Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review
www.plhr.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Decoding Joycean Narrative: Barthesian Analysis of *Eveline*

Muhammad Ihsan

BS Scholar, Department of English Language and Literature, The Shaikh Ayaz University Shikarpur, Sindh, Pakistan https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9279-3162

| ***Corresponding Author** | ak3328472@gmail.com |

ABSTRACT

This objective of this paper is to decode the story in *Eveline* by James Joyce based on the study of a narrative code by Roland Barthes. The study identifies and analyzes the five narrative codes as delineated by Barthes five codes, namely, the Hermeneutic Code, the Proairetic Code, the Semantic Code, the Symbolic Code, and the Cultural Code. The methodology utilized is qualitative and content analysis is used. Through the use of these codes, the research reveals the important structures to come up with the thematic appeal and the emotions of the plot. Thus, the narrative of this research contributes to expanding the understanding of Joyce's skill and the relevance of *Eveline* to the modernist tradition. The conclusion also emphasize the usefulness of Barthes' theoretical model in deeper comprehension of the literary works as well as the number of their meanings.

| **KEYWORDS** | Bathers Codes, Eveline, James Joyce, Short Fiction, Textual Analysis |

Introduction

Narrative is an integral part of human communication of experiences. When man started to utter something and convey ideas to others narrative start taking place. Since all ages and everywhere, narrative art developed significantly in the form of stories, novels, and poetry in different structure.

Structuralism is a human science that tries to understand, in a systematic way, the Fundamental structures that underlie all human experience and, therefore, all human behavior and production. (Tyson, 2006, p. 209-210) Literature is only one of the various human experiences or productions that Structuralism seeks to understand. In literature, it is the study of the structural system of a literary text. It tries to discover the underlying structures/codes/rules that shape a particular text. Hence, the meaning or the thematic side of the text is of secondary importance for a structuralist. Roland Barthes, a French structuralist, philosopher and linguist, in his book S / Z (1970) described and demonstrated methods of literary analysis. He while analyzing Balzac's story 'Sarrasine' identified five codes, i.e. hermeneutic code, proairetic code, semantic code, Symbolic code and cultural code. These codes define a network that forms a space of meaning that the text runs through. The present study uses Barthes five codes to analyze James Joyce's short story Eveline to see how far the theory is applicable and relevant in a different social and cultural context.

The Story and the Author

The story of Eveline is one of many stories in a collection of short stories, which is title with Dubliners by James Joyce; they take place in the early 1900s. The story is Realistic Fiction and it take place in 1914 in Ireland. The story is told by a third person narrator and

it is adopted Eveline's point of view throughout the story. Joyce employed free indirect thoughts to give voice to Eveline's thoughts. The story is about young girl who has a hard and unhappy life with household task and responsibilities that overburdened her. Eveline, the protagonist, is a young woman torn between her desire for escape and her sense of duty towards her father. She is indecisive and fearful, struggling to make a choice that will determine her future. Frank, her love interest, represents freedom and a new life, but Eveline's sense of responsibility towards her father holds her back. Her father, though absent, has a significant presence in the story, symbolizing the burden of obligation and duty. Eveline's brother Harry, who has escaped the family's unhappy situation, serves as a contrast to Eveline's predicament, highlighting the possibility of a better life. The deceased mother, mentioned briefly, represents the lack of a nurturing figure in Eveline's life, contributing to her sense of responsibility and duty. Through these characters, Joyce masterfully explores the themes of paralysis, escape, and the struggle between desire and responsibility, creating a poignant and relatable portrait of a young woman's inner conflict.

James Augstine Aloysius Joyce was born in Dublin, Ireland on February 2,1882. Joyce also had his first short story published in the Irish Homestead magazine. He published his first book, "*Dubliners*", a collection of 15 short stories, in 1914, and his second book the novel "*Portrait of the artist as a Young Man*" in 1916.

