

Lives of Girls and Women: Female Characters in *Dubliners*

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1. Introduction

The present paper analyses the female characters in *Dubliners* (1914), a work which Joyce believed represented “a chapter of the moral history” of Ireland. The writer concentrated on Dublin because that was “the center of paralysis.” His stories cover the range of “childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life.”¹

I have focused on the female figures in this work because as Florence Walzl states in an article of 1982,² although at the time there were over one hundred studies analysing separate stories from *Dubliners*, however, “one aspect of *Dubliners* that has had much less critical attention is the nature of the ‘protagonist.’”³ Also, in their introduction to the book *Women in Joyce*, published that same year, critics Suzette Henke and Elaine Unkeless say that “few critics have sought to provide fresh descriptions of Joyce’s female characters.”⁴ I have chosen the concepts of paralysis, *gnomon* and simony introduced in “The Sisters” as the basis for my approach to the women in *Dubliners* since many scholars consider this opening story as a kind of heuristic entry in the book,⁵ as a paradigm of interpretation,⁶ or as containing the three main themes of the book.⁷ The use of this pattern allows me to establish parallels and contrasts between female characters in different stories, and between male and female figures within one story. I have excluded two relevant women in “The Dead” from the focus on paralysis, *gnomon* and simony because, as I will try to show, they stand out as completely different from most female characters in *Dubliners*.

The exploration of traits related to the ideas of paralysis, *gnomon* and simony understood in a broad sense reveals Joyce’s vision of gender as a source of oppression. It also allows us to glimpse into the motivations and consciousness underlying the private and public lives of the female characters in this work, which constitutes another of my aims in this article.

2. Paralysis, *Gnomon*, Simony, and Female Characters

Paralysis seems to be *Dubliners*’s central metaphor, and its portrayal was the explicit aim of the author when writing this collection of short stories. The word paralysis refers to lack of movement, it can be a physical and moral feature. On the one hand, paralysis suggests death, but it is also found in life, with the implication of being dead while alive, which is even worse than death itself. This condition is evident throughout the book, both in the initial images from “The Sisters” as well as in the last ones from “The Dead.”

The female characters I have associated with paralysis are those who experience epiphanies of frustration, according to Mary T. Reynolds.⁸ Some

become aware of being trapped within the prison of self and society, but are unable to change it, whereas others carry on with their life-in-death existences in a childish way, thus increasing the pathetic condition of their paralysis.

The word *gnomon* literally means both a parallelogram with a smaller parallelogram missing in the upper right-hand corner, and the stylus of a sundial that throws the shadow which indicates the hours of the day. Philip Herring points out that in both definitions “the missing part is what is important, either as a space that defines a geometric shape or as a shadow that indicates the time of day.”⁹ I use this concept to approach those female figures who are defined by their absences or ambiguities, but whose role is relevant because they stress other characters’ profile in the story who at the same time reflect the image of the “gnomic” ones. These contrasts allow the reader to figure out the missing information, and understand the particular condition and situation of a given female character.

The third concept I have used to approach the female characters in *Dubliners* is simony. It means the buying and selling of spiritual things, such as the buying of a blessing, the purchase of ecclesiastical favour or of pardons.¹⁰ I refer to those female figures who participate in the brutal economics of personal relationships considered as a monetary transaction. They victimize or are victims of others who, through personal involvement, pursue an economic interest. The narrow confines of the Irish society of the early twentieth century, defined by economic depression and lack of professional opportunities for both men and women fostered mercenary attitudes towards marriage,¹¹ and mercantile sexuality.¹²

My classification of female characters in *Dubliners* in relation to paralysis, *gnomon* and simony does not imply a simplistic view of them. I appreciate their complexity, and understand that many of them share not only one but all the features associated with the above-mentioned concepts. Consequently, they might be grouped in a different category.

