The Paralysing Sea
A Cognitive Analysis of the Discourse Worlds in James Joyce's *Eveline*

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Il presente saggio intende dimostrare come, in «Eveline» di James Joyce, *wish worlds*, *speculative extensions* e *intention worlds* permettano alla protagonista di fuggire mentalmente dalla sua realtà; esplorare nuove dimensioni e risvegliare il desiderio di cambiare la propria condizione. Tali mondi sono strettamente collegati al mare, considerato tanto un *limes* quanto una possibilità. Il racconto è disseminato di immagini relative all'acqua che, se combinate con l'analisi dei *discourse worlds* e del fenomeno cognitivo dell'isolamento realizzato attraverso le epifanie, potrebbero portare a una più ampia comprensione dell'opera letteraria oggetto del presente studio. In conclusione, il saggio si pone come obiettivo l'analisi della relazione tra i *discourse worlds* di Eveline e il mare, con particolare focus sulle epifanie, considerate un ponte tra l'io interiore e il mondo esterno, spesso capace di provocare un cambiamento reciproco.

The hypothesis underpinning the present essay is that, in James Joyce's «Eveline», wish worlds, speculative extensions and intention worlds allow the protagonist to mentally escape her reality; explore new dimensions, and awake a desire to change her current condition. The abovementioned worlds are strictly bound to the sea, both seen as a limit and a possibility. The short story is scattered with images related to water that, if combined with the analysis of the discourse worlds and the cognitive phenomenon of isolation realised through epiphanies, could lead to a deeper and far-reaching understanding of the literary work object of the present study. In conclusion, this essay aims to analyse the relationship between Eveline's discourse worlds and the sea, focusing on the epiphanies since they can be considered a bridge between the inner selves and the external world, often provoking a reciprocal change.

1 Introduction

Eveline[1] is the second story in order of composition among the 15 intertwined short stories of the collection *Dubliners*, which aims at presenting everyday life in Dublin.[2] Published in 1914, such tales of «grey existence»[3] move through childhood, adolescence, adulthood and public life, «almost in order to provide an introduction and background to an epiphany»,[4] which «al-

[1] James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man *and* Dubliners, New York, Barnes & Noble Classics 2004. Subsequent quotations of *Eveline* are drawn from the above-mentioned edition.

[2] Cfr. Morris Beja, *James Joyce: A Literary Life*, London, Palgrave Macmillan 1993; Morris Beja and Ellen Carol Jones (eds.), *Twenty-First Joyce*. The Florida James Joyce Series. Gainesville, University Press of Florida 2004; Don Gifford, *Joyce Annotated: notes for* Dubliners *and* A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Oakland, University of California Press 1982; Mary Ann Gillies, *Henri Bergson and British Modernism*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's Press 1996; Madeleine Hamlin, *Geographies of Mobility in James Joyce's* Dubliners in «Literary Geographies», II (2016), pp. 128-143.

[3] Joseph Florio, *Joyce's Eveline* in «The Explicator», LI (1993), cit., p. 181.

[4] Morris Beja, *Epiphany in the Modern Novel*, London, Owen 1971, cit., p. 94.

most invariably comes at or toward the end and is fully prepared for by a meticulous writer».[5]

«Eveline», which depicts the transition between childhood and adolescence,[6] is the shortest tale of the collection and the only one named after a woman;[7] it is particularly rich in wish worlds, speculative extensions, and intention worlds[8] and embodies «one of the most intriguing aspects of the reading act [that] is the mysterious and intricate process by which most of us mentally visualise what we are reading».[9]

The plot is about a girl who dreams of leaving Dublin with her lover Frank, a sailor,[10] who could allegedly help her escape her sad and monotonous life, dominated by the perpetrated abuses of her father; afflicted by the absence of her brothers;[11] and, by the harsh criticism of Miss Gavan, her boss. Nevertheless, when the time to leave with Frank comes, she decides to stay because - as she recalls in the first part of the short story - she had promised her dying mother that she would have kept the home together as long as she could. In brief, she represents the problematic relationship between man and woman and woman and society.[12]

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[5] Ivi, p. 26. Cfr. ZACK BOWEN, *Joyce and the Epiphany Concept: A New Approach* in «Journal of Modern Literature», IX (1981), pp. 103–114.

