Pathological Joyce:
A Psychoanalytic Exploration
of Neurosis and Perversion
in James Joyce's *Dubliners*

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2002
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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses a combination of psychoanalysis and Marxism to demonstrate how James Joyce's writing enabled him to break away from his unconscious attachments to capitalism. Offering a detailed reading of Joyce's *Dubliners*, it makes three central claims. First, that Joyce's writing is neurotic in structure, not perverse, as is commonly thought. Second, that Joyce's writing depicts neurotic characters struggling in a social, cultural and political context that privileges the perverse. And lastly, that Joyce locates the source of this ongoing privilege in capitalist ideology. The conclusion is that Joyce's writing may be said to "hysterize" the perverse subject of capitalism; Joyce's neurotic writing style provokes the perverse subject of capitalist ideology into questioning his or her disavowing complicity of the dominance of capital. Ultimately, therefore, this thesis illuminates how Joyce's writing presents -- and continues to present -- a remarkable challenge to contemporary modes of control upon the modern subject.
# Table of Contents

Title Page \hspace{1cm} i
Supervisory Committee \hspace{1cm} ii
Abstract \hspace{1cm} iii
Table of Contents \hspace{1cm} iv
List of Figures \hspace{1cm} v

Introduction \hspace{1cm} 1
Chapter 1 Assumptions that Joyce is Perverse \hspace{1cm} 34
Chapter 2 Eveline \hspace{1cm} 53
Chapter 3 Araby \hspace{1cm} 73
Chapter 4 The Dead \hspace{1cm} 93
Conclusion \hspace{1cm} 115

Bibliography \hspace{1cm} 118
List of Figures

Figure 1. 48
INTRODUCTION

The relationship between James Joyce's writing and psychoanalysis is well documented. Psychoanalytic treatments of Joyce's writing can be traced back to the 1930's if we recall Carl Jung's preface to Stuart Gilbert's *James Joyce's Ulysses* (1932), or Jung's treatment of Joyce's daughter Lucia (Roughley 175). Joyce is known to have kept works of Freud, and questions of Freud's influence on Joyce have long been debated. 

Jean Kimball has recently argued in *Joyce and the Early Freudians* (2003) that the influence of Freud on *Ulysses* is now unmistakable: locating fragments of Freud in *Ulysses*, Kimball states "that the probability of the existence of a relationship between *Ulysses* and the early psychoanalytic texts is high" (Kimball 5). Indeed, ever since Margot Norris's *The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake: A Structuralist Analysis* (1974), scholars have generally conceded that *Finnegans Wake* operates according to the processes of "distortion, displacement, and condensation," thus reproducing the "ordering and organization of materials" outlined in Freud's model of the dream (Roughley 176). Joyce died in 1941, and psychoanalytic and psychological explorations of Joyce's writing grew steadily through the 40's and 50's, with essays appearing in journals such as *Psychoanalysis: Journal of the National Psychology Association for Psychoanalysis* and *Literature and Psychology* and in 1963, the newly established *James Joyce Quarterly*. 

The 1970's were a watershed decade for psychoanalytic productions on Joyce, however, seeing the rise of not only Norris but also critics such as Mark Shechner, Sheldon Brivic, Darcy O'Brien, Colin McCabe and Jean Kimball.

The most remarkable development in the 70's was Joyce's influence on the late theories of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, whose late-twentieth century elaboration on

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1 See Kimball; Ellman,
Freud is considered to be one of the more sophisticated and persuasive articulations of psychoanalysis to date. Norris was the first Joycean to use Lacan extensively, applying Lacan’s concept of the “empty subject” to show how “attempts to give form to the subject through stories are always displaced from coherence in the Wake” (Brivic13). She was followed closely by Colin MacCabe’s combination of Lacan, deconstruction and critical theory, *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (1979), which focused on Lacan’s idea of the “shifting of the signifier” to illustrate how Joyce’s move away from the fixed meaning of words to a multiplicity of meanings was, and continues to be, politically ground-breaking (Brivic 13). In the 80’s, critical to Joyce and Lacan’s advancement was the groundbreaking series of French essays edited by Jacques Aubert *Joyce Avec Lacan* (1987), which not only included essays by Lacan himself, but also works by notable French Joyceans Jacques-Alain Miller, Jean-Michel Rabaté and Catherine Millot. Especially important during this period were Joyceans Ellie Ragland-Sullivan and R.B. Kershner, who mediated much of this still untranslated “French Connection” for a North American audience. Finally, in 1995, Robert Hatari offered the remarkable yet complex *How James Joyce Made His Name: A Reading of the Final Lacan*, a work that focused almost entirely on Joyce’s influence on Lacan. Such longstanding efforts represent a late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century trend that has lead Lacanian psychoanalysis to becoming a school of thought *de rigueur* for interpreting Joyce in the field of literary criticism, hence the ongoing work of Joycean theorists such as Luke Thurston, Robert Hatari, Sheldon Brivic, Garry Leonard and Christine Van Boheemen-Saaf.
While this thesis attempts to situate itself within the lineage of psychoanalytic criticism on Joyce, it retains Colin McCabe’s strong political bent. Joyce is a revolutionary writer in the sense that revolutionary means “involving or causing dramatic change or innovation, as well as engag[ing] in, promoting, or relating to political revolution” (OED). Although political revolution might seem to exaggerate the importance of Joyce, I qualify this assertion by maintaining that he must be conceived so foremost at the level of the psyche. By this, I mean that Joyce’s writing was not only seminal in transforming the discipline of psychoanalysis, marked by Lacan, but also for expanding the libidinal limits as to how the reader might conceive the political as such. Joyce’s writing is strikingly effective in this sense. Its novelty -- while often praised aesthetically and for its descriptive powers -- has largely been disregarded by critics with respect to the ambivalent territory between psychical affect and political orientation, especially as it pertains to the modern, readerly subject.

My own arrival at this insight originates not from Freud, Lacan or Norris, or any other writer on Joyce, but from Slavoj Žižek’s *The Ticklish Subject*, specifically, Žižek’s inspired polemic on the political potential of the neurotically-rooted activity of the hysterick:

the opposition of perversion and hysteria is especially pertinent today in our era of the ‘decline of Oedipus’, when the paradigmatic mode of subjectivity is no longer the subject integrated into the paternal Law through symbolic castration, but the ‘polymorphously perverse’ subject following the superego injunction to enjoy. The question of how we are to hystericize the subject caught in the closed loop of perversion (how we are to inculcate the dimension of lack and questioning in him) becomes more urgent in view of today’s political scene: the subject of late capitalist market relations is perverse, while the ‘democratic subject’ (the mode of subjectivity implied by the modern democracy) is inherently hysterical (the abstract citizen correlative to the empty place of Power). (*The Ticklish Subject* 248)
Despite Žižek’s conceptual density, within this discursive scenario we are provided with a productive psychoanalytic framework with which to elucidate Joyce’s combined political and psychical significance. Stated directly, Joyce’s writing “hystericize[s] the subject caught in the closed loop of perversion”; alternatively, his writing is the outcome of a neurotic authorial subject that successfully hysterectomizes the perverse subject of late capitalist market relations (The Ticklish Subject 248). Of course, to fully understand this complex claim, a fuller understanding of Lacanian psychoanalysis is required; in order to remedy this concern, my thesis provides an ongoing elaboration on some of the fundamental tenets of psychoanalytic theory to supplement my argument. In doing so, I return frequently to Žižek, whose writings have come to revolutionize our understanding of Lacan not only with his seminal 1989 The Sublime Object of Ideology, but also with works such as his philosophically rigorous Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology (1993) and the politically salient The Ticklish Subject (1999).²

Prior to detailing my full approach to Joyce, however, two tasks need completion: First, the terms introduced by Žižek -- neurosis, hysteria, perversion and psychosis -- need to be sketched out, along with a brief introduction to theoretical psychoanalysis, so as to gain a foothold in Žižek’s polemic. Second, the parameters underlying my own theoretical approach require elucidation, an endeavour involving an intricate combination of philosophy, psychoanalysis and political theory. As a result, I present Joyce only at the end of my introduction, dovetailing his writings with my developing point of view.

² As recognized by Fredric Jameson and Stanley Fish, editors of Zizek, “perhaps more than those of any other single author, [Zizek’s] writings have constituted the most compelling evidence available for recognizing Jacques Lacan as the preeminent philosopher of our time” (Tarrying with the Negative; back cover).
Ultimately, my underlying thesis here continues to be that psychoanalysis remains vital towards understanding Joyce’s writing.

*Theoretical Beginnings: Desire*

The first step towards appreciating the above quote by Žižek is to recognize its unusual combination of psychoanalytic and political terminology. How can capitalist relations be described as, in any way, perverse? To explain such associations, we must first strike at the heart of all psychoanalysis: desire. The concept of desire is pivotal towards connecting Žižek’s theoretical outlook with Joyce’s literary one, as well as each writer to today’s political scene. Desire, in this view, exceeds traditional notions that limit it to the individual. While traditional perspectives confine desire to questions of personal taste or physical attraction, a Lacanian conception of desire seeks to show how individual desire, while meaningful, is also an effect of broader formations: individual desire is the product of larger cultural, social and political forces. From this perspective, desire resembles Adam Smith’s well-known metaphor of the market as an “invisible hand”, which quietly and unconsciously guides all human interaction, from the most formal to the most intimate. Consequently, I posit psychoanalysis as illuminating what I categorize as three, interlocking articulations of human desire: the personal, the social and the political. While such categories are generalizations, they nevertheless provide a theoretical structure, or tool, which can be used to organize and make explicit this invisible relationship between desire and political agency.

Pursuing this framework, cross-disciplinary perspectives such as Žižek’s should be regarded from three vantage points: first, they should be seen from the perspective of
Lacanian analysis. Terms such as neurosis, perversion and hysteria designate not illness (necessarily), but ways in which Lacan categorizes personal desire. Neurosis, perversion and psychosis refer to the types of desire – or, more precisely, fantasy formations -- a subject may experience due to his or her integration into the symbolic order (Écrits 225). Central to this definition is that every individual demonstrates varying degrees of pathological desire, not merely those who are explicitly delusional, abnormal or immoral.¹ Second, inferring from this insight, neurosis, perversion and psychosis also refer to the ways in which social interest is formed, a crossover from the personal realm justified by the Lacanian premise that desire is structured (Evans 192).² Being structured, desire spans the boundary between the individual and social, the personal and the cultural, the subject and its objects. As such, desire is always social; a key but often overlooked premise embedded within Lacanian theory (Evans 192). Social patterns such as kinship hierarchies and the incest taboo are the most obvious examples of how desire unconsciously preempts and regulates conscious interaction cross-culturally. Thirdly, and most importantly, neurosis, perversion and psychosis refer to how political desire is formed.

To understand this final and proposed category, we must resurrect and reaffirm the notion that desire constitutes a kind of illness. Despite its universality, desire is, at bottom, inherently flawed. Desire is always imbalanced, undetermined or problematic, and the expression that best registers this reality is, precisely, pathology. Since all subjects are pathological, neurosis, perversion and psychosis refer not only to how an individual’s personal desire harmoniously relates to the social world, but registers how

¹ In contrast to Lacan, Freud categorized the subject in terms of symptoms, not structures.
² Lacan also held that “social structures are [always] symbolic” (Evans 192-3).
the self and the social world are themselves cacophonous, pathological or “torn” in fabric. Such a characteristic that has not gone unnoticed by philosophers. As Judith Butler explains, philosophers from Hegel to Foucault have long recognized that desire is founded on a paradox, a paradox whose appeal demands investigation at the ontological level (see *The Psychic Life of Power*). With this in mind, I define political desire as the subject’s relationship to this ontologically rooted imbalance in human psychical experience, a schism that “cuts across” the other articulations of desire. Political desire, according to this perspective, becomes synonymous with pathology, and beneath its overarching sphere of influence we can see how political forces influence and impinge upon individual and social desire.

While the full nature of this schism grounding pathological desire far exceeds my thesis, suffice it to mention, by way of example, that its more familiar experience is agency. The experience of personal agency is the outcome of the unacknowledged role of political desire within the individual psyche. Agency testifies to the fact that, while subjects such as Joyce are always unconsciously guided by social norms, they are also determined by this social order’s very “indetermination”. Such an indetermination may be said to *occasion* politics: it mediates between “free will” and determinism, and its outcome in the field of perception approximates an existential state that Jean-Paul Sartre describes as condemned to being free. For Sartre, “Man is condemned to be free... because once thrown into this world, he is responsible for everything he does”

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5 Throughout *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler illustrates how Lacan’s formulation of desire is not a contradiction but a paradox. Butler articulates Lacanian desire in terms of political power; or, as her trope of reflexivity persuasively shows, desire, when read through the works of Hegel and Nietzsche, Freud and Foucault, does not oppose political power but is itself already the installation of power in the subject. While I would reverse this formulation — desire installs power and not vice-versa — such theorists nevertheless belong to a line of thought that astutely recognizes this constitutive paradox in their own and other’s arguments.
(Existentialism and Human Emotions 23). Indeed, Sartre locates this condition in the problem of understanding desire: “we do not know what we want and yet we are responsible for what we are – that is a fact” (Existentialism is a Humanism 12).