3. Paralysis: Reality and Desire in “Eveline,” “Clay,” and “A Painful Case”

Eveline and Maria, the protagonists of the first two stories embody the paralysis that comes as a result of living in the prison of self and society.¹³ Their silence emphasizes their immobility and self-denial. We never hear Eveline’s direct words but are witness to her memories and consciousness, to the voice of her private self. In “Clay,” the author filters Maria’s words by using indirect speech. At the end of the story, Maria sings a song: she interprets the words another person has written, so in a certain way, like Eveline, Maria also remains silent.

Eveline’s silence is related to her role as spectator, established in the first sentence of the story, “She sat at the window, watching the evening invade the avenue” (29).¹⁴ She observes but she does not speak. The borders of Eveline’s mental and social prison are delimited by her home and her work. Her home is a physical space full of objects that she has inherited. These objects symbolize the will of her mother, of the dead. They constantly remind Eveline of the promise she made her mother on her deathbed, “to keep the home together” (33). Eveline’s father limits her existence economically and socially. She must give him her entire wages and has to meet her boyfriend secretly because her father is opposed to their relationship. Frank has offered Eveline the happiness she is looking for: marriage and a new life far from the restrictions imposed by her work and

home. While revisiting her past and present reality, and analysing the consequences of her decision to elope with Frank to Argentina, Eveline has the epiphany that is her only chance to avoid repeating her mother's story.

But this mental revision of her wishes and hopes will eventually be useless to improve her existence. The epiphany of happiness becomes and epiphany of frustration, derived from Eveline's giving up to a different life. The dramatic final scene at the gangway depicts a quiet and static Eveline, whose only activity is mental, "She answered nothing . . . she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty" (33). The burden of this duty, apart from affecting her physically ("Her distress awoke a nausea in her body," 34), deteriorates Eveline's perception of Frank, which becomes suffocating, "All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her" (34). Eveline represses her desire to go away with Frank and decides to continue with her usual existence, thus keeping her promise to her mother. This decision paralyzes her body, affect and will,¹⁵ as we read in the last sentences, "She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition" (34). The ending emphasizes Eveline's role as a spectator that was established at the beginning of the story. She is now condemned to repeating her mother's unhappy existence¹⁶ because she has chosen to occupy her place beside her father instead of creating her own home with Frank, "As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spell on the very quick of her being—that life of common-place sacrifices closing in final craziness." (33). Eveline's static image when she sees Frank leave reflects the worst of the paralyses, that of death-in-life.

If in "Eveline" we read the story of a girl who chooses a barren life, "Clay" tells the story of an old woman who has lived one. According to Florence Walzl,¹⁷ the protagonist, Maria, is morally depicted as a Virgin Mary figure in her role as peacemaker at the laundry where she works, and physically as a Celtic witch (95). Such features suggest both the life of perpetual self-effacement she has lived,¹⁸ as well as the grotesque aspects of her existence. We find several levels of narration. On the one hand, an omniscient narrator shows Maria's consciousness and feelings but on the other, and ironic subtext undermines her naïvety about the minute certainties she bases her existence on. This subtext projects a pathetic, ironic and pitiable image of Maria, pointing out her dark sides. Although she lives for others, Maria does not achieve their respect or recognition. Her workmates and friends do not take her very seriously or appreciate her efforts to please them.

The emptiness of Maria's celibacy emerges when an apparently unimportant event takes place: Maria forgets on the train a plumcake she had bought for the friends she is going to visit, the Donnellys. Shopping for it had constituted such an energy-consuming task that its loss becomes almost a tragedy because it denies Maria the possibility of pleasing others. For a moment, she experiences "shame, vexation and disappointment" (99-100) for which she cannot find relief in her empty life. At the core of this feeling of failure lie Maria's unacknowledged and repressed aspirations, which the author has offered hints of throughout the story, for instance when she is having lunch at the laundry or when she looks at herself in the mirror (97). The song Maria sings at the end of the story reveals a dream of romantic love and wealth we can identify as Maria's secret fantasy. The fact that she forgets the second verse of the song, "no one tried to show her her mistake" (102), may imply Maria's acceptance of the impossibility of closing the gaps between the reality of her life and her fantasies of love, wealth and imaginary romance. If Eveline was condemned to repeat her mother's