[6] SONDRA MELZER, *In the Beginning There Was «Eveline»*, in «James Joyce Quarterly», XVI (1979), p. 479.

[7] PETER DE VOOGD, *Imaging Eveline, Visualised Focalisations in James Joyce's Dubliners* in «European Journal of English Studies», IV (2000), p. 39.

[8] Cfr. CAROLINE MORILLOT, *Spatialized Thought: Waiting as Cognitive State in* Dubliners, in Cognitive Joyce, Cham, Springer International Publishing 2018, pp. 131-143.

[9] P. DE VOOGD, *Imaging Eveline, Visualised Focalisations in James Joyce's* Dubliners, cit., p. 39.

[10] Frank can be considered either a saviour, a seducer or an exploiter [MARIA LAURA BARBERAN REINARES, *Frankly Speaking, «the men that is now is only all pallaver and what they can get out of you»: Migration and White Slavery in Argentina in Joyce's «Eveline»* in «Irish Migration Studies in Latin America», II (2013), pp. 49-50; BERNARD BENSTOCK, *The Kenner Conundrum: Or Who Does What with Which to Whom*, in «James Joyce Quarterly», XXXIII (1976), p. 428]. In fact, his behaviour reflects «the seduction and recruiting tactics employed by Zwi Migdal procurers, who travelled regularly to Europe in order to entice poor women with courtship and promises of marriage to later prostitute them in Buenos Aires. [...] Joyce could have modelled the mysterious sailor after the stereotypical (Zwi Migdal?) recruiters so prevalent in social purity propaganda. [...] Moreover, the expression "going to Buenos Ayres", Mullin notes, was turn-of-the-century slang for "taking up a life of prostitution, especially by way of a procurer's offices", M. L. BARBERAN REINARES, *Frankly Speaking,* cit., pp. 49-50. Among the large number of arguments in favour of this thesis, Barberan Reinares refers to a textual element in the original version of «Eveline», which was published in *The Irish Homestead* in 1904; the idea is also supported by the fact that that version included a second question (here in italics) that was later deleted: «She had consented to go away—to leave her home. Was it wise —*was it honourable?*», ivi, p. 51).

[11] As specified in the short story, Ernst was dead and Harry was often out of town for business reasons.

[12] ANNA VIO, *Figure femminili del primo Joyce: Eveline e Maria e il desiderio dell'altrove*, in «Annali di Ca' Foscari. Rivista della Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature straniere dell'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia», XXXV (1996), p. 435.

Before delving into the analysis, which will focus on the relationship between water images and isolation, the methodology will be discussed.

2 METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the above-mentioned relationship, «Eveline» will be analysed by applying the concepts of cognitive poetics. More specifically, the Deictic Shift Theory, the Possible World Theory and the categorization of discourse worlds will be essential for the present analysis; they will help to determine how epiphanies affect both the cognitive states and the choices of the main character.

According to the Deictic Shift Theory, our mind allows us to immerse in the world of the text and to relate to «characters, scenes and ideas».[13] Metaphorically, we cross a threshold and project our minds into the other world and shape the worlds of the text «on the basis of real-life experience and knowledge».[14] Technically speaking, «[e]very time a deictic shift occurs, we move either <up> or <down> the virtual planes of deictic fields».[15] In order to describe such movements, the terms PUSH and POP were borrowed from computer science. More specifically, with the term PUSH, we refer to the moments when the reader immerses in a plane of the world of the text; «flashbacks, dreams, plays within plays, stories told by characters, reproduced letters or diary entries inside a novel, or considering unrealised possibilities inside the minds of characters are all examples of pushing into a deictic field».[16] On the contrary, with the term POP, we refer to every time we emerge (or «pop out») from a plane of the world of the text.[17]

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[13] PETER STOCKWELL, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, London, Routledge 2005, cit., p. 41.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Ivi, p. 47.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

The Possible Worlds Theory[18] was first introduced into literary theory in the mid-1970s;[19] it implies a plurality of worlds and helps to provide the tools to categorise them. In fact, as the aforementioned theory states, what is true in our actual world (hereafter, AW) may be false in the fictional world of the text that has to stick to the principle of non-contradiction. In other words, «PWS [possible worlds] could be regarded as [coherent] fictions conceived within AW that are concerned with how AW could have been».[20] Every possible world is made of the same substance of the AW (*i.e.*, material things and events) and it needs to fulfil the condition of *worldness*; if the worlds are impossible worlds (for instance, due to mathematic rules different from the AW) but logically possible, they do fulfil the above-mentioned condition.[21] If no variations are specified, the principle of minimal departure operates: the reader assumes that the TAW (textual actual world) shares the same rules and historical events of the AW.[22]