Subjectivity refers to a condition in which humans are condemned to making choices in their life because we can never fully know or comprehend desire. The practice of voting, for example, occasions this desire, where the subject takes responsibility for an activity whose outcome he or she neither fully comprehends, nor has full control over. The degree to which desire eludes us, or that social desire does not seem to “hold” within our psyches, is what I label as political desire or pathology.  

By accepting pathology as a necessary part of human experience, and accepting this experience as political, my thesis employs the categories of Lacanian pathology to demonstrate Joyce’s political affectivity. Pathology allows subjects such as Joyce to assert their socio-political significance in an otherwise (in)determined social order; although unconscious in derivation, such assertions explain why writers such as Joyce write. While psychoanalytic critique typically associates the emergence of desire with the parent child relationship, criticism should, in this view, be obliged to holding governments and corporations – no less than literature -- accountable to observations.

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6 Importantly, we must not confuse Sartrean free will with the psychotic’s fantasy of an individual who can do whatever he or she wishes; nor does it denote a portion of human experience untouched by language or socialization. On the contrary, the subject of political desire continues to be determined by social desire; rather, “free choice” in the political sense refers to a condition in which all subjects eventually find themselves in: rejected from the social order of desire. Critical here, therefore, is that political desire is impacted and fully “comprehended” by social desire. The difference is that, unlike social desire by itself, political desire depends on a minimum of exile from the social order, a condition necessary for agency and, by extension, self-consciousness. Such exile is not freedom per se then, but only, in reality, a kind of abjection. Political desire culminates in the subject’s predicament of “freely” struggling for his or her acceptance within the social order. The most obvious instance is marginalized groups who act against the establishment because they find themselves left outside of its patterns of privilege. With political desire, such figures remain condemned to serve the social order even when – or precisely when-- it fails them. Only in this limited, inarticulate sense can subjects such as Joyce be said to be free from the social order’s unconscious, all-encompassing dominance.
concerning pathology. Created by and creative of subjects, they too are reflective of human pathology, various extensions of a subject's integration into the social and political orders of desire. Of course, given the gist of my theoretical approach, further questions are raised. For example, if the individual experiences his or her neurosis or perversion as painful or problematic, how do we respond to his or her desire for relief? Lacan also considered desire always to be sexual and, at bottom, unconscious. How do we consider personal, social and political desire as unconscious, let alone, more awkwardly, as sexual (Evans 36)? In order to answer such questions, and how they pertain to Joyce's political affectivity, a more in-depth exploration of the Lacanian subject is required; achieving this, I will be in a position to illustrate how Joyce hysterizes the perverse subject of capitalism.

*Fantasy Formation, or How the Lacanian Subject is Political.*

The shortest way to further integrating a Lacanian conception of the subject into my framework is through Lacan's notion of fantasy formation. Central to this demonstration is that, while Lacan's notion of fantasy formation approximates basic Freudian concepts such as desire, wish or libido, fantasy formation does not connote a homogenous essence circulating between and within subjects. The concept of fantasy formation may be broken down into simpler concepts, or parts. Fantasy formation may be translated into terms of the *subject* or, more precisely, articulated in terms of *parts* of the subject. Lacan named these components the Imaginary, Symbolic and Real and, finally, *jouissance:* different fantasy formations reflect the different arrangements these

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7 Lacan's fourth order, which he developed in his later years, was actually called the *sinthome,* a notion derived from his reading of Joyce. The *sinthome* designated for Lacan "a signifying formulation beyond"
components may take, each creating measurably distinct personalities within subjects.

With this said, Lacan’s notion of fantasy formation may be said to harmonize with my three-part model of desire. The personal, social and political categories of desire correspond to the imaginary, symbolic and real orders of the subject respectively, while the fourth order pertains to all of them. Like desire, the structure of the Lacanian subject reflects how consciousness extends beyond the domain of the individual. From the beginning, fantasy formation creates and sustains the subject via its four parts, carrying him or her along like a puppet on a string through the world of meaning as such. For Freud this process started with the Oedipal complex, while Lacan emphasized the unveiling of the Name of the Father. By mediating between contingent forces, on the one hand, and purposeful activity, on the other hand, the structure of the fantasy formation is responsible not only for fostering desire within the subject, but also for maintaining and installing the subject as such, perhaps the premier of powers ascribed to desire by Lacan.

The simplest way to describe the Lacanian subject is as a combination of the imaginary and symbolic orders. Together, they negotiate the world of meaning for the subject. For Lacan, the symbolic order constitutes the most important order of subjectivity. Representing the social order of desire, the symbolic order is the ultimate arbiter of meaning for the subject. Being the all-encompassing mediator of subjectivity, the symbolic order, like the social order of desire, presents the critical field of contestation on which Joyce’s writing may be seen to politically vie. As a kind of psychic-social reservoir -- the depth to which our consciousness is always grounded in

analysis, a kernel of enjoyment immune to the efficacy of the symbolic... the *sinthome* is what ‘allows one to live’ by providing a unique organization of *jouissance*” (Evans 189). While I choose to deal with *jouissance* directly because of my engagement with ideology, the *sinthome* nevertheless remains an underlying concept critical to my argument.
someone else’s consciousness -- the symbolic order is simply the basis of all conscious life. Accordingly, while such a claim might seem to exaggerate the significance of the symbolic order, one must realize the symbolic order presents a completely autonomous domain in psychoanalysis. Answerable only to itself, “the symbolic order is not a superstructure determined by biology or genetic”, but comprises its own universe entirely (Evans 202). Because of this autonomy, the symbolic order resides strictly in the unconscious and consists solely of signifiers. Designating essentially the linguistic dimension of the psyche, it is a dimension in which elements have no positive existence but are constituted purely by virtue of their mutual differences (The Seminar: Book III 29). Notwithstanding such alterity, however, it is important to realize that without the symbolic order, the world would be incomprehensible to us. The symbolic order is the precondition of meaning and intelligibility, and the nearest conventional term that approximates the meaning of this term is the term “language”, except with the difference that the symbolic order is not simply a tool for communication. The symbolic order, like social desire, produces thought; it does not merely mediate it. Imagine, for example, what it would be like to think without language in the first place. Would this even be possible? For Lacan, the answer is a definitive “no” because language, and its more fundamental underpinning the symbolic order, are necessary conditions for thought and not vice-versa. With this said, we must keep in mind that subjects are not equally implicated in this grounding: despite the fact that we are always grounded in “someone else’s” consciousness, certain subjects are “more” grounded in the symbolic order than others -- a fact testified to, once again, by pathology. As stated, the social order is not
excluded from political desire, which infringes on and stratifies conscious life between subjects.

Despite Lacan's privileging of the symbolic, the imaginary holds an equally vital place in my account of desire. If the symbolic order represents the social order of desire, the imaginary order represents, in rough terms, the personal order of desire. The imaginary may be thought of a "window" through which we might locate Joyce's authorial subjectivity in the symbolic order. Despite its deceptive qualities, therefore, the imaginary offers a necessary dimension for understanding Joyce's socio-political significance. On the one hand, the imaginary order, seemingly ephemeral, consists mainly of "image and imagination, deception and lure" (Evans 82). On the other hand, the imaginary order remains essential to the subject's sustenance and is responsible for such things as the ego and the mirror stage of identity development (The Seminar: Book 1 74). In this regard, the imaginary constitutes one of the most important links between psychoanalysis and literature: the necessity of imagination to human psychical experience. We may recall the spontaneity and inner life of childhood. Such an experience is not left behind in childhood, but only represents the emergence of a more fundamental sense of being a subject: the creation and development of the imaginary. Joyce is exemplary here, if we recall A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man where a young Stephen Dedalus learns to negotiate his relationship to modern life under the auspices of his imagination. With the imaginary order, we retain the familiar, egoistic figure whose inner struggle parallels his or her striving with the social world, however distorted this world manifests itself in his or her psyche (whether perceived as a battle of good against evil, self versus fate, revolution, etc). Via such intimate perspectives, we can
see how Joyce’s manipulation of the imaginary provides a meeting ground for psychical notions as “the subject”, resident in the symbolic order, and more positive, egocentric notions such as “the individual”, which are perceived as social.  

The Real Politics of Jouissance

Before I move on to define neurosis, perversion and psychosis with more precision, the final components linking the psychical with the political require contextualization: the real and jouissance. The real most accords with my category of the political order of desire: like political desire, the real insists on a subject who is never fully determined by the structuring imperatives of the symbolic order. In this sense, the real is, literally, elusive; Lacan defines it simply as the “unsymbolizable” (Evans 159). While the real occasions the political, like a black hole it remains devoid of content and form. Indeed, even this rudimentary knowledge of the real would be impossible without the last order of the Lacanian subject: jouissance. Although the real refuses symbolization, jouissance offers a point of reference for comprehending a socio-political history of the subject. If the real occasions the political because of the inconsistency of the universe, jouissance is the inert “stuff” within which this schism extinguishes itself,

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8 One such starting point is the Freudian “ego”. While the ego for Lacan is wholly consigned to the imaginary order, it nevertheless provides a pivot for illustrating how the individual -- whose closest resemblance in psychoanalysis is the ego -- may be understood from a psychoanalytic vantage point. Tentatively, we can demonstrate how discourses that speak of the individual reside in the domain of the imaginary order or, conversely, from a social perspective, how psychoanalysis itself functions in any given social milieu.

9 With this said, it remains possible to gain a glimpse of the real. It manifests itself most clearly in literature in conflicts involving sexual or moral sentiment. Consider, for example, the role of desire in major Western works such as Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet, or Plato’s The Death of Socrates. In Romeo and Juliet the hero and heroine commit suicide on grounds of unrequited love and in Hamlet and Plato’s The Death of Socrates, each commit suicide -- virtual and literal suicide respectively -- on the basis of principle. In either case, desire, at its most extreme, demonstrates the capability of overriding reason. Desire in such cases often appears overwhelming or incomprehensible to the outside viewer: the irrationality of suicide is the seeming contradictory stance of an individual desiring not to desire, of desiring not to exist; it exemplifies how “Being” depends on desire and not vice-versa.
or tentatively comes to an end; in this way *jouissance* enables the subject to operate
“normally” within the symbolic order. Only through the intervening presence of
*jouissance* might we acquire an understanding of the Lacanian real and negotiate the
perilous terrain of political desire. Because of its stabilizing presence, *jouissance*,
perceived most simply as “pleasure,” offers the clearest point for exposing a history of
modern regimes that manipulate subjects at the level of desire. *Jouissance* illustrates why
hysteria no longer holds for Žižek as the paradigmatic mode of subjectivity, and exposes
how and why Joyce’s writing opposes the new paradigm, perversion.

To begin with, it is imperative not to confuse *jouissance* with Freud’s pleasure
principle. Freud’s pleasure principle functions in the opposite way pleasure is generally
conceived: Freud’s homeostatic pleasure principle suppresses and minimizes pleasure.
Conversely, *jouissance* connotes precisely the popular understanding of pleasure: an
enjoyment with strong sexual connotations. And yet, still, much like Freud’s pleasure
principle, *jouissance* holds a constructive role in Lacan’s notions of the subject.

*Jouissance* bears the distinguished responsibility of binding together *all the other orders*
of the subject together. *Jouissance* is the “glue” that keeps the imaginary, symbolic and
real orders of subjectivity together. A helpful way to look at this unusual conception of
pleasure is that, if the symbolic order is the minimum condition for consciousness or
*conscience*, *jouissance* offers the subject the minimum possibility of *sentience*. If the
symbolic order is necessary for comprehension, *jouissance* is necessary for apprehension.

*Jouissance* enables bodily feeling to emerge in the subject in the first place; it is the
groundwork over which a symbolically rooted consciousness is placed, first perceived in
the mirror stage of development via the imaginary. Perhaps the figure that best
represents the non-subject of pure jouissance is the human vegetable: devoid of consciousness, the vegetable nonetheless retains its physical functions.

Of particular importance is that jouissance fastens the structuring qualities of the symbolic order with the unsymbolizable meaning of the real. Jouissance serves a very genuine protective function in the subject: on the one hand, jouissance shields the subject from the bewildering, horrific and conscious-obliterating capacity of the real; on the other hand, jouissance -- equally immune to representation by the symbolic order -- prevents us from becoming creatures who obey, unconditionally, the symbolic's arbitrary commands. Put somewhat simplistically, jouissance allows the subject to function in the face of what he or she cannot control. The consistent, dependable presence of jouissance is why the subject does not feel pathological necessarily in his or her daily life. The source of this consistency rests upon the fact that jouissance constitutes the most basic link connecting the subject to his or her phenomenological world: materiality. Jouissance is the sole material substance hypothesized in Lacanian theory and, as such, literally "fuses" the subject to reality. While such a materiality must not be confused with the physical or natural world posited by the natural sciences, it nevertheless constitutes a positive essence in psychoanalytic theory.