existence, Maria's fate is to continue with the death-in-life that characterizes her work at the laundry, where as Suzette Henke says, "she is trapped in life-denying celibacy."¹⁹ This was announced when during her visit to the Donnellys Maria touched the clay in the children's Halloween game, "She felt a soft wet substance with her fingers and was surprised that nobody spoke or took off her bandage . . . at last Mrs. Donnelly said something very cross to one of the next-door girls and told her to throw it out at once: that was no play" (101).

Unlike Eveline and Maria, Mrs. Sinico in "A Painful Case" is married, and unlike them, she is refined, cultivated and has an intellectual life. But her marriage is loveless, and to her husband's eyes she is a commodity he has already discarded from his life, "He had dismissed his wife so sincerely from his gallery of pleasures that he did not suspect that anyone else would take an interest on her" (106). Mrs. Sinico's husband is a sea-captain. This fact stresses the static condition of the wife: his travelling contrasts with Mrs. Sinico's earthbound existence.²⁰ She tries to break her isolation by seeking human contact at the social events she attends in Dublin. Mrs. Sinico becomes friends with Mr. Duffy, a bachelor her age. In their relationship, Mrs. Sinico always plays a passive role, as mother, confessor and sister, deferring the articulation of her own feelings and thoughts, as we read in the following sentences, "She listened to all" (106), "With almost maternal solicitude she urged him to let his nature open to the full; she became her confessor" (106), "Sometimes in return for his theories she gave out some fact of her own life" (106). Thus she expects their relationship to evolve to a more intimate sphere, as in fact it does, "they spoke of subjects less remote" (107). However, the personal communion Mrs. Sinico longs for never takes place. Her innocent attempts at physical contact with Mr. Duffy end in her being rejected by him. He holds on to his notions of "the soul's incurable loneliness" (107), "every bond, he said, is a bond to sorrow" (108) in order to avoid exploring the world of feelings and human contact Mrs. Sinico offers him. Mr. Duffy is afraid of treading this emotional field, which is new to him, because he feels he would be subordinated to Mrs. Sinico.

Mr. Duffy's rejection of herself causes Mrs. Sinico's undoing. She will again enter Mr. Duffy's life through the newspaper report on her suicide under the wheels of a train. If we think of the frustration of Dublin's women of the era, usually trapped in loveless marriages or life-in-death celibacy, and whose relationships with men were tainted by economic interest and maneuvering as a prelude to marriage, we can understand Mrs. Sinico's apparently disproportionate reaction. Meeting Mr. Duffy had led Mrs. Sinico to foresee the possibility of communication with a soul mate. This could compensate for the lack of other self-fulfilling personal and professional opportunities in the narrow Irish society. After Mr. Duffy abandoned her, Mrs. Sinico was not able to face the perspective of emotional paralysis. Her mind only saw two options: death-in-life and death, and she chose death. It could seem heroic but in fact, it implied a life's failure.

Some minor female characters in other stories exemplify the paralyzing relationships between mothers and sons. Florence Walzl points out their destructiveness because of the matriarchal system in Ireland at that time.²¹ Mothers used to control their sons' emotional life, thus hindering the development of meaningful love relationships with women. We can see this in "A Little Cloud," where the protagonist's wife treats her husband badly, and focuses on their son, "What have you done to him? she cried, glaring into his face" (80), "My little man! My mannie!" (80). Likewise, in "Grace," Mrs. Kernan devoted her attention mostly to her children, as can be inferred from the following passage, "After three weeks she had found a wife's life

irksome and, later on, when she was beginning to find it unbearable, she had become a mother" (155).