Adapting the briefly described approach, we can discuss and categorise the discourse worlds, that is the worlds - often embedded in one another - among which both the reader and the character move.[23]

> A discourse world is the imaginary world which is conjured up by a reading of a text, and which is used to understand and keep track of events and elements in that world. It is a principle of cognitive poetics that the same cognitive mechanisms apply to literary reading as to all

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[18] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was the first to develop the concept of possible worlds when discussing the creation by God, postulating that the Unmighty had considered any world possible before creating the one we all know (GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ, *Essays of Theodicy on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, Charleston, Bibliobazaar 2007). Such concept was re-elaborated during the twentieth century by analytic philosophers such as Kripke, Lewis and Hintikka (ALICE BELL and MAIRE-LAURE RYAN (ed.), *Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology*, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press 2019, p. 3). However, the first to apply the theory to literary texts was Thomas G. Pavel, who anticipated the cognitive turn of the twenty-first century (cfr. THOMAS G. PAVEL, *Possible Worlds in Literary Semantics* in «The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism», XXXIV (1975), pp. 165–176; ID., *Fictional Worlds*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press 1986). Other important stages concerning the adaptation of the above-mentioned approach to literature are defined in: LUBOMÍR DOLEŽEL, *Narrative modalities* in «Journal of Literary Semantics», V (1976), pp. 5–14; ID., *Mimesis and possible worlds* in «Poetics Today», IX (1988), pp. 475–97; ID., *Possible worlds and literary fictions*, in *Possible Worlds in Humanities, Arts and Sciences*, Berlin, de Gruyter 1989, pp. 223–42; UMBERTO ECO, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press 1984; DAVID LEWIS, *Counterfactuals*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1973; DAVID LEWIS *On the Plurality of Worlds*, Oxford, Blackwell 1986; DOREEN MAÎTRE, *Literature and Possible Worlds*, Middlesex, Middlesex Polytechnic Press 1983; MARIE-LAURE RYAN, *Possible Worlds: Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press 1991; EAD. *Possible worlds and accessibility relations: a semantics typology of fiction* in «Poetics Today», XII 1991, pp. 553–76; JOHN SEARLE, *The logical status of fictional discourse* in «New Literary History», VI (1975), pp. 319–32; ELENA SEMINO, *Language and World Creation in Poems and Other Texts*, London, Longman 1997; P. STOCKWELL, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction;* LUCIA VAINA, *Les mondes possible du texte* in «Versus», XVII (1977), pp. 3–13).

[19] A. BELL and M-L RYAN (ed.), *Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology*, p. 1.

[20] Ivi, p.6.

[21] Ivi, pp. 6-7.

[22] P. STOCKWELL, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, p. 96.

[23] Ivi, p. 94.

> other interaction, and so we can understand a discourse world as the mediating domain for reality as well as projected fictions. In order to be able to do this, we must be able to negotiate trans-world identity – that is, we must have a mapping facility between worlds [...].[24]

Furthermore, the reader automatically develops the ability to move between worlds, creating in their mind and memorising different images of the same character, different situations and moments (for instance, flashbacks, flashforwards and alternative versions of the characters). The above-mentioned «versions» are *counterparts* within the fictional discourse world.[25]

Discourse worlds and their level of accessibility can be categorized according to different models. The present essay will adopt the one by Stockwell, which is an adaptation from the approach by Ryan:[26]

- epistemic worlds – knowledge worlds; what the characters in the fictional world believe to be true about their world.
- Speculative extensions – things the characters anticipate about their world, or other hypotheses they hold.
- Intention worlds – what characters plan to do to deliberately change their world.
- Wish worlds – what characters wish or imagine might be different about their world.
- Obligation worlds – different versions of the world filtered through the characters' sense of moral values.
- Fantasy worlds – the worlds of characters' dreams, visions, imaginations, or fictions that they compose themselves.[27]

3 A COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF *EVELINE*

The first reference to the sea in *Eveline* is linked to intertextuality; thus, some readers might overlook it. By reading *Dubliners*, it is apparent that music plays a key role;[28] however, the link between the character after whom the short story is named and *Silent, O Moyle*, a song played in *Two Gallants*, is not immediate:

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[24] *Ibid.*

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] Ivi, p. 104.

