GLL-205

[Name of Course]

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Emergence of Modern Literature

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“Eveline” and “A Painful Case”

James Joyce was an Irish writer and one of the most important literary figures of the 20th century. He was famous for the use of literacy techniques, often known as the stream of consciousness. He wrote several great literacy pieces of the 20th century, some of those are *Ulysses* and *Dubliners.* In this essay, we will be discussing the latter one concerning two short stories of this collection: *Eveline* and *A Painful Case.*

The Dubliners are mostly focused on the concept of "paralysis" of the main characters in his stories. This means that the main characters are rather hesitant in the realization of their destinies, avoid to take action and taking the matter into their own hands. The main character of the short story *Eveline* is highly accustomed to her way of life. She does not help but think about the old incidents of her life at her father's home. She remembers her life with her old childhood companions, especially her lover. Also, the act of resisting to leave with Frank shows how well she is accustomed to her life routine. The same goes for Mr. Duffy of *a Painful Case.* He goes out in the morning, eats at the same restaurant at the same time every day and returns home every day. He seems to be a state of constant paralysis as he refuses to accept the influence of others in his life. In other words, the life routine of both the leading characters seem to be in a state of paralysis to the reader.

One of the reasons for this state of paralysis can be attributed to the difference in their respective social order. Eveline seems to be from a rather lower or poorer class. Thisconclusion can be drawn from several passages in the course of the story. First, some passages show that the house had a rather shabby look[[1]](#footnote-2). Also, there is an idea in Eveline's mind that her residence in her new home will bring her fame and respect "which her mother had". Mr. Duffy can be immediately assessed as an affluent man. This conclusion is drawn on the colorful description of his room, as well as his way of life. He spends his life with absolutely no worries about his daily expenses.

Another factor that influences the main characters of both plays to stay in this state of paralysis is their attachments to their surroundings. Eveline is highly attached to her home and can be seen remembering all her childhood memories as she kept thinking about leaving her childhood home. This is enough for the reader to understand that she is highly nostalgic and attached to her home. Mr. Duffy is more or less the same. This attachment to his home can be seen in the pride that he feels regarding his literacy and music collection. Even, at the end of the course of the story, the writer emphasizes the fact that Mr. Duffy wants to acquire more books for the sake of his sanity.

Their relationship with their family and relative also contribute to their state of emotional paralysis in the stories. Eveline was very fond of her mother and often describes her with admiration. She regards her mother as a symbol of success and respect. Her relations with her father are strained, which contributes to her paralysis due to her emotional isolation. Mr. Duffy also keeps his distances when it comes to relations with his relatives. He meets with his relatives on weekends and attends their funerals, but other than that, he likes to keep his distance with his neighbor. In crux, we can see that the colorless and the monotonous nature of his personality is the main contributor to his distance with his relatives and his general state of personality paralysis.

Religion played a role in the personality paralysis of Eveline. The influence of this factor can be gathered by numerous passages in the course of the story. First, the picture of the priest that hung over the wall over the harmonium shows the general inclination of the family towards the Christian faith. The priest is said to be a friend of her father, although he is seldom talked about in the daily routine of the house. The next passage shows that the religious values that are strictly followed in the house that enforces the state of paralysis in her life. Mr. Duffy, on the other hand, seems to be independent of the bounds of religion, yet his sudden withdrawal from his love affair with Mrs. Sinico suggests that he was after all a God-fearing man. Other than that, his life seems absent of any religious beliefs.

This paralysis is not so evident during the relationship of both the leading characters of *Eveline* and *A Painful Case,* at least until the end of the stories. Eveline is seen looking forward to the entire experience of living away from the home where she had spent her entire life. She likes Frank but she has feelings for Harry as well. This becomes apparent as she actively resists Frank's moves to push her in a boat. She is emotionally paralyzed about the abrupt change in her life. The last passage of the stories shows that she does trust her relationship to whether the hardship of unknown adventures that are waiting for her, far from her familiar surroundings[[2]](#footnote-3). Mr. Duffy is also not obvious to the consequences of his relations with Mrs. Sinico. He was paralyzed as she showed her affections to him. This also shows that Mr. Duffy was not prepared to accept her as her lover. He just wanted a companion with whom he could conduct several conversations that would emphasize his literal and musical superiority. This is a textbook example of paralysis as Mr. Duffy was alone, yet he wanted a relationship with practically no responsibility.

To conclude the entire argument, there were still changes in both personalities in the end. Mr. Duffy felt a longing to enjoy the company of Mrs. Sinico as he wanders in the park at late hours. He realizes that his emotional paralysis was the major contributor to her death [[3]](#footnote-4). This regret leads the reader to the conclusion that Mr. Duffy is ready to change his ways of emotional paralysis and rigid daily routine. Eveline's fear is also the indicator that she might be willing to end her relations with Frank, thereby ending her paralysis. The rebellious behavior that she shows while not leaving with Frank shows that she may be ready to confess the love she feels for Harry. Yet, before any conclusion is formed, the writer ends the story, forcing the reader to speculate. In short, both of them failed to acquire their love due to their personality paralysis. If they had chosen to break their hesitation and taken their decision timely, the outcomes would have been different.

# Works Cited

Joyce, James. *The Dubliners*. Dublin: Penguin Classics, 1914. Print. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2814/2814-h/2814-h.htm#chap04>.

1. “And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the colored print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. At moments he seemed to feel her voice touch his ear, her hand touches his. He stood still to listen. Why had he withheld life from her? Why had he sentenced her to death? He felt his moral nature falling to pieces. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)