Thus, "Eveline" by James Joyce, a short story from the collection of the same name published in 1914, is rightfully considered as a work with a developed plot and unambiguous philosophical SUBSTANCE. While Joyce's work has been subject to detailed academic scrutiny, most of the work done in this field revolves around the identification of and commentary on Joyce's concerns, his tools of stying, characters, and the like. Nevertheless, there is a noticeable absence of the analysis based on such theoretical frameworks as structuralism and semiotics, specifically, Barthes' narrative codes in relation to this piece.

The concept, which Barthes explored in his work of S/Z (1970), lays down a clear procedure to analyse all the semiotic features in a text. The five codes, namely Hermeneutic, Proairetic, Semantic, Symbolic and Cultural, provide a discourse on how to dismantle a story into its structural components. Therefore, there has been limited study on how Barthes' codes can be further used to analyse new aspects of "Eveline".

The problem, therefore, is twofold: First, it is necessary to define the relationship between postmodern literary criticism, which is closer to formalism, and the structuralist semiotics of culture to study "Eveline" by James Joyce; Secondly, it is necessary to show how Barthes' codes can make literary texts' mechanics and the authors' intentions plot and meaning significant. Thus, this research aims at filling these gaps by providing a narrative analysis of 'Eveline' using Barthes' codes, thus improving the understanding of both the text and the theory.

Literature Review

Literature explains that the employment of narrative analysis especially by the means of applying Roland Barthes' codes has been a decisive strategy in perceiving the multifariousness of fiction. Barthes' seminal work, "S/Z" (1970), introduced five narrative codes: the Hermeneutic, Proairetic, Semantic, Symbolic and Cultural codes, which people have come to know are major principles in narrative theory today from Barthes (1974). These are useful in that it provides a breakdown of structuralist methodology into specific codes to analyse multiple layers within text (Cixous, 1972).

'Eveline' by James Joyce is one of the stories from the 'Dubliners' (1914) which is one of the distinguished collections of short stories. It is important to note that Joyce's implementation of the stream of consciousness and epiphanies has received extensive academic discussion and criticism Benstock, 1965; Norris, 2003). However, the interpretation of Barthes' codes in regard to "Eveline" can be viewed as sensational, as it aligns these concepts with a fresh analytical angle, revealing the intricate connection between the works' plot and symbolic motifs.

The Hermeneutic Code is clearly expressed in the enigma that pervades "Eveline," that of the possibility of the young woman's escape or completion with Frank and leaving Dublin. While, Norris (2003) has discussed the psychological stagnation of a character Eveline, this could be still further analyzed using Barthes' method because, as we have seen, Joyce builds and solves this enigma of the character. That is why the decision that remains ambiguous in the love affair of Eveline is also a part of the Hermeneutic Code which grips the interest of the readers due to possibilities of suspense.

The Proairetic Code also focuses with the socio-political elements that are deployed in the narrative and the relationship with the entire scope of Warrambeen. In "Eveline", this code is illustrated in the sequence of actions: lighting a cigarette, walking down the street and joining Frank at the docks as well as slope of her head towards the 'foreign' accents. These actions have been interpreted in terms of structural meaning and topical contents by critics such as Benstock (1965); but under the perspective of the Proairetic Code defined by Barthes the actions are narrator's real constructs as they contribute to the construction of the plot and the anticipation of the reader's reception.

The Semantic and Symbolic Codes comprise of the additional or hidden meanings that are presented in the story. There is a lot of criticism on Joyce's strategies and motifs, one of them being the window where Eveline looks at (Walzl, 1965). The use of Barthes' Semantic Code allows such motifs to be deconstructed and their connotations as well as importance to representation on the emotions of the narration explained. The Symbolic Code, in contrast, analyses opposites and antagonists of the text – such as freedom/entrapment that are essential for understanding Eveline's internal torment.

The Cultural Code places "Eveline" firmly in the context of her cultural and social background which is early twentieth century Dublin. Academics have pointed on these cultural indices in the works of Joyce as described in Norris (2003); Walzl (1965). The elements identified by Barthes can then be organized and understood according to his Cultural Code and therefore give a deeper perception of the story and characters, especially of Eveline and why she is in the situation she is in.