We now begin to see how jouissance emerges as a variable in struggles that vie for subjects at the psychical level. Individuals are increasingly controlled via their capacity for jouissance. For instance, the power of today's media rests not so much in its role as a dispenser of propaganda -- if by that we mean telling people lies -- but, rather, in its ability to produce and disseminate pleasure. News broadcasting persuades people on the basis of spin, an open secret widely recognized by industry and media consumers
alike; the modern media, like the ancient Sophists, makes information appear right or wrong by making it feel pleasurable. On the one hand, such a power is, by itself, not problematic; pleasure is a necessary part of subjective existence, part of a libidinal economy that links the subject with his or her outer world. On the other hand, subjects become unavoidably attached to these particular sites of pleasure production. Given the subject’s dependence upon jouissance, modern technologies such as television and the Internet not only produce pleasure but also, while doing so, create bonds of jouissance linking subjects to these same modes of production. More importantly, however, although such relationships are undoubtedly one-sided, in order to perceive the truly political problem derived from such bonds, we need to address another central and as-of-yet unmentioned detail concerning pleasure production: the fact that modern structures of jouissance-production are incapable of sustaining the knot of subjectivity. While fully capable of cultivating bonds of pleasure onto them, such organizations, unlike the traditional rhetorician or master craftsman, do not reciprocate these bonds (however unequally). Standing outside of the order of social desire, modern structures belong to a league of psychotic productive forces responsible for what Lacan, speaking of the late twentieth century, called “the decline of the symbolic order” (The Ticklish Subject 322). While capable of imitating the social mode of desire -- feigning to work for the public good, for example -- such psychotic forms of power also express indifference to the same order. Choosing instead to incestuously create their own pleasure sites (say, the shopping

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10 Individuals may, for example, want to “possess” these forms immediately – exemplified in various addictions (television addiction, for example) – or, more typically, identify with the underlying organizations responsible for these modes. Identification occurs when subjects feel themselves to be the same as, or on equal footing to, a particular brand name or logo responsible for producing pleasure: people who only use Apple computers, fans of certain teams in sports, etc.

11 I say “political” because the problem specifically concerns the subject’s relation to the real -- the schism or imbalance -- inseparable from subjectivity. In this case, its primary conduit is psychosis.
mall) they irresponsibly bring subjects -- subjects who are mainly perverse -- to the
dangerous brink of psychosis. Compare, for example, the individual’s respective
relationships to the parent and the boss: while a boss and parent are both authoritative
figures who foster bonds of attachment in the psyches of those who depend on them -- the
worker and child respectively -- a parent will, typically, reciprocate these bonds, while a
 corporate employer will not.

With *jouissance*, then, I have reached the heart of Žižek’s complaint, and the core
of my argument concerning Joyce. Joyce’s writing resists the production of pleasure as
well as the privileging of the “paradigmatic mode of subjectivity” induced by late
- capitalist market relations (*The Ticklish Subject* 248). Joyce’s writing separates bonds of
*jouissance* that sustain the subject from psychotically rooted bonds that undermine the
subject; such enticement to bondage occurs mainly through a privileging of perversion, a
fantasy formation especially vulnerable to the seduction of capital.

**Neurosis versus Perversion in Joyce**

Lacan lists three main categories of fantasy formation: neurosis, perversion and
psychosis (*The Seminar: Book I* 86-7). Each reflects, in different ways, the subject’s
relation to *jouissance*; as a result, each displays divergent responses to contemporary
modes of pleasure production. First, psychosis constitutes the most extreme form of
fantasy structure. Foreclosing the Name-of-the-Father, the psychotic is defined by Lacan
as a subject that lacks the “fundamental signifier that permits signification to proceed
normally” (*The Seminar: Book III* 119). Within this definition, there are two dominant
expressions of psychosis. The first expression places the subject entirely outside the
symbolic order. Devoid of subjectivity, such a figure often exists outside language, and is unable to comprehend speech or communicate with others. Immersed within the real, he or she has either no comprehensive relation to jouissance or, at best, a visceral apprehension of it. By contrast, the second expression is well versed with the symbolic. Appearing “normal” from the outside, such a version of psychosis functions quite successfully in modern society. Indeed, such psychoticics may be said to function too well, a fact that testifies not to the psychotic’s normality but to the abnormality of a society dominated by late-capitalism. That is, what they lack is not a facility with the symbolic, but a sense of jouissance that underlies this order. Failing to perceive the jouissance of other subjects, they, like modern power structures, do not register subjectivity. Such a manifestation of psychosis most closely resembles the stereotypical villain who is unable to empathize with other people, inviting, naturally, speculation as to whether or not he or she represents a threat to society.

By contrast, neurosis and perversion betray very active relationships to jouissance. Residing within the symbolic, each possesses the capacity to signify. However, because they situate themselves in relation to jouissance in radically different ways, their strategies for signifying also radically differ. The first step to understanding this division is to realize that the neurotic possesses the distinctive deficiency of repressing jouissance. Neurotics fundamentally avoid or refuse their inner pleasure. ¹²

Choosing to merely fantasize about their hidden pleasure in cryptic form, they desire what they perceive the symbolic order as wanting them to desire. For instance, neurotics commonly want objects and images they perceive as popular because they are popular

¹² By refusing, I mean they refuse to be made aware of their real desire outside of the distorting presence of fantasy.
while, by contrast, perverts do not desire such objects, learning instead to acknowledge the reality of their jouissance. Perverts know what they desire, regardless of social opinion and, in this sense, aware of their inner jouissance, they possess an implicit advantage over the neurotic. The second step, however, is to realize that, despite his or her knowledge, the pervert equally fails to satisfy his or her desire. While the neurotic sincerely believes what the symbolic order tells him or her, the perverse subject willingly forgoes his or her particular jouissance in favour of the symbolic order’s express desire in the hope of making him or herself desirable in the eyes of the symbolic order. Although the pervert knows that the symbolic order does not represent his or her desire, he or she, nevertheless, follows its tenets; failing to doubt his or her knowledge of jouissance, the pervert continues to act as if the symbolic was something that actually existed, an assumption which, in the end, spells the pervert’s capitulation to the logic of symbolic authority (The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis 185). Such a stance is encapsulated under the term disavowal, which is defined, roughly, as knowing that something is true, yet acting as if it was not.\(^\text{13}\) In the end, the pervert misrecognizes his or her desire, not in terms of knowledge, but in terms of action within the social field.

Still, returning to the neurotic, we must not overlook the fact that the neurotic accrues an additional and unexpected quality from his or her repressive stance. Over and above the pervert’s knowledge of desire, the neurotic possesses the critical capacity of interrogating the significance of desire as such. Despite his or her repression of desire,

\(^{13}\) Freud articulates disavowal in terms of castration; that is, when a child first discovers the absence of the penis in the little girl, the child disavows this absence. While he knows the little girl does not have penis, he nevertheless believes she has penis all the same. Although Lacan agrees with Freud on the structure of disavowal, Lacan makes the added claim that disavowal is not caused by the perception of the perceived absence of the penis (i.e. the bodily organ), but the absence of the phallus. The phallus is the one signifier in Lacanian theory that serves as a signified. Lacan: “the phallus is a signifier...It is the signifier intended to designate as a whole the effects of the signified” (Ecrits 285).
the neurotic comes to interrogate the unaccounted for discrepancy between individual desire and social desire. He or she asks: why does my jouissance not harmonize with the symbolic order of desire? Why is the social order wrong in its claims about me? Within this discrepancy, the neurotic not only questions his or her personal desire (precisely because he or she represses it), therefore, but also social desire and, ultimately, political desire as well. Such unreserved questioning is encapsulated in the word anxiety, which carries a central and special status in psychoanalytic theory: anxiety, elevated to the status of “an affect, [is] not an emotion...[but] the only affect which is beyond all doubt, which is not deceptive” (The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis 73). Thus the neurotic is foremost characterized by “a question that being poses for the subject,” a fantasy whose structural relation to the symbolic order, “is essentially a question” (The Seminar: Book III 174). The truth of his or her anxiety is therefore symptomatic of the neurotic’s singular “access” to the real – and for this reason anxiety becomes the key catalyst in Joyce’s agenda of hystericalizing the social order of desire. Communicated from one subject to another like a signal, anxiety has the capacity to provoke subjects into action personally and politically (The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis 73). Effecting change at the social level of desire, neurotics compel other subjects to doubt their desire and objects desired by exhibiting alternative modes of relating or existing within the signifier, a capacity facilitated typically by speech but also, as in Joyce’s case, writing. In this manner, the neurotic dispels artificially produced bonds of jouissance, potentially mobilizing perverse subjects against psychotic modes of

14 There are two types of neurosis: obsessional neurosis and hysteria (Écrits 168). The question of the hysterical relates to the indeterminacy of one’s sex (“Am I a man or woman?”), whereas the question of the obsessional neurotic relates to the contingency of one’s existence (“What am I for the symbolic order?”) (Écrits 168).
production that manipulate them through artificially produced bonds of pleasure. Not surprisingly, then, the fantasy formation that Žižek is most critical of is perversion. The heart of Žižek's criticism rests upon the fact that the pervert's desire disavows knowledge of desire. While the pervert knows "what's wrong," so to speak, he or she does not act against the truth of the situation.\(^\text{15}\)

To better see the neurotic/perversion dichotomy, contemplate the following scenario: one Saturday night, a neurotic, heterosexual man and perverse one enter into a bar. Each hopes to "pick up" or seduce a woman. While a "woman" is the object of their desire, given that one man is neurotic and the other perverse, each conceives of their task in different ways. On the one hand, the neurotic enters the bar pursuing an arbitrary and phantasmal image of the women. Such an image does not exist in reality, but represents a fantasy formation reflective only of male desire, one privileged by patriarchy.

Notwithstanding, the neurotic man bears a possessive stance to this image; he wants to have the Woman he imagines he desires, because it effaces his real jouissance whose unveiling to him would be traumatic and unbearable. On the other hand, the perverse man enters the bar with the opposite hope: the perverse subject does not want to possess an image of the Woman; instead, he desires to be possessed by a woman although -- we must immediately add -- a woman who happens to exemplify the neurotic's ideal image of "Woman". Critical here is that the pervert perceives the difference between real women and the image of the Woman; he comprehends jouissance in others and himself.

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\(^{15}\) On the one hand, in Lacanian terms, the pervert fully realizes that desire is founded on an absence or lack, a lack exemplified by the symbolic order. On the other hand, the consequence of this realization is that, precisely by recognizing this lack, the pervert is placed in the paradoxical position of being a subject that is "characterized by a lack of a question" (Evans 140). Instead of questioning the symbolic order, the pervert believes he or she embodies and fills in this lack in desire: "the pervert himself occupies the place of the object...to the benefit of another for whose jouissance he exercises his action as sadistic pervert" (The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis 185).
Of course, the oversight not to be made here is to imagine the perverse subject to be any less patriarchal, selfish or free from symbolic authority then the neurotic. While the perverse subject recognizes desire in others, he recognizes it *only* insofar as he himself can satisfy and gain approval from the social order of desire. Once he has successfully “seduced” the woman that most closely approximates the image of the Woman -- that is, elicited an admission that she thinks *he* is desirable -- he will, so to speak, have been satisfied. What this means is that the pervert uses the image of the Woman to “prove” that he is desirable in the eyes of the phallic economy. On the one hand, the competitive, neurotic, bourgeois man who successfully attains the image of the Woman at the bar will immediately become disappointed with her. On the other hand, the perverse, bourgeois subject will *not* evince dissatisfaction with the image of the beautiful Woman. He will continue to desire his “trophy bride” as long as she continues to prove his desirability in the eyes of others. Despite the pervert’s insight beyond the illusory nature of the social order of desire, then, it is important not to forget that the pervert remains susceptible to the neurotic’s capacity to hystericize the symbolic order; hence, the relevance of Žižek’s question, “[how are we] to inculcate the dimension of lack and questioning in [the subject of perversion]” (Žižek 248)? Unlike the psychotic, the pervert remains vulnerable to the neurotic’s anxious disruption of the pervert’s *jouissance*, around which the perverse subject’s discourse circles, and on which his or her disavowing complacency rests. The neurotic’s anxiety effectively reminds the subject of perversion that he or she remains a figure of the social order of desire and not, as ideology would make him or her believe, a figure that stands somewhere else.
Consider the case of the American, right wing working class. They, too, illustrate the logic of disavowal inherent to perversion. The American working class constitutes an increasingly right wing demographic since the late-seventies, evidenced in Ronald Reagan’s presidential victory in 1980 and in both Bush administrations. The point is that individuals in the right-wing working class are not oblivious to the fact that the Republican Party is the party of “strength” and “wealth”; they know the right wing is unsympathetic to working class institutions such as unions, unemployment insurance and minimum wage. Yet it is exactly for these reasons that the working class votes for them. On the one hand, by voting for the Republican Party, who treats him as what he actually is (surplus-labour), the right wing working class individual negates his own personal interests and real economic position. This is not so much a mistake in judgment as it is a rejection of his or her own desires (because he or she knows the Republicans will likely provide tax breaks for the rich, etc). On the other hand, the same individual thinks to himself: if I side myself with the party of the strong, if I place myself on “the team” that is unapologetically rich and powerful, will I not be powerful like them? The working class subject’s mistake is not that he is ignorant of serving the desire of the Other (being perverse, he or she willingly serves the desire of the Other); instead, he or she obliviously substitutes the desire of the Other for the desire of the upper classes. Indeed, by fearlessly taking upon themselves what the rich face, willingly competing on the same playing field (unregulated labour markets, the unchallenged movement of capital, etc.), the right wing working class person believes he or she demonstrates honesty and “inner” struggle all the more convincingly in the face of power. Like a soldier who dutifully goes to war, he or she does not shirk the severity of his or her predicament. Conversely, if the
working class right wing person concedes the logic of left-wing protectionism – that is, admits social vulnerability and structural “weakness” – he or she believes him or herself to be an individual who is, at heart, vulnerable and weak. Knowing full well the gulf in power between the working and upper classes, therefore, the working class, right wing person gains pleasure from, and chooses to identify with, those who exploit his or her weakness. Caught within this state of disavowal, the working class subject’s conviction is that she faces reality “as such” rather than class conflict, a rationale that helps explain the Left’s lack of success in regaining working class support through the strategy of vilifying George W. Bush. The more bullying Bush behaves, the more appealing he becomes because a considerable portion of the working class have come to identify with Bush’s displays of power; the right wing working class now identifies with the violent context that the Bush administration seemingly, like them, confronts. With this illustration, we may infer that the perverse subject operates according to the rationale that, while he or she knows capitalism is contradictory, he or she continues to act as if this were not the case. Along these paradoxically styled thought patterns, Freud, Lacan and Žižek all maintain that the fantasy formation of perversion is “always a socially constructive attitude, while hysteria is much more subversive and threatening to the predominant hegemony” (*The Ticklish Subject* 247).