In "Counterparts," the author depicts what seems to be a day in the life of a married couple: the husband, Farrington, comes back home almost drunk to find that his wife has left the children alone to go to church. Each of them tries to escape from one another and from the prison their marriage has become. An improvement in their relationship cannot be foreseen because "His wife was a little sharp-faced woman who bullied her husband when he was sober and was bullied by him when he was drunk" (93). All these episodes show the emotional desert between husbands and wives, as well as the powerlessness of husbands in the face of their wives. Husbands try to evade by drinking, whereas wives tend to dominate their children's existences.

4. *Gnomon*: Presences and Absences in "The Sisters" and "Araby"

"The Sisters" is a "gnomic" story in meaning and characters. In his revision of his relationship with Father Flynn, the protagonist tries to cover the gaps that come to his mind about this figure. His picture of Father Flynn is incomplete, and he searches for the missing pieces throughout the story.

Father Flynn's sisters are absent from the boy's initial reflections on and references to the priest. One could expect their presence in the story from the very beginning, as the title suggests. However, it is an elusive title anticipating that meaning will be displaced.²² The boy's doubts about the priest's personality, the nature of his vocation, his illness (paralysis) and their friendship, may be solved by the persons who lived with him but remained on the shadow of domestic life, his sisters. From a linguistic point of view, this idea is conveyed through the use of ellipsis in conversations, "No I wouldn't say he was exactly ... but there was something queer ... there was something uncanny about him. I'll tell you my opinion ..." (1), and through the focus upon words and their varied meanings, "Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word *paralysis*. It had always sounded strange in my ears . . . But now it sounded to me like the name of some maleficent and sinful being" (1).

The boy attempts to fill in the gaps in meaning that some of the characters display in their conversations, such as Mr. Cotter, "I puzzled my head to extract meaning from his unfinished sentences" (3). He is shocked when Father Flynn's sisters subvert the traditional polite conversation in wakes and give information about their brother which the boy would have never expected. This refers to one of the themes of the story, the complexity of reality. Appearances deceive and reality can only be apprehended in fragments. Such a solid figure as Father Flynn shows a dark side, and such irrelevant figures as Nannie and Eliza play an important part in the boy's quest for meaning by supplying a piece of the missing information about the priest. But even though important pieces are filled,²³ the picture is not finished because the information the sisters provide is open-ended and ambiguous.

The sisters' role as conveyors of meaning for the boy elevates them over the vulgarity of their existences. Their spinsterhood may indicate their self-effacement through hard work as shopkeepers and servants for their brother. Florence Walzl sees them as representative of the sterile and empty lives of their cultural sphere.²⁴ Their "gnomic" role anticipates the importance of the missing information, or person in subsequent stories such as the unsung stanza in "Clay" and the absent lover in "The Dead."²⁵

"Araby" is a little narrative of love and disappointment, another epiphany of frustration which refers to the impossibility of the young protagonist's relationship with the unnamed Mangan's sister. She is a gnomonic character because most of the time she is absent, she lives in the boy's mind, "Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance" (22), "At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read" (24). These mental images are more relevant than her physical presence, which is defined in a blurred way, through contrasts of shadow and light, through lines and curves, through the girl's voice and expression, "her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door" (22), "the soft rope of her hair" (22), "my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires" (23), "The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck" (24). In the boy's mind *Araby*, the bazaar's name, and Mangan's sister embody an unexplored physical and emotional location he longs to visit. Mangan's sister is also a "gnomic" figure in the sense that through her intervention the boy fills in some gaps in his somewhat naive perception of reality. This missing information has to do with the vulgar reality of buying and selling and superficial human relationships, which destroys the protagonist's romantic illusions, "Observing me the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty" (27). The boy's epiphany of frustration anticipates the impossibility of his relationship with Mangan's sister, emphasizing the distance between the two, that is, the young woman's trap in her convent and her future absence from the boy's life.