For analyzing the intertwining of, and the overall narrative, the concept of Barthes works very effectively on "Eveline. " Although the traditional critical approaches of identifying themes, meaning and style in Joyce's writing have been valuable to override, the operation of the codes aids in a more thorough and comprehensive differentiation and examination of the structural elements that define the story. This way not only deepens our understanding of Joyce's artistic work but also proves the significance of Barthes' semiotics of the narrative for the present-day literary practice.

Material and Methods

The research methodology for this study involves a qualitative, interpretive approach to literary analysis, employing Roland Barthes' narrative codes to dissect and understand the complexities of James Joyce's "Eveline. The textual source to be focused on

is the short story titled "Eveline" by James Joyce, which is a part of Dubliners (1914). The analysis of the textual elements in "Eveline" will entail a systematic rereading of the story to textualize it and exhaust the meanings of the name of the character and other patterns of reading the story. Thus, carrying out this detailed analysis will create a basis for implementing application of codes by Barthes.

Ronald Bathes, are a set of five codes used to analyze and interpret narratives, particularly literary texts. These codes help readers uncover the underlying meanings, themes, and structure in a story.

Hermeneutic Code

This code involves the mysteries, puzzles, or enigmas presented in the narrative, which the reader tries to solve or interpret. It's the "whodunit" or "what's going on" aspect of the story.

Proairetic Code

This code refers to the sequence of events, actions, and plot twists that make up the narrative. It's the "what happens" in the story.

Semantic Code

This code examines the symbols, signs, and icons used in the narrative to convey meaning beyond their literal interpretation. It's the "what does this represent" aspect of the story.

Cultural Code

This code considers the cultural, historical, and social context in which the narrative is set and the ways in which these contexts influence the story's meaning.

Symbolic Code

This code explores the deeper themes, meanings, and ideas that the narrative conveys, often through the use of symbols, metaphors, and other literary devices. It's the "what does it all mean" aspect of the story.

Data Analysis

This section provides analysis of James Joyce's 'Eveline' applying the five narrative codes of Roland Barthes to reveal the latent schemes and motifs. When the codes are decoded in this manner systematically, one is able to simplify the complexity of the layered narrative and can understand the aesthetics of Joyce's writing.

The Hermeneutic Code (Enigma/Mystery)

It was hard work – a hard life – but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted.

The title Eveline is not a mystery in the story, it the name of protagonist, Eveline a name with French and German origins, meaning "*wished for child*" the title is very much

connected with protagonist life which is Joyce wrote in story. Eveline's struggle for her personal desires that she wants in her life.

One mystery is Eveline's fear and hesitation about leaving her home, another mystery is the nature of relationship with her lover, Frnak. We do not know about their past how genuine their connection is.

The Proairetic Code (Actions/Events)

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres where he had a home waiting for her.

Eveline as a protagonist of the story she faces many events in her overburden life. After her mother's death she lives as obedience, responsible, and caretaker of her father and siblings in her home and she sacrifices her personal desires such as education, love and inner feelings that she wants to show in patriarchal society. She did job at store and less paid. She loves with sailor, Frank. She thinks Frank will change her life because her life was very difficult for household task as a caretaker. She takes decision to leave her home because of her abusive father. When she reaches at port for escape with her lover, who waited for her but she do not go to him on the ship, she remembers her promise with her mother, and turn back.

The Symbolic Code (Binary Oppositions)

She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne.

There are few symbolic things in the story such as, dust, window and red bricks houses.

The dust symbolize the monotony and stagnation of Eveline's life. It represents the accumulation of time and weight of her responsibilities and burdens.The dust on the mantelpiece serves as a reminder of the routine and experiences daily. The window represents the both opportunity and prison, she torn in suffocating life but she knows and the unknown possibilities outside the window.

The field and built houses in it – not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs.

The red bricks homes represent the embrace change 20th century in *Dublin*.