*Joyce’s Fictional Hysteria*

Through a modernist blend of fact and fiction, Joyce’s neurotic writing hysterizics the perverse subject of late market capitalism. Such a movement is accompanied by the fact that Joyce successfully continues to pose as the symbolic order
in the eyes of the modern subject; a posture also reflected by, I believe, his status in the canon. Joyce’s manipulation of the signifier has persuaded “us,” perverse subjects of modernity, into believing that his authorial name possesses the lack that is the phallus at the heart of the social order of desire, the literary canon; and by “success”, I mean that Joyce has deceived the perverse subject into believing that he or she knows what Joyce wants. Joyce has come to pose as the “subject who knows” even though, naturally, once examined, Joyce’s writing refuses this possibility. Instead, Joyce’s insurrectionary style provokes the perverse subject into questioning his or her own ideological assumptions.

Providing enigmatic and unresolved endings to many of his stories, for example, Joyce not only opposes strongly held conventions such as the “spiral plot” ending in storytelling but also, in doing so, challenges the uncritical reader’s presumption of drawing pleasure or jouissance from such customary techniques (Jackson 20-1). Disrupting the reader’s unquestioned attachment to form, Joyce’s writing teaches the subject of perversion the Lacanian lesson that the symbolic order may not be satisfied, and that what he or she thought was the symbolic order was in fact an ideological façade on which capitalism depends. Capitalist ideology persuades the pervert into believing he or she “stands in” for the non-existent phallus by mimicking the illusion of the phallus, a feat capitalism manages by producing commodities and cultivating commodity fetishism. Commodity production does not concern the symbolic order (which is rooted in lack) but only feigns to, and commodity fetishism is a symptom of those who mistake the desire of the symbolic for the desire of capital.

Finally, before moving on to Joyce, it is important to note that by claiming that Joyce hysterilizes the subject of perversion, I am not referring to the historical figure of
Joyce but rather, as posited by Sheldon Brivic, his authorial subjectivity, a persona extrapolated exclusively from Joyce’s published works. I deduce, after my treatment of Joyce’s narratives, that Joyce’s writing served as a tool that enabled, through hystericization, his authorial subjectivity to break out of the closed loop of perversion. This, in turn, elevated Joyce’s authorial subjectivity to a perspectival vantage point from which to critique and oppose ideological constraint at the unconscious level. By elevate, I do not mean Joyce overcame pathology or ideology; rather, I mean Joyce managed to extract his authorial subjectivity out of the symbolic order while, at the same time, reintegrating it at a point in the chain of signification not caught within the closed loop of perversion. Joyce’s position within the symbolic order changed, along with the content of his fundamental fantasy, but his status as a neurotic subject remained the same.

Effectively, Joyce managed to survive his own concerted attack against a perversely inscribed ideology both foreign to and constitutive of his own subjectivity. In light of this movement, Joyce’s authorial subjectivity may be seen as not only opposed to capitalist ideology and anticipating Žižek’s political outlook but also, when perceived in hindsight, regarded as contributing to how the modern psyche came to conceive of what constitutes “the political” in the twentieth century. Joyce’s writing not only altered the parameters by

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It is crucial to sharply differentiate between Joyce’s authorial subjectivity, Joyce’s psyche and the historically material Joyce. As stated by Sheldon Brivic in *The Veil of Signs*, “Joyce” refers to the author who “projects himself as a series of authorial agencies designed to interloop with each other” (Brivic 61). By this, I take Brivic to mean that authorship guarantees its own subjectivity, a subjectivity that is projected onto the text and bears its own complex structure. The authorial subject exists between, on the one hand, Joyce’s psyche and the historically material Joyce, and, on the other hand, the narrators that give voice to Joyce’s stories. Indeed, my position will suggest that the category of authorial subject renders the historically material Joyce — labeled as the biographical subject — irrelevant. The relevant distinction for psychoanalysis is between Joyce the speaking subject (Joyce’s unknowable psyche) versus Joyce the writing subject; in fact, the figure we call the historically material Joyce is not a subject of language, but an object as such. So, in locating Joyce the subject, to arrive at his authorial subjectivity, the relevant distinction is between the spoken Joyce (again, Joyce’s unknowable psyche) and the written Joyce. My judgment on Joyce pertains solely to the written Joyce, an assessment I base exclusively on Joyce’s published works.
which we regard the political as it functions within its psychic economy, but also continues to foster opposition to capitalist ideology as capitalism proceeds virtually unchecked in its privileging of perversion in today’s political climate.

**Thesis Outline**

My thesis’s most basic premise is that Joyce’s writing style is neurotic in structure, not perverse, as is commonly thought. Joyce’s writing structurally takes the form of a question (as in neurosis), as opposed to the lack of a question (as in perversion). Thus, my first concern is to counter the standpoint that suggests Joyce’s writing is rooted in perversion. Originating in the late 1970s, in a series of misreadings of Joyce by scholars such as Colin McCabe, the prevailing view, culminating in 1980s, was that Joyce’s style exemplified perversion: critics such as Jean-Michel Rabaté and Frances Restuccia (1980s) were succeeded by critics Garry Leonard, Christy L. Burns, and Christine Van Boheemen-Saaf. While this misreading may appear trivial, it misrepresents the manner and degree of criticality of Joyce’s writing style. More pointedly, it points to a considerable gap in the literature: as Sheldon Brivic remarked in 1991, “entire books could still be written on Joyce which [emphasize] Lacan’s theories on psychopathology (neurosis, psychosis, or perversion)” (Brivic 15). Seemingly, Brivic’s observation holds true today.17 Addressing this lapse in the field, therefore, I apply this prospective dynamic between pathology and criticism towards forging a new perspective on Joyce. Attempting this perspective, I set forth three objectives: first, to

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17 While numerous complex and detailed psychoanalytical works have been produced on Joyce since 1991 – such as those written by Luke Thurston and Robert Hatari -- virtually none have tapped into the perverse/neurotic dynamic I have drawn from Zizek. Exceptions include Bruce MacDonald’s “Circe and the Uncanny, or Joyce From Freud to Marx”.
illustrate that Joyce’s writing is rooted in neurosis; second, to illustrate that the literary epiphany in Joyce is symptomatic of neurotic individuals struggling in a social, political and cultural context (i.e., early twentieth century capitalism) that privileges the perverse; third, to propose, in light of this portrayal, that Joyce’s writing opposes capitalist ideology at the level of the unconscious. Fulfilling these aims, my thesis unveils a Joycean persona whose writing strategy figures within a political engagement not otherwise recognized by psychoanalytic interpretations of Joyce. By locating the alternative psychical dimension upon which Joyce’s writing style is founded, and comprehending how this dimension is reciprocally implicated in its political bearing, my contribution to scholarship on Joyce will be threefold: first, it offers a distinctly “Žižekian” reading of Joyce; second, it presents an interpretation of Joyce’s writing founded upon the premise of Joyce’s neurosis; and, third, it registers a unique and remarkable instance of an authorial subject whose writing enabled him to contest and break away from his unconscious attachments to capitalist ideology.

The scope of my thesis is limited to Dubliners. While this might seem scant, Dubliners is sufficient to demonstrating Joyce’s critical effect on subjectivity. His later works — A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses and Finnegans Wake — continue the strategy of hybernicizing the subject of late-capitalist relations. I offer two justifications for this (seemingly) sweeping claim: first, according to psychoanalytic doxa, subjects are structurally either neurotic or perverse; a subject’s pathological orientation cannot change over time, a condition we may apply, presumably, to Joyce. Second, my argument, although interrogative of assumptions regarding structural fixity in

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18 Accompanying these goals, I supplement my argument with an ongoing treatise on the importance of literary mode in Joyce, further suggesting that Joyce’s repudiation of capitalist ideology parallels his transition from realism to modernism.
pathological orientation, strives to prove that Joyce’s authorial subjectivity distinctly resists perversion. As a result, I deem that, on the condition that my interpretation of *Dubliners* is correct, Joyce’s pathological orientation, once analyzed, will remain unchanged throughout his writings. So, offering detailed readings of “Eveline,” “Araby” and “The Dead”, I address *Dubliners*’ four main themes as outlined by Joyce to his publisher Grant Richards on May 5, 1906:

> my intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis. I have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories are arranged in this order. (Schwartz 63)

Although my treatment of “The Dead” is the exception to this outline (I use it to incorporate both the maturity and public life aspects Joyce’s stories), the stories I select may be considered as representative of *Dubliners*.

The central literary device (which is actually an extended metaphor) I focus on is the literary epiphany. Appealing to Lacan, who describes the Joycean epiphany as a particular moment when the subject “drops out” of the symbolic order, my argument hinges on the premise that the literary epiphany is a political and existential phenomenon that pertains to the life and death of the subject. Such an understanding opposes conventional understandings of the literary epiphany that characterize it in terms of personal enlightenment and transcendent truths. We see this distinction played out clearly in “Eveline”: Eveline’s epiphany not only causes her subjectivity to drop out of the symbolic order, but also, given the appalling ending of the story, implies that she never recovers her subjectivity within the symbolic order. I divide the epiphany into two separate but complementary notions: on the one hand, the failed epiphany takes into
consideration subjects such as Eveline whose psyches are permanently extinguished by their epiphany, and the boy in “Araby”, whose psyche is irreparably damaged by his epiphany. On the other hand, the successful epiphany denotes subjects who are successfully reintegrated into the symbolic order and who benefit from their reintegration. “The Dead” is unique in this regard, portraying in Gabriel Conroy the only successful epiphany in *Dubliners*.

Finally, the primary political concept I employ is ideology, the focus of my first chapter.

Chapter One begins with a list of Joycean theorists who posit Joyce’s writing as perverse. While mentioning five -- Colin McCabe, Christy Burns, Jean-Michel Rabaté, Christine Van Boheemen-Saaf, and Garry Leonard -- I only deal with Leonard as he provides the most concerted engagement with Lacanian psychoanalysis and *Dubliners*. My general approach towards Leonard is not to contradict his claims; instead, Leonard warrants scrutiny precisely because he does not delve far enough into a Lacanian conception of desire and thus fails to register how Joyce presents not simply conflict between a masculine subject and a feminine subject, but between a neurotic and a perverse subject. Leonard’s argument fails to perceive how conflicts of gender, which he paints as definitive of Joyce, may themselves be subsumed to the ideologically sustained antagonism between neurosis and perversion.