5. Simony: Women as Victims and Victimiziers in "Two Gallants," "The Boarding House," and "A Mother"

In "Two Gallants," a couple of young men seduce a servant girl, and in "The Boarding House," a mother and daughter conspire to trap a husband. These stories show the difficult relationships between the sexes, with each trying to take advantage of the other's weakness.²⁶ Corley, the protagonist of "Two Gallants," conquers a naive servant girl, and exploits her sexually and financially. The girl is described as a simple-minded creature (49) who sees Corley not as the gigolo he really is, but as an attractive suitor superior to the dairyman who once courted her, "She doesn't know my name . . . But she thinks I'm a bit of class, you know" (45), "She's a bit gone on me" (46). In order to retain his favour, the girl brings him cigars and gives him money. Being at the lower part of the social stratum, the reader can imagine the oppressed future that awaits her, worse than that of her Don Juan.

In "The Boarding House," Mrs. Mooney, depicted as cunning and calculating, is hardly more attractive than Corley. For her, life is business (58), and it can be dealt with in the same way she runs her boarding house, with patience, determination and clever scheming. Her plan is to get her daughter Polly off her hands (60), that is, to find a husband for her. Mrs. Mooney's first choice for Polly, an ill-paid career as typist, did not work from the point of view of marriage, so she decided to "give her the run of the young men" (57-58) among her boarders till the suitable man appeared. Polly, depicted as "a little perverse madonna" (57) connives in her mother's design. In her seduction of the naive Robert Doran, her only playing-cards are her body and her outraged honour. Polly sells them willingly and her reward will be the so-called comforts of middle-class marriage.²⁷ For her, it

is a matter of choosing the best option within her limited circumstances, although both lead to a cage. Being a typist implied an existence of economic necessity and possible celibacy, whereas marrying Doran anticipates the prison of an unhappy marriage. Polly is likely to repeat her mother's unsuccessful marital life.

"A Mother" deals with maternal influence on a girl's career. The reader is already familiar with the situations depicted: a loveless marriage for the mother, and for the daughter a chance of one of the few professional careers open to women at this period, music.²⁸ Before marrying, the mother, Mrs. Kearney, had aspirations of romance and a brilliant life, but she realised that if she insisted on pursuing them, there was a risk that she would never find a husband (134). She escaped spinsterhood by marrying a dull bootmaker. Marriage provided her with economic stability, social respectability, and two daughters. But Mrs. Kearney is a frustrated person "who never put her own romantic ideas away" (134-35), and tries to live these ideas through one of her daughters, the timid Kathleen, who has displayed a musical talent. If the motto that had presided Mrs. Kearney's life was not to take chances, she follows it when arranging Kathleen's first concert. Mrs. Kearney gets a contract for her daughter, with the same mercenary attitude with which she had negotiated her marriage. Later, when there is a risk that Kathleen does not receive the stipulated eight guineas, her mother forbids her from playing and singing at the concert. Mrs. Kearney's greed makes her confuse her daughter's desires with her own. She is not able to see or does not want to see the other serious risk she is taking: her daughter's musical career (146). Kathleen has no say in her mother's confrontation with the organising committee and witnesses in silence the destruction of her professional future, "Kathleen followed her mother meekly" (146), which heralds the same empty life of frustration as her mother.

However, as Suzette Henke points out,²⁹ not only is Mrs. Kearney the victim of her greed and frustration, but also of a male-dominated power structure of bourgeois impresarios who control Dublin culture. Naively, Mrs. Kearney thinks she can manipulate them in the same way as her husband and daughter, but she fails. Mrs. Kearney tries to get for her daughter the same financial treatment as the other male players (146), but she is powerless in the face of a sorry lot of men for whom women are clearly inferior to men. Mrs. Kearney becomes aware of the fact that these men are taking advantage of her daughter because she is a woman. Instead of accepting it in order not to risk her daughter's future, her reaction is to assert herself "like a man." Mrs. Kearney's bullying attitude proves even worse because at that time women transgressing sex-stereotyped codes of behaviour were socially ostracized. The committee, the singers and the journalists censure Mrs. Kearney's behaviour as unladylike, "You might have some sense of decency, said Mr. Holohan" (147), "I thought you were a lady, said Mr. Holohan" (147), which reassures them in their decision to stop Kathleen's musical career, "I'm not done with you yet, she said. But I'm done with you, said Mr. Holohan" (148).