The Cultural Code (References to Knowledge)

In this story Joyce show of the view of his written short story Eveline to the readers. He wrote about influence of patriarchal society on the women in Irish society during early 20th century. Protagonist of the story Eveline she faces the hardship in society that inset from male dominant society. According the traditions of Irish culture she has less job opportunity, if she gets opportunity for job, she paid less as compare to male empolye. She cannot show her skills, she cannot make decisions because her decisions control in male dominant, because society told him she is powerless. She plays different role for male as in relations of obedient daughter, sister and wife in her home. Society inset obligations on her like cooking, and cleaning, because society told to her she is caretaker of her family.

The Semantic Code (Connotations/Meanings)

In "Eveline," James Joyce employs various semantic codes to convey themes, emotions, and the protagonist's inner conflict. Some key semantic codes in the story include:

Symbolism: Joyce uses symbols to represent deeper meanings. For example, the yellowing photograph of Eveline's mother symbolizes nostalgia and the past, while the word "dust" recurs throughout the story, representing decay and stagnation.

Repetition: Certain phrases and words are repeated throughout the story for emphasis and to highlight key themes. For instance, the repetition of phrases like "all the seas of the world" and "escape" underscores Eveline's desire for freedom and escape from her stifling life.

Imagery: Vivid imagery is used to evoke emotions and create atmosphere. Descriptions of the physical setting, such as the "dusty cretonne" curtains and the "brown imperturbable faces" of Dubliners, paint a vivid picture of Eveline's environment and contribute to the overall mood of the story.

Irony: Joyce employs irony to underscore the disparity between Eveline's desires and her reality. For example, Eveline imagines Frank as a savior who will rescue her from her unhappy life, but her final decision to remain in Dublin contradicts this idealized image.

Stream of Consciousness: The narrative technique of stream of consciousness allows readers to delve into Eveline's thoughts and emotions in real-time, providing insight into her inner conflict and the complexities of her decision-making process.

Discussion

This discussion is devoted to the analysis of the codes introduced by Roland Barthes with reference to James Joyce's "Eveline", a short story belonging to the Dubliners collection. Thanks to the narrative codes introduced by Barthes, namely hermeneutic, proairetic, semic, symbolic, and cultural, it will be easier to have a clear structure of textual analysis. Through the analysis of the abovementioned aspects of "Eveline", the hidden layers of Joyce's narration would be explored. The hermeneutic code implies the aspect of the story which contributes to the formation of the questions. This code is used in "Eveline" by Joyce where the suspense is created regarding the decision of whether Eveline will stay at home or follow Frank.

Initial Questions: It can be said that the story provokes questions about such circumstances as Eveline's past, and her ideas of freeing herself. Why is she unhappy? What has her background been? Delays: Joyce gives some answers (even though not complete) disclosing the fact that Eveline fulfilled her promise to her mother, which is to send money to her father who abused her, and her aspiration to embrace a new life. These elements prolong the climax and, therefore, the answer to the show's main riddle.

Final Revelation: Eveline cannot go with the man, thus the climax answers the enigma of the short story. Still, Joyce parts her readers with many a anxious and uncertain gazes on the consequences of her decision and her lot.

The proairetic code concerns such an open action as a verb and refers to what a character does or what is done to him or her and how the action contributes to the storyline.

Key Actions: Eveline's struggles and decisions which occur in her head, her recollections, even her conversations with her family are all programmatic actions. Her preparations for eloping with Frank productions work to develop tension that fuels the plot.

Resolution of Actions: The main climax coincides with the plot's last act when Eveline fails to move, and the tragedy is underlined by her inner battle.

Semic Code (Connotative Code)

The semic code entails the extensions and implications that are possessed by certain constituents in the text.

Characterization: Eveline exists in society as a subject of consciousness in remembrance, thoughts, and the sensations she undergoes. She is obliged to perform duties, and these fears along with the unknown concerns make up her character.

Symbols: The area that seems most oppressive in the novel is also related to sexual stereotyping; objects and settings, as for example the window through which Eveline watches the world, is associated with captivity as well as with possibility of escape. The cretonne found in her home is dusty signifying that things have been static and moving in a circle of decay.

The symbolic code as opposed to the moral code involves a focus on the text's symbolic significance and the oppositions at play in the narrative.