Next, I clarify my main theoretical tools. Drawing upon *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, I outline my understanding of ideology with the aim of explaining how capitalism privileges and produces perversion. Providing an in-depth comparison
between ideology and the symbolic order, I argue that, while the symbolic order and ideology both possess “the form of thought whose ontological status is not that of thought,” their difference depends on the way each interpellates and integrates subjects (*The Sublime Object of Ideology* 19). While I realize that this proposition is unprecedented, given the already complex and controversial history of the term ideology, I feel my exploratory hypothesis to be justified.¹⁹ With this stated, subjects on the one hand are assimilated to the symbolic order through the castration complex. Subjects are liberated from the smothering *jouissance* of the Mother and integrated into the paternal order through a traumatic unveiling of the Name-of-the-Father. On the other hand, ideology interpellates subjects by deceptively *posing* as the symbolic order, albeit with the opposite effect: ideology undermines subjective attachment to the symbolic order, replacing it with, once more, attachments rooted in pre-symbolic *jouissance*. This process is synonymous with what I already mentioned as “the decline of symbolic efficiency”, a material process whose facilitator is a distinct form of *jouissance* called surplus-*jouissance* (*The Ticklish Subject* 322). Given capitalism’s production of *jouissance* through mimicry, one of the definitions I assign capitalist ideology is a mode of knowledge production that exploits *jouissance* in order to undermine inter-subjective relations in the socio-symbolic field. The culmination of this manipulation of *jouissance* is the restrictive binding of subjects, neurotic and perverse alike, to ideological structures that bypass their conscious and unconscious selves (resting solely in *jouissance* as such). The subject of perversion is especially susceptible to this process because of his or her “closer proximity” to the pleasure of *jouissance* (namely, the pervert “locates himself as the means of the other’s *jouissance*”) (Evans 139).

¹⁹ To give an indication of this rich, historical complexity, see Terry Eagleton’s *Ideology.*
Finally, I offer a brief rendering of the literary epiphanies to illustrate how an aesthetic conceit such as the literary epiphany may be located in its political terrain and significance. I combine two discrepant definitions of the epiphany: the first is from Wim Tigges’ summary of the epiphany in “The Significance of Trivial Things: Towards a Typology of Literary Epiphanies,” and the second is provided by Lacan himself from his May 1976 Seminar II on Joyce. Together, these seemingly divergent definitions illustrate how the literary epiphany exemplifies an aesthetic conceit whose meaning may be traced to an underlying political dynamic, thus allowing me to develop the concept of the failed epiphany. While the failed epiphany serves as a modified version of Northrop Frye’s demonic epiphany, unlike its demonic predecessor, the failed epiphany contains unmistakable political, social and existential relevance imperative to the subject (and the self as a whole). Lastly, before embarking on a treatment of “Eveline”, I present my central thesis regarding *Dubliners*: namely, that the epiphanies in “Eveline,” “Araby” and “The Dead,” are symptomatic of effectively hysterical or neurotic individuals struggling in a social, political and cultural context that privileges the perverse. This thesis guides my approach to all of Joyce’s stories.

Chapter Two demonstrates how Eveline experiences a failed epiphany, an experience that compels her to descend from a state of neurosis into a state of psychosis. Following Žižek’s lead within *The Ticklish Subject* regarding the nature and scope of Lacan’s *jouissance*, I contrast my argument with Leonard’s claim that Eveline’s subjectivity falls not into psychosis, but into the realm of feminine *jouissance*. While I do not deny the presence of feminine *jouissance* in “Eveline”, I nevertheless stipulate that
Eveline’s final psychical state – even prior to her planned escape – was already doomed by an ideological surplus-jouissance derivative of her relationship to her father.

Chapter Three ("Araby") details a much more complicated instance of a failed epiphany. Unlike "Eveline," "Araby" depicts a failed epiphany in which the subject returns to the Symbolic Order. However, while the subject returns to the symbolic, I nevertheless deem he suffers a failed epiphany because he does not accept the necessary insight into his epiphany – and by "not accepting" I mean he negates the libidinal significance of his reintegration into the symbolic order. Subsequently, the penalty for this reintegration is to be a subject who is re-structured as perverse. Refining my basic position, therefore, I grant that under exceptional conditions a subject may undergo a failed epiphany and yet be integrated into the symbolic order; only that, he or she must lose or sacrifice a critical portion of his or her subjective make-up to retain, minimally, his or her status as subject. Thus a successful epiphany denotes an increase in subjective lucidity, or "lack," while a failed epiphany denotes a diminishment in its quality of lack, its contours being "clouded" and rendered opaque with jouissance. Typically, in such instances the subject is described as becoming "less of a person" in comparison to his or her disposition prior to their failed epiphany. To this end, I focus primarily on "Araby"'s nostalgic quality to demonstrate how the unconscious motive of the narrator's storytelling is to reclaim his initial sense of lost love in the hope of dispelling his perverse self-indictment of vanity.

Perspective in "Araby" is also more complex. Narrated in the past tense, "Araby" presents a story that occurs long after the subject who tells the story experiences the

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20 For example, conditions which are particular to capitalism.
21 This modification does not contradict my primary claim, moreover, for it is important to remember that the subject in psychoanalysis is not an indivisible, unified entity, but a subject that is split.
failed epiphany. This raises two critical points for my argument: 1) “Araby” depicts the moment when the narrator was first compelled to pose as perverse. For this, I blame the Araby bazaar: posing falsely as the symbolic order, the bazaar’s ideological purpose compels subjects to adopt a perverse outlook on reality. 2) The upshot is that “Araby” is a story told by a neurotic subject compelled to pose as perverse, a fact I demonstrate by comparing the boy’s narrative of Christian romance with the narrator’s story of personal vanity. I argue against critics such as Margot Norris and Garry Leonard who render ironic the boy’s idealism regarding love and do so, crucially, from a Lacanian point of view. Love is a fiction, impossible in the Lacanian sense, but it is nevertheless a necessary fiction for the subject to function in the Symbolic Order. The purpose of marketplaces such as the Araby bazaar is to pervert the sense of necessity inherent to concepts like love because such notions, as non-commodities, encumber and oppose capitalist ideology. The Araby bazaar deludes the narrator into believing that his motivation towards Mangan’s sister was not love, but vanity.

Chapter Four (“The Dead”) consists of Dubliners’ only successful epiphany. Demonstrating how “The Dead” depicts neurotic subjects struggling in a context that privileges the perverse, I focus on two scenarios: first the guests at the Misses Morkan’s party, and second Gabriel’s relation to women. Regarding the former, I argue that, although the guests at Misses Morkan’s party are typically neurotic and stand for tradition and order, they are subjects “infected” with perversion. As I show in Aunt Kate’s emotional speech over the Catholic Church’s banning of women from the choir, Aunt Kate’s otherwise neurotic orientation is suffused with perversion at the level of jouissance; subsequently, despite her keen sense of outrage, Aunt Kate is betrayed by her
disavowing attitude towards the church.\textsuperscript{22} Aunt Kate’s disavowal is symptomatic of a perverse mode of desire operant within an otherwise neurotic subject, the result of indoctrination by church ideology.

Like Aunt Kate, Gabriel is a neurotic subject who also labors under the influence of perversion. I focus on Gabriel’s relation to Gretta as it is here that Gabriel finally confronts and breaks way from his eminently perverse idolization of women; achieving this break, Gabriel humbly accepts Grettas’s story of love. Defending Gabriel on this account, my argument insists that it is misplaced to claim that Gabriel’s self-image as a masculine subject is undermined because he fails to satiate his libidinal desire with Gretta. Simply, Gabriel experiences a successful epiphany because he accepts -- through a self-willed, neurotic abnegation -- that the notional-object of love is fictional and necessary. Recognizing Gretta as a subject, and staving off the sense of \textit{jouissance} inside himself, Gabriel overcomes his perverse disposition, an attitude derivative of ideology, and substitutes it with a love fiction that reconnects him to the symbolic order.

My Conclusion summarizes my thesis, and discusses the ongoing repercussions of Joyce’s writing. What is it about Joyce’s writing that makes it relevant to today? I suggest that Joyce’s writing remains politically pertinent because we, like Joyce, bear a perverse structural relationship to capitalism. The extent to which today’s subject identifies with Joyce reflects the fact that history, under the sway of late-capitalism, has not qualitatively changed since Joyce’s time. We continue to disavow market capitalism’s rapacious destruction of our social and environmental reality.

\textsuperscript{22} For an elaborate account of the relationship between the church and disavowal, see Zizek’s \textit{The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity}. 
CHAPTER ONE

Assumptions that Joyce is Perverse

Colin McCabe was correct to argue in *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* that Joyce’s texts break with classic realism (McCabe 27). He was further justified in dismissing criticism which contends that his focus on Joyce’s advancement over realism is “historically misplaced,” an appraisal which prefers to read the break with realism in the works of Conrad, Hardy, and Dickens because, by doing so, we might continue such a “list in a vertiginous search for a moment of origin” (McCabe 27). Instead of searching for a pristine moment of modernism’s first break with realism, McCabe counters with the salient point that “classic realism...exists in the present,” maintaining that,

> to break with [realism] is a contemporary struggle in which we must attend to those images from the past which are summoned in response to the dangers of conformism. That Joyce is the most necessary of those images is the thesis of [my] book. (McCabe 27)

Although written in 1978, McCabe’s synopsis of realism holds today. Joyce, though not the first to break with realism, persists to provide us with “the most necessary of those images” for contesting the realist mode and the social conformity it prompts. The question that should be posed is, “why does realism persist, and how does it contribute to conformity?” Regrettably, McCabe’s elaboration distorts his preliminary insight. He infers for example that, “Joyce’s texts...lack any final and privileged discourse within them which dominates the others through its claim to access to the real” (*J.J.R.W.* 27). Erroneously, he writes, “if we continue...to use psycho-analytic theory as a model...we could say that whereas the realist text is a neurotic discourse, Joyce’s texts might be considered as psychotic discourses” (*J.J.R.W.* 27). Finally, “when the analogy is pushed
further it will become clear that Joyce’s texts are best characterized as *perverse* rather than neurotic or psychotic” (my italics; *J.J.R.W.* 28). At this point, my argument strays farthest from McCabe: by contrast, I contend that Joyce’s texts are neurotic. By the same token, realism must be regarded as perverse and to this end it is meaningless to argue that Joyce’s texts “lack any final and privileged discourse within them” (*J.J.R.W.* 28). The semblance of non-bias in Joyce’s writing is illusory; rather, Joyce opposes the dominance of a particular discourse (realism) and favors it only insofar as he wishes its destruction.

McCabe is not the only critic to adopt such a stance. His influence can be seen in the works of critics such as Christy L. Burns, Christine Van Boheemen-Saal and Jean Michele Rabaté. However, the most important figure to characterize Joyce’s writing as perverse is Garry Leonard. Leonard’s articulation of subjectivity is the most invaluable as, of all the theorists, he stays closest to a Lacanian framework; hence, I critique extensively his seminal work, *Reading Dubliners Again: A Lacanian Perspective*. The immediate concern is how did Leonard’s otherwise astute Lacanian reading of *Dubliners* come to view Joyce as perverse? The answer lies in a revealing footnote that addresses, like McCabe and Burns before him, Jean-Michel Rabaté’s influential essay “Silence in *Dubliners*”. Discussing the function of the old man in “An Encounter”, Leonard relates that

> the old man approximates a perverse role that Jean-Michel Rabaté assigns to Joyce himself: ‘Nowhere is perversion more virulent than in a discourse which attempts to articulate the truth of the subject in his own division, and this is where psychoanalysis and religion exhibit their common logic, a logic Joyce merely displaces, or rather warps.’ (Leonard 332n.)

There are several points here that need immediate scrutiny because, given Leonard’s central place as a foil to my argument, Leonard sets the tone of my critique. First of all, it
is important to realize that Leonard only briefly acknowledges, in the above quotation, the question of Joyce’s pathology in his work. Hence it is not possible to contest Leonard directly on any particular claims to this end. Nevertheless, the uncontested assumption of Joyce’s perversity undermines Leonard’s interpretation in a number of ways.

The foremost of these is his mishandling of political perspective. Leonard does not pursue far enough his own rationale regarding the relation between political power and subject formation. For example, although his gender critique and articulation of Lacan is commendable, he mistakenly substitutes what is correctly the political conflict of two kinds of historically advanced subjects (the subject of realism and the subject of modernism) for a conflict within the structure of subjectivity as such, hence, his reference to Rabaté. At first, Rabaté appears to be correct: Joyce seems “to articulate the truth of the subject in his own division” -- but the correct response to such a statement is that Joyce does not afford us sufficient information to judge whether or not he articulates the “truth of the subject” in his own division (Leonard 332n.). Typically, Joyce depicts characters whose psyches are fragmented and disjointed, the obvious example being his depiction of Bloom in the well-known “Circe” chapter in Ulysses. At the same time, Joyce depicts characters who struggle precisely with this predicament -- Gabriel Conroy, for instance -- and the combination of these two qualities makes Joyce’s and his characters’ subjectivities appear to be perverse. Each resembles the perverse subject’s readiness to dismiss the doubt and uncertainty created by the subject’s necessary split, a readiness that derives from the perverse subject’s confident belief that his acts serve the jouissance of the Other. Dismissing or disavowing this splitting, the subject of perversion boldly articulates the truth of subjectivity, irrespective of the subject’s
fragmentation. Yet Leonard and Rabaté misread Joyce on this account. Joyce does not attend to the unity or division of subjectivity; on the contrary, he attends to a particular fantasized version of subjectivity (realism) and, in doing so, writes another particular fantasized image of subjectivity (modernism). To posit this as articulating the subject in his own division is misplaced. Joyce replaces one kind of subjectivity with another. Joyce does not refer to the foundational structure of subjectivity; or, more accurately, in confronting the subject at the level of fantasy, Joyce’s authorial psyche unconsciously and inadvertently restructures this particular subject’s phantasmal relation to the Symbolic Order. But this is not to address the structure of “subjectivity itself”: while psychoanalysis and religion may address the truth of subjectivity in its own division -- themselves being, tentatively, perverse (posing as subjects who know) -- Joyce, in his political engagement, does not.