[27] Ivi pp. 94-95. It is worth noticing that, as conceived by Ryan, storyworlds can be divided into private textual possible worlds (TPWS) and textual actual world (TAW). Wish worlds and intention worlds are private worlds that constitute a static model of the ideal textual actual world (TAW), and also constitute the driving force of the plot. (cfr. M-L RYAN, *Possible Worlds: Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*; M-L RYAN *Possible worlds and accessibility relations: a semantics typology of fiction*; A. BELL and M-L RYAN (ed.), *Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology*). Furthermore, it is important to stress that thanks to fantasy worlds, «narrative universes acquire distinct ontological levels» (A. BELL and M-L RYAN (ed.), *Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology*, cit., p. 19).

[28] Cfr. ROBERT HAAS, *Music in* Dubliners in «Colby Quarterly», XXVIII (1992), pp. 19-33.

> Thomas Moore borrowed the music for this song from the traditional tune *My Dear Eveleen* and altered the lyrics so as to convey a story based on Celtic myth. Subtitled *Song of Fionnulla*, the song tells the tale of Fionnulla, the daughter of the Celtic god of the sea, Lir. She is transformed into a swan and condemned to wander over Irish lakes and rivers until the first sound of the Christian Mass bell gives the signal for her release.[29]

Considering that 1) Joyce appreciated Moore's works in general, 2) suggested that his son Giorgio listened to the lovely *Silent, O Moyle* and 3) explained the mythical context of the air to his brother George, there is a high possibility that the character was named after the Eveleen of the traditional version of the song.[30]

The present analysis focuses on both the epiphanies experienced by Eveline; when the time to leave her hometown comes, the girl decides to stay since she promised her dying mother that she would have taken care of the household as long as possible. The sentence «her promise to keep the home together as long as she could»[31] is particularly interesting since it allows the reader to stay for a few moments in an in-between world, both concerning Eveline's past -that is the moment of the promise- and her present: in fact, the verb «keep together»[32] and the adverbial clause «as long as she could»[33] imply a long action. In this case, the epiphany is stimulated by an auditory trigger.

> Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear *a street organ playing. She knew the air* [TRIGGER]. Strange that it should come that very night [PUSH] *to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could. She remembered the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sickroom saying*: [PUSH] *-Damned Italians! coming over here!* [POP (2)][34]

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[29] J. FLORIO, *Joyce's Eveline*, cit., p. 181. It is important to stress that in a letter to his brother George (*Letters III* 341), Joyce himself affirms that «Moyle is that part of the Irish Sea which is now called St George's Channel» (STEVEN DOLOFF, *A Soporific Note on the Harp in Joyce's* Two Gallants in «James Joyce Quarterly», XLI (2004), p. 825).

[30] Ivi, p. 181. It is worth mentioning Joyce's «symbolic "stenography"»: not by chance, Joyce uses female names whose initials are linked to feminine archetypes. For instance, the initial E, which is present in many character's names -among them: Eveline, Emma and Emily- is strictly bound to Eve (GIULIA PISSARELLO, *Joyce antifemminista?*, Pisa, ETS 1980, p. 26).

[31] J. JOYCE, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man *and* Dubliners, cit., p. 258.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] Ivi., p. 258. If not indicated otherwise, the italics are mine.

As a matter of fact, the street organ playing outside the window reminds the girl of her mother's last wish. At this point of the story, the readers are pushed into the moment when the young lady made the promise: thus, the link between the street organ playing in the present and the one playing past is made explicit. While the readers are located in the protagonist's past, another deictic shift takes place: her father utters discriminatory words towards Italian street musicians: «Damned Italians! coming over here!»[35] The reference to Italians can be considered an allusion to the sea, which – in this case - is the means through which undesirables arrive in the country.