Freedom vs. Confinement: The main contrasts recognized in the symbolism of "Eveline" are between liberty and restraint. Bloody shirt's associative with Eveline's home presents the familiar place which, however, thwarts her freedom; the sea is associated with Freechood but at the same time with uncertainty and murder.

Life vs. Death: From promise to her mother and sense of duty, Eveline is virtually dead in the body but alive to everything that goes round her, spiritually and emotionally she is a prisoner. On one hand her potential new life with Frank can be viewed as the possibilities of living. The cultural code means the usage of the intidications familiar to any member of the particular culture: general knowledge, rules, and background.

Historical Context: It transpires that the plot of the novel takes place in Ireland in the beginning of the XX century, which means that the main characters were living in the time when people's primary responsibilities where defined as being a good son/daughter, a proper man/woman, a faithful Catholic. Through the lenses of the cultural factors enumerated above, one can discern that they play a great role in influencing Eveline's decision.

Cultural References: Their word is their bond, particularly where a promise was made on the death bed of a close relative, so the four sisters' promise to her dying mother resolves the tension through reinstating dominant cultural values of impending Catholic morality within Irish society. The published text reveals the combinations of mystery, kinetics, meaning associations, allegories, and cultural allusions. The reality of the situation portrayed in Eveline's story is one filled with so many grey areas and paradoxes which look into the heart of the human being and his society. Overall, utilizing Barthes' analysis in interpretation of the "Eveline" by James Joyce, the audience could have a better understanding of the work that has gone into writing the piece and why the piece remains

pertinent to the contemporary society in its depiction of the major themes of irresponsibility, fear, and the pursuit of self-directing life.

Conclusion

This study identified the hidden meanings and the highly intricate and sophisticated narrative strategies that Joyce employs in order to express the torment, and appeasing mechanism that resulted in Eveline's immobility. It explored how Joyce builds the main stereotype of the undecided heroine in front of the readers and develops the irresolvable issue of Eveline's final decision. The Proairetic Code showed that the events preceding the moment of climaxes at the docks are as significant as the climax itself, as the Proairetic Code teaches the reader on how the events escalate the plot and mold reader anticipation. These codes are used to decode other layers of meanings of the text; the reader gets the additional information regarding the main character's psychological condition, and the themes of the story. The analysis of the *Eveline* through the lens of Barthes 'naratology' deepened the understanding of Joyce as a master of the narrative word art and the tale's relevance in the totality of the modernist tradition. Thus, this analysis is not only insightful, toward the understanding of structural and thematic characteristics of *Eveline*, but also illustrates how and why Barthes' concept of codes remains useful in current textual analysis. By implementing this approach, readers get a better insight into the nature of the inner discursivity of the characters of the novel and the subtleties of the entwining of multiple meanings inherent in Joyce's narrative.

References

Allen, G. (2003).Roland Barthes; Routledge critical Thinkers. London & New York: Routledeg, Taylor & Francis

Barthes, R. (1974). *S/Z: An Essay*. (R. Miller, Trans.). Hill and Wang.

Benstock, B. (1965). *Narrative Con/Texts in Dubliners*. University of Illinois Press.

Cixous, H. (1972). *The Exile of James Joyce*. (S. Cornell & I. Templeton, Trans.). John Calder.

Felluga, D. (-) Modules on Barthes: on the five codes. http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/narratology/modules/barthes codes.html

Joyce, J. (1914). *Dubliners*. Grant Richards Ltd.

Kenan, S. R. (1983). *Narrative fiction: contemporary poetics.* London & New York: Routledeg, Taylor & Francis

Miller, R. (-)Barthes, Roland. S/Z. http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/narratology/notes/barthesnote.html

Norris, M. (2003). *Suspicious Readings of Joyce's Dubliners*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Onega, S. & Landa, J. A. G. (1996). *Narratology: an introduction*. London and New York: Longman

Prince, G. (1982). *Narratology: The form and functioning of narrative*. Berlin-New York— Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers

Walzl, F. L. (1965). "Pattern of Paralysis in Joyce's Dubliners: A Study of the Original Framework." *College English*, 27(6), 421-432.