6. Different Women: Miss Ivors and Gretta Conroy in "The Dead"

The female characters from "The Dead" I am going to consider stand out from the ones I have already analysed, so I have not placed them in the categories of paralysis, *gnomon* and simony. The story contrasts Gabriel Conroy, a writer and teacher, with the commonplace guests at a party. Among a crowd of intellectually limited and provincial people, we find

Miss Ivors and especially Gretta Conroy, as the most remarkable ones. Gabriel's aunts, Miss Kate and Miss Julia Morkan are defined ambiguously and ironically. They are hospitable but naive, sometimes bordering on ignorance. They remind us of Nannie and Eliza Flynn in "The Sisters," and like them, they are flawed types.³⁰

The plot progresses by a series of confrontations Gabriel has with women, especially with Miss Ivors and Gretta, his wife. Miss Ivors is Gabriel's academic colleague, and her intellectual equal. She challenges Gabriel's way of life, and his lack of commitment in the Irish revival, which makes him uncomfortable, because there is some truth in her remarks. Although Miss Ivors is depicted as a little radical, in my opinion she anticipates new and more fulfilling professional roles for women. Her independence and political commitment contrast with other female characters' being trapped in the private sphere as well as with their sterile and ineffectual existences (196).

If the educated and ambitious Molly Ivors suggests new developments in women's professional careers, Gretta Conroy's emotional vitality embodies a new private space where women show true affection towards their lovers and husbands and are correspondingly loved for themselves and not for the sake of other economic or social interests. Gretta is the first woman in *Dubliners* whose emotional life is not paralysed. She is depicted as a passionate and spontaneous person, and she is not imprisoned in a loveless relationship. Her love for Gabriel was strong enough to overcome his mother's opposition to their marriage. But we understand the importance of love in Gretta's life when after listening to the popular song *The Lass of Aughrim*, the memory of Michael Furey, a dead lover, seizes her. The fact that he died for her (221) revealed to Gretta the power of love, and constituted the greatest moment of realization in her life. Gretta's narration of this story to her husband leads to the final epiphany in the book. Gabriel realises he has been living in a paralysed and static society where he himself is one among the "vast hosts of the dead" (224). Gabriel has never loved, at least not with the generosity of Michael Furey and the intensity of Gretta, for whom Michael is still alive in her consciousness, "I can see his eyes as well as well!" (223), "He thought of how she who lay beside him had locked in her heart for so many years that image of her lover's eyes when he had told her that he did not wish to live" (224). Gretta becomes a heuristic tool that enables Gabriel's understanding of these facts about himself and his society. She opens up another dimension of the world and the self that challenges Gabriel's limited perception of reality. This is the beginning of knowledge, and it has come about through a woman.³¹

7. Conclusions

As I have tried to show, the female characters James Joyce created in *Dubliners* are complex and go beyond a superficial realistic depiction. The author achieves an equilibrium between the depiction of female characters as societal types and as individual oppressed by specific circumstances. Although all characters, male and female, are paralysed in the prison of self and society, gender is a more oppressive element for women than for men. Female characters' professional options are few and badly paid, and this conditions their private lives. Their epiphanies of frustration are often channeled into the manipulation of sons and daughters, which ensures the repetition of the same pattern of oppression in the next generation. Female characters are more isolated than men in their frustrated existences, with

fewer possibilities of relieving their loneliness with companions in pubs and elsewhere, as men do. The alternatives outside the prisons of their private and social lives are death, such as in "A Painful Case," exclusion from public life, such as in "A Mother," loveless marriages, such as in "The Boarding House," or a sterile celibacy, as we see in "Clay" and "Eveline." I agree with Suzette Henke when she says that Joyce portrays female characters in *Dubliners* within cages and cages of repression and unhappiness.³² Only Molly Ivors and Gretta Conroy in "The Dead" suggest the possibility of female fulfillment in the professional and the personal. In my opinion, these characters point out to future changes in Ireland that could lead men and women out of the prison of self and society. This prison was defined by paralysis, referred to the burden of the past, *gnomon* or emptiness and incompleteness, and simony, which had to do with the wretched material conditions of life and the lack of chances to improve them.