A Note on Literary Mode

The question of literary mode in Joyce requires further examination. Although an in-depth treatment of mode goes beyond the reach of this paper, literary mode is difficult to avoid when discussing Joyce because his reputation is so closely intertwined with modernism. For this reason, my stance upholds the centrality of mode in Joyce’s writing. Taking my cue from McCabe, I sustain the notion that Joyce’s pathological status pertains to his modernism except that, unlike McCabe, I maintain that modernism and Joyce exemplify discourses that are neurotic, not perverse. Another cause for my turn to literary mode is that I want to evoke the idea that Joyce’s writing is not the only writing that neurotically resists the discourse of capitalism. Joyce’s modernist style is
inseparable from his resistance to capitalist ideology. As stated in my discussion of Van Boheemen-Saaf, Joyce’s authorial subjectivity engages a particular fantasized version of subjectivity that is perverse (the subject of realism), and replaces it with another fantasized image of subjectivity that is neurotic (the subject of modernism). An assumption underlying my argument, therefore, is that modernism constitutes a neurotic discourse that, like Joyce, resists modernity and the capitalist mode of production while realism constitutes a perverse mode of discourse that has largely been subsumed to capitalist ideology.²³

To this end, it is important not to forget that my approach necessitates a conception of the unconscious. Several distinctions pertaining to literary mode require attention. First, to reiterate, the psyche of the authorial subject must be separated from the activities of its actual authors. By saying that modernism opposes capitalism, I do not mean that actual modernists – say, Joyce, Eliot or Woolf – consciously resisted capitalism or refused publication because publishing houses seek profits. Joyce sold his books on the market, just as modernism participated in economic exchanges. In fact, as Lawrence Rainey tells us, “modernism and commodity culture were not implacable enemies but fraternal rivals,” a fraternity in which Joyce played a central part (Institutions of Modernism 75). At the same time, Rainey’s comment does not in any way deter the claim that modernism opposes capitalism; for, although dealing at length with Rainey also goes beyond the purview of my paper, the difficulty with empirically styled analyses such as Rainey’s is that they fail to address the libidinal investment inseparable from any given mode of production. The publication process that Joyce and many other modernist writers entered into must be distinguished from the discursive economy that motivated

²³ One example of a realist discourse not subsumed to capitalist ideology is socialist realism.
modernists to write in the first place. Rainey focuses on the former, on those interests at which modernism aims or potentially aims, at the expense of the materially preceding causes responsible for those interests in the first place; namely, the objet petit a or object-cause of the modernist’s already extant desire to be an authorial subject as figured in the field of the symbolic.

In light of Freud’s discovery of the unconscious -- a factor I consider to be largely unavoidable when dealing with categories as emotionally pregnant as literature -- investigations of the ideology of capitalism must take precedence over studies that focus solely on its material consequences. The material results of capitalism are themselves the expression of subjects who are already interpellated into capitalist ideology, a process that is itself always already grounded in some other material “scene”, a scene that may or may not itself be under the sway of capital. Subsequently, the psyche for Lacan is always anchored in materiality, not the materiality of the physical brain, but the material kernel of jouissance (the objet petit a) around which all psychical phenomena revolve. Heeding Lacan’s observation, therefore, studies that profess to discuss the materiality of modernism should therefore attend to, or at least acknowledge the existence of, the material jouissance that constitutes the object-cause of such modes. If critics were to discover, for example, that the historical person James Joyce was morally suspect in his motivation for writing -- say, if they discovered through Joyce’s personal letters that he intended Ulysses as a gimmick, designed for scandal and profit – this, too, would not encumber my case. Making assumptions regarding modernism based on the personal habits, memoirs or even intentions of its creators fundamentally misunderstands what modernism, capitalism and the authorial subject “are”, respectively, which brings me to
perhaps the most important concept in my paper bridging these notions: ideology.

Ideology is critical to resolving any confusion between modernism as a cultural and economic moment in history (an unstable period no doubt, comprised of any number of contradictions and contingencies at the empirical level) and modernism as a qualitative shift in subjective positioning in the discourse of modernity.

Ideology and Jouissance

As already stated, a critical theme in my thesis is Joyce's political affect. Although the main school of thought I appeal to is Lacanian psychoanalysis, my alternative point of reference is Marxism. Over the decades there has been significant progress in harmonizing psychoanalysis with Marxist thought, involving such mid-twentieth century theorists as Eric Fromm and Louis Althusser, and present day notables such as Fredric Jameson, Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek. Against this background, the concept of ideology provides a well-prepared point of departure for intertwining further a Marxist perspective with a psychoanalytic one, as well as elucidating Joyce's political affect. While difficult to understand with any degree of common sense or to systematically analyze from a social science vantage-point (without falling into debates over relativism), the concept of ideology invaluably provides a way of demonstrating how capitalism -- a concrete economic mode of production -- privileges and produces perversion. As I discussed in my introduction, capitalism manipulates subjects through the production and appropriation of jouissance even though, to achieve this, it is compelled to privilege perversion. While I label this current ongoing privilege "capitalist ideology", it is important to realize that the social efficacy of such a privilege
depends on the pervert's continued respect for capitalism's dissemination pleasure, and his or her unconscious willingness to serve the jouissance of the other. Still, capitalist ideology's stimulation of jouissance remains remarkable in that it exemplifies how a formal entity such as ideology can have powerful effects at the bodily and apprehensive level -- not only privileging subjects who are perverse -- but, in the end, maneuvering neurotic subjects into perverse behavior and perverse psychical states. This particular tension is most evident in my reading of "The Dead". Having outlined the concept of ideology and how it relates to jouissance, my argument will be in a position to show how Joyce resists this interpellation in my following chapters.

Althusser and the Early Marx

The concept of ideology has traditionally been associated with Marxism. Founded on Marx's materialist axiom that "being conditions consciousness," ideology denotes a particular disconnection between human consciousness and agency, [one] stemming not from human nature, but from social conditions (Capital 322-3). Marx's Capital provides its most elementary definition, "they do not know it, but they are doing it" -- a phrase that encapsulates the often-stark, undoubtedly unconscious, disparity between thought and action in the history of human affairs (The Sublime Object of Ideology 28). While Marx's articulation of ideology is considered to be incomplete by most critics, at bottom he may be understood as offering two definitions (Althusser 240). His first and more commonly known definition of capitalist ideology is as "an inverted reflection of the material contradictions of the capitalist mode of production [that] denote[s] only one type of

24 In Žižekian thought, the concept of ideological surplus-jouissance indicates this productive capacity: to see his articulation of surplus-jouissance in more depth, see Chapter 1 of The Sublime Object of Ideology.
socially produced thought” (Encyclopedia of Philosophy 681). Rejecting this definition, however, Marx later held that the category of “Ideology” did not reflect reality at all: Ideology, including capitalist ideology, was simply and only “pure fantasy”, a shift in perspective that complicated Marx’s original conception of capitalist ideology considerably (Althusser 240).

The twentieth century’s most fervent proponent of this latter view concerning Ideology was Louis Althusser. Althusser maintained that within ideological relations, “it is not [‘men’s’] real conditions of existence...that ‘men’ ‘represent to themselves’ in ideology, but above all it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there” (Althusser 242). For the individual, ideology does not represent reality, but only how persons have already imaginatively conceived of this relation. Comparing the idea of ideology to Freud’s understanding of the dream work, Althusser emphasizes that ideology is “an imaginary assemblage...a pure dream, empty and vain” (Althusser 240). Indeed, given Althusser’s own use of Lacan, it is not surprising that such a definition of ideology may be translated into Lacanian terms: like ideology, the imaginary order does not convey reality as “it is” to subjects, but only how the Other has already imaginatively conceived of this relation. What is common to ideology and the imaginary order is that, from the perspective of the individual or subject, each constitutes an imaginary representation of an already imagined representation.

While I provisionally agree with Althusser on this account, I nevertheless want to resurrect and sustain Marx’s earlier definition of ideology. The reason is that Marx’s original definition insists on the minimal difference between “capitalist ideology” and “other ideologies”. In contrast with Althusser, who viewed “Ideology” as an a-historical
mode of thought produced by all classes and cultures, for the early Marx capitalist ideology *did* reflect a version of reality, albeit a distorted one (see *The Jewish Question* and the *1844 Manuscripts*). So, while I hesitate in claiming that Ideology or capitalist ideology represent reality, or manifest, perhaps, various anathemas that can or should be eradicated, I want to affirm Marx's earlier position in the sense that capitalist ideology is a historical exception to the norm and a distortion that is an inverted reflection of the material mode of production. The benefit of this return to the early Marx is that it opens a space for advancing a critique of ideology that goes one step further than Althusser.

The particular distortion that the early Marx speaks of is not reducible to "pure fantasy" as Althusser and the later Marx conceived it -- but a distortion that is a *pathologically* derived distortion: ideology is not simply the passive reception of a represented fantasy (namely, "an imaginary relation that is represented to them there"), a kind of "fantasy-of-a-fantasy," but denotes a particular *kind* of imaginary relation to the imagined relations of production. Thus my precise claim is that the distortion in question is neither mere fantasy nor a distortion of "reality," but denotes a qualitative difference between types of fantasy formations. Capitalism is historically remarkable not because it invented Ideology as such, as Marx originally thought (Ideology, as Althusser correctly surmised, is unavoidable for the subject) but because it created an especially effective ideological form founded on perversion and not, as per usual, on neurosis. Reaching ultimately into the political order of desire, the qualitative social "norm" that capitalism perennially transgresses and distorts -- and which the early Marx saw as reality -- is not the norm of objective or historical reality, but the norm that is the symbolic order.
Within this minimal but critical difference, several insights regarding ideology are revealed: 1) Ideology correlates not only to the imaginary order, as implied in Althusser's use of Freud, but also to the symbolic order (Althusser 240). The "substance" that separates one type of imaginary relation from another is symbolic, a point that foregrounds the Lacanian tenet that, "the imaginary is always structured like the symbolic" (Evans 83). We may designate this specific understanding of fantasy "Ideology" (its distorting aspect) while naming its various phantasmal manifestations "ideologies" (the latter of which can be tentatively divided into neurotic, perverse and psychotic manifestations of ideology). 2) This oversight concerning the difference-between ideology-as-symbolic and ideology-as-fantasy leads to my claim that ideology has the capacity to mimic the symbolic order. The symbolic dimension of ideology enables me to posit that each stands in an "equal relation" to the subject; that the symbolic order and ideology each possess the ability to take "the form of thought whose ontological status is not that of thought" (The Sublime Object of Ideology 19). 3) This, in turn, allows me to complete the chain of association that links what was ostensibly only pure fantasy to its material and social conditions.

By recognizing the symbolic "backbone" inseparable from ideology, I have introduced or "smuggled in" the requisite material core of the subject that is necessary for the subject's inclusion within the ideological and symbolic orders respectively. Over and above the symbolic order there is always a material element, a repressed "kernel" of desire that the symbolic both needs and denies to sustain itself in precisely this regard.

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25 Throughout my thesis, I characterize capitalist ideology as perverse. However, it important to be reminded that capitalist ideology is perverse only from the perspective of those it interpellates. In reality, ideology imitates the symbolic order precisely because it lacks the Name of the Father, a point that leads me to conclude that capitalist ideology is really, at heart, psychotic in structure.
Such a kernel of materiality (*jouissance*) is fundamental to understanding how ideology comprises something more than “mere fantasy” for the subject, the reason being that *jouissance* is, as stated, a material substance exploitable by capitalism (*Tarrying with the Negative* 202). As a result, just as *jouissance* links and divides the real and symbolic order, *jouissance* is the key that links and divides the symbolic and ideological orders respectively. While the symbolic order represses and requires *jouissance* to sustain itself, ideology is comprised of *nothing but* material *jouissance*, even as it requires the symbolic order to “fool” the subject into believing that it, not the symbolic, is the bearer of symbolic significance. Capitalist ideology requires this constitutive deception, just as it requires *jouissance* to qualify as a material mode of production. So, when the early Marx observed that capitalism inverts our relation to reality and the material conditions of production respectively, he was closer to the mark than it at first seems (*Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 681). The difference is that what is inverted is not our perspective of reality, but our respective fantasy formations. What is transformed is the subject’s relation to his or her bodily *jouissance*, which capitalism inverts from a neurotic relation to a perverse one, an effect brought about through a penetration of the subject’s *jouissance* of the Other, JA in Lacan’s Borromean Knot of Subjectivity (see Figure 1).
Figure 1.