After this first hint, two POPs direct the readers to the narrative level of the story, told by a third-person narrator who accurately describes Eveline's present. The words uttered by her mother constitute the following PUSH:

> [PUSH] -Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun! [POP]
> She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! [PUSH] 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.
> [POP (2)] * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *[36]

The Gaelic formula uttered by Eveline's mother allows the readers to submerge in the past and enter her mother's shoes.[37] Then, the readers are brought back to the main level of the story when Eveline suddenly stands up. Afterwards, they enter what can be considered a wish world, where Frank saves her and the sea becomes the only way to reach her happiness. Subsequently, a graphic element, that is, a small frame, interrupts the text: two POPs bring the readers back to reality. In other words, the graphic element, which was also present in the 1914 editions of *Dubliners*, reminds the readers that they are exploring fictional worlds.

After the pause, the readers find themselves in another place in time: the near future (PUSH). The peritextual element (*i.e.*, the frame) transports the readers in their AW. Then, they are brought back to the TAW, where Eveline is with Frank in the station at the North Wall, ready to leave Ireland for «Buenos Ayres».[38]

> [PUSH] She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall. [BEGINNING OF THE ISOLATION PROCESS] He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again. The station was full of soldiers with brown baggages.[39]

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[35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] It is particularly relevant to observe that, depending on the knowledge of the reader, the brief passage has a different effect and meaning.

[38] J. JOYCE, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man *and* Dubliners, cit., p. 259.

[39] Ivi, p. 258.

The girl's isolation begins when the narrator states: «He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again».[40] The readers empathise with the protagonist since they feel they could enter her mind and hear Frank's distant voice. Then, there is a POP and a detailed description of what is happening on the dock.

Subsequently, Eveline imagines her journey with Frank: thus, the reader is pushed into a speculative extension.

> [PUSH] If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming toward Buenos Ayres. [POP] [PUSH] Their passage had been booked. [POP] [PUSH] Could she still draw back [POP] [PUSH] after all he had done for her? [POP] Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer. A bell clanged upon her heart.[41]

Afterwards, the reader emerges from it and accesses the moment when the tickets had been booked. Eveline is apparently in a state of shock: she reflects on the purchase of the tickets, but not about the agent of the action. The following question, «Could she still draw back after all he had done for her?»[42] constitutes a PUSH in another hypothetical space and a sort of premonition. Then, a POP brings the reader to the main plane of the story, where Eveline's physical status and her movements are described.

Next, the alternation of direct speeches uttered by Frank and the narrative level, where only actions are described, constitutes another series of PUSHes and POPs.

> She felt him seize her hand:
> [PUSH] *Come!* [POP]
> All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.
> [PUSH] *Come!* [POP]
> No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish!
> [PUSH] *Eveline! Evvy*! [POP]
> 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, [SIMILE] *like a helpless animal*. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.[43]

The short story ends with the narrator as a deictic centre but with Eveline as a focus. The last lines of the short story correspond to the end of the epi-

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[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Ivi, p. 259.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] Ivi, p. 259.

phany: the young lady, compared to «a helpless animal»[44] whose image is independently created by the reader in their mind, decides not to leave Dublin; she surrenders, becoming passive; she loses contact with the world, isolates herself and does not answer her supposed love: she is paralysed. The animal Joyce is referring to might be a swan, due both to the reference to the colour white and the use of the name "Eveline", which, as previously stated, bears a connection to *Silent, O Moyle* and *My Dear Eveleen*. Thus, the character of Eveline may be seen as linked to Celtic mythology and could be considered a new version of Fionnulla, shaped by Joyce.[45]

4 CONCLUSION

The present paper has presented a cognitive analysis of James Joyce's «Eveline», trying to underline the relationship between discourse worlds and the images concerning the sea. The short story is the tale of a reverie,[46] a supposed dream Eveline does not fulfil, which will affect the young lady but not her world; in fact, she was fleeing and probably no one is aware of her plan unless someone found the two letters that she wrote to her brother, Harry, and her father. In other words, «Joyce -[...] through shifting tenses, subjunctive moods, rhetorical repetitions, and hesitations - captures Eveline's dilemma of whether or not to leave her home and sail away with Frank».[47]

The meaning of the literary work object of the present study is enriched by the imaginary related to the sea. «Eveline» is scattered with images of drowning or being engulfed, and almost everything seems related to water:[48] the sea, and water in general, which should (and seem) to be the symbol of a new life, become paralysing.[49]

In *Eveline*, the subjective nature of Joyce's epiphany manifests itself.[50] As Beja affirmed, epiphanies are «special, sudden illumination[s]»,[51] usually

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[44] *Ibid.*

[45] J. FLORIO, *Joyce's Eveline*, p. 183.