Although the portrayal of women is complex, a masculine point of view prevails throughout this work. Only three of the fifteen stories offer a woman as a central character, however, none of them speaks in the first person, because Joyce uses free indirect style in stories with women as main characters.

Notes

1. Joyce, *Letters* 2: 134.
2. Florence L. Walzl, "A Book of Signs and Symbols," *The Seventh of Joyce*, ed. Bernard Benstock (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982).
3. Walzl, "A Book of Signs and Symbols" 117.
4. Suzette Henke and Elaine Unkeless, eds. *Women in Joyce* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982) xi.
5. Terence Brown, "Introduction" and "Notes," *Dubliners*, (Hardmondsworth: Penguin, 1992) xlv.
6. Philip Herring, "Structure and Meaning in Joyce's 'The Sisters,'" *The Seventh of Joyce*, ed. Bernard Benstock (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982) 139.
7. Walzl, "A Book of Signs and Symbols" 117.
8. Mary T. Reynolds, "The Dantean Design of Joyce's *Dubliners*," *The Seventh of Joyce*, ed. Bernard Benstock (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982) 129.
9. Herring 134.
10. Brown 238-39.
11. Florence L. Walzl, "Dubliners: Women in Irish Society," *Women in Joyce*, eds. Suzette Henke and Elaine Unkeless (Brighton: Harvester, 1982) 46.
12. David G. Wright, *Characters of Joyce* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983) 17.
13. Walzl, "A Book of Signs and Symbols" 122.
14. All the quotations included hereafter have been taken from James Joyce, *Dubliners* (Hardmondsworth: Penguin, 1992).
15. Brown xxxvi.
16. Walzl, "Dubliners" 48.
17. Walzl, "A Book of Signs and Symbols" 120.
18. Suzette A. Henke, *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire* (London: Routledge, 1990) 34.
19. Henke 34.
20. Wright 16.
21. Walzl, "Dubliners" 49.
22. Herring 137.
23. Herring 134.
24. Walzl, "Dubliners" 44.
25. Brown xlv.
26. Henke 25.
27. Henke 27.

28. Walzl, "Dubliners" 48.
29. Henke 40-41.
30. Walzl, "Dubliners" 44.
31. Walzl, "Dubliners" 51.
32. Henke 27.

How does she relate to other female characters? Liesel doesn't have a huge amount of relationships with other women – most of her relationships are with men. That said, she still manages to have some very interesting and varied relationships with a diverse range of female characters. She's exasperated by her adopted mother – they frequently butt heads and don't get along at first, but they come to really love each other. Next week, I'll be returning to my comparison format to look at one of the oldest characters in literature. Cinderella, I'm coming for you. And if you're looking for all my posts on Strong Female Characters, you can find them here. Share this: [Twitter](#). In fact, this understanding gives the reader even more to analyze, as it contextualizes one representation of how men understood women in the absence of women present during the time period in which *Dubliners* was written. "A Little Cloud," was included in the collection of short stories and featured only one woman in a speaking role in its entirety. The character in question was Little Chandler's wife, Annie, who appeared only at the very end of the short story. However, during their conversation in the middle of the short story, Little Chandler and Gallaher talk about women, and reveal during this conversation, their thoughts about women and their

[Join Now to View Premium Content](#). The present paper analyses the female characters in *Dubliners* (1914), a work which Joyce believed represented "a chapter of the moral history" of Ireland. The writer concentrated on Dublin because that was "the center of paralysis." His stories cover the range of "childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life." I have focused on the female figures in this work because as Florence Walzl states in an article of 1982, although at the time there were over one hundred studies analysing separately, CONTINUE READING. [View PDF](#).