Borromean Knot of Subjectivity

To properly comprehend this sleight of hand, it is critical to realize that ideology imitates the symbolic order and yet is not the symbolic order. Ideology partakes of the real and the imaginary orders of subjectivity, but not of the symbolic. Although ideology definitely contains a symbolic dimension or element, by “contains” I simply mean it has the capacity to simulate symbolic signification in the jouissance of the Other, and to deceive the subject into “allowing” jouissance to transgress the symbolic order. To understand this subtle distinction, consider the brand name “Kleenex”. In everyday

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26 Figure of the Borromean Knot of Subjectivity taken from Evans 19.
speech in North America, "Kleenex" has effectively come to mean and stand in for the word "tissue. Instead of representing a brand of tissue, the word Kleenex now functions as the name for tissue itself. While such a change might appear insignificant, it must be recalled that Kleenex remains a trademarked product. Protected by copyright law, Kleenex belongs to a hidden and privileged small "other" that is its shareholders; and, while such a "small other" might appear as the objet petit a of the Lacanian subject, such an explanation must also be rejected for it is precisely because of this hidden claim upon the word "Kleenex" that any attempt to universalize or symbolize trademarked labels such as Kleenex are doomed to fail. Simply, the Kleenex Corporation and the State do not afford the word Kleenex universal meaning (they protect it from slander, ensure its market value, reputation, etc.). Kleenex does not represent, signify or refer to the object "tissue", as ideology would have us believe, but in reality represents the hidden interests of its patron, the Kleenex Corporation. Because it lacks the requisite lack needed to elevate it from a proper noun to a simple noun, creators of texts such as dictionaries should resist, in light of the obscene smear of ownership appended to it, christening Kleenex as a synonym of tissue. The underlying desire attached to it by capital serves as the jouissance that "fills in" the necessary lack constitutive of the symbolic order, impeding and undermining the word's potential for symbolic meaning. Notwithstanding, the concept of jouissance in the end allows us to see words such as Kleenex for what they are: ideological simulations. Via such an example, we also see how jouissance becomes a political variable insofar as ideology is able to fool subjects into believing it, not the symbolic order, carries with it symbolic authority.
The Epiphany

The central, extended metaphor I employ to demonstrate Joyce’s neurosis is the literary epiphany. As a symptom of neurotic individuals struggling in a context that privileges the perverse, the epiphany critically reflects on Joyce’s authorial pathos and the pathos of those in Dubliners. Joyce is well known for adapting this traditionally religious expression to describing secular experience, a term whose earlier definition signified a manifestation of God’s presence within the created world. Here, it is worth noting that the literary epiphany does not possess one precise definition but refers to a cluster of concepts. The literary epiphany has a history that predates Joyce, traceable even to Wordsworth’s “spots of time” (Tigges 26). Still, as Wim Tigges reminds us in “The Significance of Trivial Things: Towards a Typology of Literary Epiphanies,” “while Joyce did not invent the literary epiphany, he certainly gave the phenomenon its critical reputation” (11). Through the voice of his alter ego Stephen Daedalus, Joyce defines the epiphany as the moment “the soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant” (Stephen Hero 213). Following Joyce, Abrams defines the epiphany as “the description... of the sudden flare into revelation of an ordinary object or scene”, a definition that is important because it is perhaps the most widely accepted version of the literary epiphany, often abridged to a kind of “secular revelation” (A Glossary of a Literary Terms, 26). While Abrams’ definition is accurate enough to describe the phenomenon in general terms it is, however, as Tigges points out, “vague as to what precisely may trigger off the revelation” (26).

With this ambiguity in mind, my paper adopts for itself two supplementary definitions of the epiphany. The first is Abrams’ definition of the epiphany, whereby the
subject comes to acquire a certain knowledge or insight into reality. The second
definition, however, appeals to the writings of Jacques Lacan. Contrary to any sense of
revelation, Lacan defines the epiphany as a moment when the subject “drops out” of the
Symbolic Order, an eminently hazardous experience in which an individual indefinitely
loses self-consciousness (Thurston 167). In this view, the individual’s experience of
illumination occurs not when the subject drops out of the Symbolic Order, but only when
he or she has been reintegrated back into the symbolic order.

Lacan thus contributes two critical facets to the epiphany. First, by articulating it
in terms of the subject, Lacan provides a theoretical backdrop with which to situate the
epiphany (i.e. psychoanalysis). Second, via this framework, he allows for an inherent
ambiguity in the epiphanic experience. Lacan leaves open the possibility for the subject
not to be reintegrated back into the Symbolic Order, a potential that places a degree of
risk upon the epiphanic experience. This element of danger serves to elevate the epiphany
above its mere aesthetic sense, imbuing it with existential, moral and political
connotations not otherwise associated with the literary epiphany. In short, it means that
the life of a person’s conscious self is at stake in the epiphany. Exploiting this additional
meaning, therefore, I propose the concept of the “failed epiphany”, a concept
extrapolated from Tigges and Valeria Tinkler-Villani’s elaboration on Northrop Frye’s
demonic epiphany (which Tigges inadequately defines as the “reverse of the epiphany”)
(Tigges 30). Despite Tigges’ weak elaboration, the demonic moniker warrants
consideration as it connotes both the moral and existential considerations invested in the
epiphany. Referring to Jean Paul Sartre’s work La nausée, for example, Tigges posits that
“rather than building a self… [the demonic epiphany] disembodies” the self, referring to
the moment when the subjectivity of Sartre’s main character Roquentin’s proverbial “‘I’ pales, pales and finally goes out” (Tigges 30). Depicting Roquentin’s subjective death, Sartre shows how the demonic epiphany has the power to literally dissolve or diminish the self. Following Tigges and Sartre, my particular rendering of the failed epiphany also retains the power to dissolve the subject. And, while this does not mean that every failed epiphany results in dissolution of consciousness (as I show in “Araby”), it does mean that the subject’s existence is implicated in the dynamic of the epiphanic phenomenon. Instead of serving as an unexpected yet beneficial revelation, the individual is now “put to the test” by his or her enlightenment. With the onus now on the subject to survive his or her epiphany, he or she can no longer sit passively and wait for epiphanies to aesthetically enhance his or her well-being. The epiphany now comes to judge, as it were, the existence of the subject and not vice-versa. The subject must take responsibility for his or her epiphany because it concerns precisely those truths that the subject has already refused to deal with, yet can no longer afford to do so. Epiphanies are thus symptoms in the proper sense of the word, harbingers of problems already in the offing.

Against this background, the epiphanies experienced by Joyce’s characters in *Dubliners* are symptomatic of hysterical or neurotic individuals who struggle in a social, political and cultural context that privileges the perverse. In arguing this, my treatment of “Eveline” draws mainly upon Lacan and Luke Thurston’s *James Joyce and Problem of Psychoanalysis* to further elucidate my understanding of the epiphany.
CHAPTER TWO

Eveline

The story that reveals the most dramatic instance of the failed epiphany in *Dubliners* is "Eveline". "Eveline" tells the story of an unhappy woman who takes care of her abusive father, yet who aspires to runaway with a sailor named Frank. When the moment arrives for Eveline to escape, however, she experiences an inexplicable change of heart: she refuses to board the ship. Instead, Eveline feels "all the seas of the world tumble about her heart. [Frank] was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing" (*Dubliners* 34). Indeed, Eveline’s refusal exceeds a mere change of heart: she registers a complete mental break down. As Frank calls to her, Eveline "set[s] her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition" (*Dubliners* 34). Seeming to lose complete touch with reality, Eveline, devoid of consciousness, stares vacantly into space. Such, then, is Eveline’s epiphany.

How do we begin to explain Eveline’s epiphany? Jacques Lacan presents one avenue of explanation. In fact, not only does Lacan offer his own definition of the epiphany, but his definition occurs as a direct response to Joyce. As Thurston elaborates, apropos of Lacan, "in the mid-1970’s Lacan [came] to conceive of the human subject as precisely a knot or chain in which real, symbolic and imaginary are linked together" (94). However, in discussing Joyce’s epiphany "in his II May 1976 seminar...Lacan asks what would happen if the knot were not tied properly, if it contained an error or faute? [...] It would, of course, come undone – and the Joycean ‘epiphany’ is testimony, in Lacan’s view, to just such disintegration" (Ibid.):
the epiphany records a quasi-hallucinatory encounter that entails the unknottning of real, symbolic and imaginary, although the act of writing itself then ‘makes up’ the knot, offering it supplicheance. A moment in A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man serves, in Lacan’s view, to illustrate this topological reading of the epiphany: there Stephen, having been beaten by his friends because of a disagreement... experiences a sudden loss of feeling, as if ‘some power was divesting him of that sudden-woven anger as easily as a fruit is divested of its soft ripe peel.’ (Thurston 95)

Like Stephen, Eveline experiences a “sudden loss of feeling,” as if some power were divesting her of her ability to respond emotionally, sapping her resolve to flee from an impending threat. What both protagonists have in common is that the “I” of their subjectivities unravels or falls out, although in Stephen’s instance his subjectivity enigmatically returns in the form of ego – an event explainable only by Lacan’s appeal to the sinthome (Thurston 95). Thurston points out that

what is at stake here is an identification with something outside the discursive bounds and bonds of social reality – in other words with what refuses to be subject to the constraints that constitute that reality [...] [For Lacan] the sinthome is the site of [such] a ‘disinvestment.’ (96)

Indubitally, subjects who undergo epiphanies experience a disinvestment in which identification outside the discursive bounds of social reality is in effect (an externality equivalent to the Lacanian real). In striking contrast with Stephen, however, the ego of Eveline’s personality does not return; it is not cushioned by the fourth order of subjectivity, the sinthome, or knot of jouissance, allowing Eveline’s final moments to close in craziness like her mother’s. Robbed of cognition at the end of the story, Eveline appears consigned to the psychotic abyss of a real that resides outside the symbolic order.

While Eveline’s disintegration constitutes a failed epiphany, questions remain: why are some epiphanies successful and others unsuccessful? Why does Joyce condemn Eveline to the fate of psychosis -- seemingly unraveling the sinthome -- and Stephen not?
Thurston pursues the epiphany in a (typically) metaphysical direction. Attempting to show the connection between Lacan’s concept of the *saint-homme* (or *sinthome*) and his own notion of a universal “literary act” that eludes psychoanalysis, Thurston describes the epiphany as primarily an encounter with the real. While this is true, Thurston unfortunately fails to qualify this claim, and makes the mistaken inference that Lacan’s notion of the real *causes* the epiphany. At this point, Thurston’s conceptualization raises two concerns: first, as already noted, he does not address how epiphanies such as Eveline’s fail to be buttressed by the *sinthome*. Indubitably, an epiphany concerns an encounter with the real (noted by Thurston), an encounter whose results may end either in psychosis or, as with Stephen, with a recuperation of that loss *via jouissance* (and the *sinthome*). However, the important question goes unanswered: what causes the epiphany in the first place? Why are some epiphanies recuperated back into the symbolic order and others not? Second, Thurston’s use of the real is itself flawed for, while the real itself might be used as a supplement towards explaining things like character behaviour or epiphanies, it is not sufficient to this explanation. The definition of the real precludes such use, refusing definition, and for this reason resists posing as the cause (or effect) of any given phenomenon (Evans 159). As a result, critics such as Thurston must forbear the fascinating appeal of the real or else, failing this, risk overlooking the less captivating but equally relevant incongruities pertinent to subjects like Stephen and Eveline: not only differences in pathology, but also differences of gender and class which themselves are symptomatic of -- but not reducible to -- the unrepresentable and impossible proximity of the real (Evans 160). In contrast to such criticism, we must continue to search for palpable and specific causes of the epiphany; the origins of Eveline’s epiphany must be
found in Eveline’s life-struggle as presented in the story. Via this route, our inquiry will return to the level of the text, social reality and the socio-political causes of Eveline’s failed epiphany, a direction necessary for demonstrating how the epiphany exemplifies a neurotic response to a perverse mode of cultural discourse.