[46] S. MELZER, *In the Beginning There Was «Eveline»*, p. 479.

[47] DAVID BEN-MERRE, *Eveline Ever After* in «James Joyce Quarterly», XLIX (2012), cit., p. 455.

[48] EPIFANIO JR. SAN JUAN, *James Joyce and the Craft of Fiction*, Cranbury, NJ, Fairleigh Dickinson UP 1972. More specifically: 1) «the odour of dusty cretonne» accumulates in Eveline's lungs like she is drowning in it; 2) her neighbours, «the Waters», left the country to reach England by sea; 3) «little Keogh used to keep nix» (in German the word «nix» indicates the Nixie, a humanoid water spirit); 4) the Italians reached Ireland by sea; 5) «Frank would save her»: the sea is the mean to reach a purported happiness; 6) Eveline stands in a «swaying crowd», which resembles the sea waves; 7) Frank «was drawing her into [all the seas of the world and]: he would [have] drown her»; 8) Eveline is considered «a helpless animal», which could be a swan if the relationship of the protagonist's name with «My dear Eveleen» is considered.

[49] Cfr. E-J SAN JUAN, *James Joyce and the Craft of Fiction*; BREWSTER GHISELIN, *The Unity of Dubliners*, in «Accent», XVI (1956), pp. 75-87.

[50] M. BEJA, *Epiphany in the Modern Novel*, cit., p. 78.

[51] Ivi, p. 75.

triggered by external stimuli.[52] However, I argue that they also correspond to isolation processes, which could influence the characters' world. Indeed, speculations about their effect could be easily made. Furthermore, as I tried to demonstrate, Eveline experiences some sort of isolation: despite being on the dock in a «swaying crowd»[53], which resembles the sea waves, Eveline enters the dimension of isolation[54] and refuses to move. Her epiphanies are «moments of insight»[55] that involve a certain degree of agency[56] but are also full isolation processes.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that the three main articulations of the story are strictly bound to the sea: a street organ triggers the first epiphany, played on the night of Eveline's promise to her dying mother by some undesirable Italian who reached Ireland *by sea*; furthermore, her supposed dream life is depicted in a wish world, where the saviour sailor Frank brings her by sea to the happy Buenos Aires. Her courageous choice to stay - resulting from the effects of the epiphanies - is also linked both to the sea and the continuously overlapping discourse worlds. In fact, Eveline - who certainly remembers the promise to her mother -[57] imagines the journey, thinks about the moment when the tickets had been booked, reflects upon the choice to leave and is compared to «a helpless animal»,[58] differently imagined by the reader depending on their knowledge. In any case, the sea becomes the symbol of paralysis and impossibility. Furthermore,

> [a]s the active verbal group 'she set to' implies, hers is an almost perverse act of the will, and to force the eyes to be absolutely blank, giving 'no sign of love or farewell or recognition' [...]. Eveline, in the last instance, acts out a great melodramatic scene, heroically giving up a pleasant if uncertain future [...].[59]

There is a maze of meanings, and not a «final totalizing of meanings».[60] It is unfeasible to agree on whether Eveline, a modern re-interpretation of Calypso, is a great woman or a failure: the decision is left to the reader who is empowered by the author.

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[52] Ivi, p. 76.

[53] J. JOYCE, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man *and* Dubliners, cit., p. 258.

[54] The process is apparent from its beginning, which can be traced in the following sentence: «she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again».

[55] CLAIRE CULLETON and ELLEN SCHEIBLE (ed.), *Rethinking Joyce's Dubliners*, Cham, Springer International Publishing 2017, cit., p. 171.

[56] Ivi p. 161.

[57] «[S]he prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty» (J. JOYCE, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man *and* Dubliners, cit., p. 259).

[58] Ivi, p. 259.

[59] P. DE VOOGD, *Imaging Eveline, Visualised Focalisations in James Joyce's* Dubliners, cit., p. 48.

[60] A. VIO, *Figure femminili del primo Joyce: Eveline e Maria e il desiderio dell'altrove*, cit., p. 437.

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PAROLE CHIAVE

Cognitive Poetics; James Joyce; Sea; Isolation; Short story

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