales, set in the Dublin slums of his childhood, whereas Padraic O'Conaire was an Irish writer and journalist who wrote in Irish.

²³ The Cranberries were an Irish rock band that was formed in Ireland.

²⁴ The varied definitions of this term are mentioned in the paragraph that follows.

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