*Leonard, Lacan and Feminine Desire*

Garry Leonard’s interpretation of “Eveline” offers a more perspicacious argument to this end. While he too recognizes that ‘kernel’ of the real implied within Eveline’s epiphany, he does not relinquish his foothold on the political stakes involved. Leonard provides a way of understanding how Lacanian concepts such as symbolic order and *jouissance* might have political and social bearing. Positing that Eveline’s struggle “is to discover who or what she is beyond an object of symbolic exchange within the phallic function”, Leonard situates Eveline’s epiphany within a politic of desire, feminine *jouissance* and patriarchy (Leonard 109). Unfortunately, while Leonard correctly fathoms that Eveline’s epiphany pertains to *jouissance*, there are two problems with his argument, each pertaining to the epiphany. The first problem is that he depends over much on a religious lexicon. In comparing Eveline’s epiphany to Lacan’s example of Saint Theresa, for instance, Leonard does not exploit a religious metaphor to oppose patriarchy and explain feminine *jouissance*, so much as consign feminine *jouissance* to the realm of metaphysics. Not only does such a tack present undue closure on explicating the literary epiphany in political terms, but it restricts what feminine *jouissance* could mean in its existence and political relevance. Leonard presents feminine *jouissance* as singularly reactionary to the phallic order, a portrayal that depicts the goal of feminine *jouissance* as
a type of pious liberation encapsulated in religious mysticism. Adhering too closely to Lacan’s metaphorical use of St. Theresa, therefore, Leonard does not register the real tragedy behind Eveline’s epiphany: the fact that Eveline suffers a psychotic episode. Eveline’s flight outside the symbolic order is not an answer to the feminine subject’s desire, but constitutes a flight from the problem that is the symbolic order. Indeed, by conceding that Eveline does suffer a nervous breakdown, Leonard undermines his own praise of Eveline’s “triumph”. He states, “the poignancy of Joyce’s characterization of [Eveline] lies in the fact that he forces the reader to appreciate that her inability to represent her desire does not in any way exempt her from experiencing it” (Leonard 110). Effectively, Eveline experiences feminine jouissance at the price of having a nervous breakdown.27

The second problem, related to the first, is Leonard’s position that Eveline’s epiphany does not evince psychosis but only appears to evince psychosis. Eveline’s epiphany heralds the death of the subject, yet such a death does not necessitate craziness because it only constitutes a death from the perspective of male desire (Leonard 110).

Observing how Eveline’s epiphany is depicted from Frank’s perspective, Leonard asserts,

the unassimilated jouissance of Eveline…freezes her face into a supposedly blank expression, an unveiled hole that Frank can only gaze into as through a glass darkly, that face beyond language, which is God’s. (Leonard 111)

Eveline’s epiphany elides representation by the phallic order, an order represented by

Frank. Eveline’s subjectivity falls into the inassimilable realm of female jouissance, an event that staves off psychosis and upholds the possibility of reuniting her with the

27 In light of my criticism, it is important to realize that I am not suggesting that feminine jouissance be assimilated by the phallic economy; on the contrary, by situating the epiphany within a political antagonism figured under the auspices of Eveline’s neurosis, I strengthen Eveline’s antagonistic stance towards the phallic economy. Without contravening the notion of feminine jouissance, my underlying rationale offers an alternative to Leonard’s narrative of religious escape.
symbolic order. On the one hand, Leonard’s position is sound here. Provisionally, if Eveline’s epiphany truly portrays a subject’s descent into feminine jouissance, by definition her epiphany will necessarily elude the male perspective; it eludes it by its sheer ex-istence. Seen this way, Leonard’s rationale concerning the male gaze is impossible to refute. On the other hand, while feminine jouissance does ex-ist beyond the symbolic order, it does not exist beyond all conceptualizations of jouissance. Leonard overlooks the complexity of jouissance and the possibility of alternative articulations of jouissance, articulations which exist outside the Phallic Order and which may also be responsible for Eveline’s epiphany.

This, then, is the heart of my criticism: Leonard overlooks the possibility of Žižek’s ideologically surplus-jouissance, or ideologically produced jouissance. By factoring the ideological production of jouissance into our analysis of “Eveline”, we uncover the real source for Eveline’s failed epiphany: its failure originates not with the feminine jouissance that Leonard ascribes to Eveline’s mother, but with the jouissance of her father. Or, from a different vantage-point, Eveline’s epiphany constitutes a failed epiphany because her subjectivity has been corrupted by “the decline of symbolic efficiency”, a decline whose origins may be traced back to Eveline’s father and, through him, to ideological perversion. The hidden consequence of this decline is the gradual abolition of the incest taboo, a taboo whose primal inception coincided with the emergence of the symbolic order (as told in psychoanalytic cosmology).\(^{28}\) So, although

\(^{28}\) For a detailed explanation of this cosmology, see The Ticklish Subject’s “The Three Fathers”. The erosion in question is actually more complex then simply the decline of the Oedipus Complex. As Žižek relates in a discussion Freud’s Totem and Taboo, the lesson of the primordial father in Totem and Taboo is “the exact obverse of that of Oedipus; that is to say, here, far from having to deal with the father who intervenes as the Third, the agent who prevents direct contact with the incestuous object…it is the killing of the Father-Thing which gives rise to symbolic prohibition… And what occurs in today’s much-decried
my argument stops short of claiming that actual incest takes place between Eveline and her father, their relationship is irreparably smeared with the obscenity of jouissance. Their relationship has become sexualized: such an insidious form of attachment, rooted in the effects of ideological surplus-jouissance, is immune to the neurotic’s capacity for transgressing the symbolic order and to the possibility of Eveline breaking from her unconscious attachments to ideology at the level of jouissance. My insinuation of sexualization is based on, one, the extremity of Eveline’s reaction at the end, an overreaction whose cause is not quite reducible to any overt experience in her life even if we consider the epiphany and her father’s threat of physical violence; and, two, the fact that her father’s threat of violence is decidedly ambiguous in expression. For example, Eveline, speaking of her father’s violence, explains that “she knew it was that that had given her the palpitations” even though, when she and her brothers were growing up, “he had never gone for her, like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl; but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother’s sake” (my italics; Dubliners 30). On the one hand, her father apparently treats her differently from her brothers; on the other hand, Eveline does not specify what this difference might be -- what would he “do to her only for her mother’s sake” (30)? Would he beat her like her brothers (physical violence) or abuse her like he did her mother, namely, violently but also with gendered and sexual connotations? Would he treat Eveline differently by sexually abusing her? It is not surprising, given the awfulness involved in such a “choice” between physical violence or physical violence and sexual

‘decline of Oedipus’ (the decline of symbolic authority) is precisely the return of figures which function according to the logic of the ‘primordial father’, from ‘totalitarian’ political Leaders to the paternal sexual harasser…” (The Ticklish Subject 315). In either case, what occurs is a decline of the symbolic order and an erosion of the incest taboo. I mention this added step in logic, however, because the “paternal sexual harasser” refers precisely Eveline’s father (The Ticklish Subject 315).
violence, that Eveline’s ability to speculate on her father’s capacity for violence is considerably impaired.

Ideology in “Eveline”

Consequently, the settling of dust in “Eveline” does not represent the “unsettling of paternity” as Leonard contends; instead, it represents the gradual, unconscious, and perverse undermining of the symbolic order by ideological surplus-*jouissance*. Wholly opposed to the symbolic order, ideology instigates an insidious movement that undermines traditional notions of paternity and the potential for subjects to retreat into feminine *jouissance*. Consider, again, Leonard’s interpretation of Eveline’s mother: on the one hand, Eveline promises her dying mother “to keep home together as long as she could” and to continue her mother’s life of “commonplace sacrifices” (*Dubliners* 33). On the other hand, Leonard contrasts this passage with her incomprehensible final utterance “Derevaun Seraun”. He asks, “is it not inevitable that when expressing something motivated by her own desire she would express it in a mode that is incomprehensible” (Leonard 100)? This incomprehensible mode, so his rationale goes, propels Eveline upon a pathway that leads to her discovery of feminine *jouissance*. But it is not clear whether, at the end, this constitutes unification with feminine *jouissance* or an alternative form of *jouissance*. Given Eveline’s complex, traumatic relationship with her father, the possibility of an alternative source of attachment via *jouissance* must be considered. As Žižek explains in an important passage in *The Ticklish Subject*, when dealing with the emergence of the modern abstract individual (such as Eveline and her father) -- who “relies on a mutation in the functioning of the Oedipus complex” and thus renders the
subject accessible once more to the Real Thing from whence the subject was separated as a child, one should not identify this Real Thing too hastily with the incestuous object of desire rendered inaccessible by symbolic prohibition (i.e. the maternal Thing); this Thing is, rather, Father himself, namely the obscene Father-jouissance prior to his murder and subsequent elevation into the agency of symbolic authority (Name-of-the-Father) (*The Ticklish Subject* 314).

The uplifting of symbolic prohibition as such does not necessarily release a female subject into the realm of the “maternal Thing”, or feminine *jouissance*, as Leonard contends. Instead, it releases the subject back into the original Father-*jouissance*; hence, if we take seriously Žižek’s precaution, Eveline’s visceral recollection of her mother’s final crazy chant functions not “as a sort of umbilical cord that brings her unexpected and unsettling nourishment from the unseen and barely suspected world beyond” (i.e. feminine *jouissance*) but rather -- inferring from Žižek -- exposes horrifically Eveline’s relation to the Real Thing that is Father himself, the obscene Father-*jouissance* who preexists the prohibition of incest imposed by the Name-of-the-Father (Leonard 100).

Contrary to Leonard’s understanding, Eveline’s epiphany indicates not her reconciliation with feminine *jouissance* grounded in a relation with her mother, but the realization that her subjective grounding has already been aligned, horrifically, with the *jouissance* of her biological father. The effects of ideologically created *jouissance* have already undermined Eveline’s relation to the symbolic order, the symbolically stratified relationship between Eveline and her father and, ultimately, the functioning of the incest taboo.²⁹

²⁹ A significant detail regarding Father-*jouissance* is that his ideological appeal necessitates a *perverse* relation within the Symbolic Order.
Before describing in detail how “Eveline” links “the decline of the Symbolic Order” to the logic of perversion, Eveline’s neurosis requires demonstration. There are three areas that reveal Eveline’s character as neurotic: 1) the relation she bears towards her daily responsibilities; 2) the logic in which she attempts to leave her home; and 3) her relation to her father. At this point, it is important to recall that in Lacanian psychoanalysis, neurosis is not merely a symptom, but a structure as well as a fantasy. A “fantasy” in psychoanalysis refers to “the permanent modes by which the subject constitutes his objects” (Evans 60); in this definition, “permanent” refers to the structural element that is inseparable from this fantasy. This is significant because my analysis does not so much depend on a symptomatic reading of “Eveline” consisting of Freudian slips, memory gaps, dream logic, or humor. Rather, it begins with those aspects in Eveline’s life that she considers meaningful, for it is at the level of hermeneutics that we may detect the ambiguous yet structural overlap between the subject’s fantasy (imaginary) and the Other (symbolic) to which this fantasy relates. In the Lacanian conceptualization of the subject, meaning arises at the point where the imaginary and the symbolic orders meet. Put simply, what the subject considers important in her life is the relationship her fantasy bears towards the symbolic order.

With this in mind, Eveline is clearly dissatisfied with her life. Consistent with her status as a neurotic subject, her dissatisfaction operates according to a “fundamental lack” at the heart of her relation to the symbolic order, a lack whose structure takes the form of a question. To see how Eveline’s dissatisfaction goes beyond her frustrating situation, we must compare the dynamic between her life circumstances and her reaction to them. Notwithstanding her wish to escape home, the central issue in Eveline’s life is the
“common place sacrifices” of her domesticity (Dubliners 31). Such sacrifices include taking care of her abusive father and attending to her daily responsibilities which include holding a job, keeping the house together, and seeing that two young children (who have been left to her charge) are taken care of. Seen from this perspective, the structure of Eveline’s desire is strikingly at odds with her life’s commitments.

Eveline, despite her position as home caretaker, does not pose as a subject who “knows” the significance of her responsibilities (as would a subject of perversion), but instead as one who is either indifferent to or critical of her responsibilities. For example, it is notable that Eveline hardly mentions the two children under her charge: was she unable to form emotional attachments to them? Seemingly, her indifference derives from the fact that she does not identify with the purpose of her responsibilities, however dutifully she may perform them. Critically, this propensity is not reducible to a lack of feeling or thought on her part, or because she is unable to think beyond mere duty. On the contrary, Eveline contemplates her situation. Deliberating on her planned flight, for example, she reflects how “she had consented to go away, to leave her home,” asking “was that wise? […] Eveline tried to weigh each side of the question” (Dubliners 30). This passage, indicative of Eveline’s psychical disposition as a whole, illustrates how her thoughts are inseparable from the mode of desire that motivates them; taking the form of a question, they reveal to us that Eveline is neurotic. Eveline responds to the question put forth by a symbolic order with a corresponding question.

This pattern of response also plays out in the primary domain of conflict in which “Eveline” takes place: inside Eveline herself. Eveline interrogates her own inner being, revealing the depth to which the neurotic’s anxiety struggles with a symbolic order
resident within and constitutive of personal subjectivity. The upshot is that while such a conflict does not appear political in the sense that connotes a relationship between a discrete individual and the outer world, Eveline’s neurosis nonetheless enables her to achieve a degree of critical distance not only from the children under her charge, her father, neighborhood, and country, but also -- as suggested by her reminiscence in the beginning -- the only existence she has ever known. Eveline’s decision to run away from home is political and revolutionary: a self-willed upheaval of her entire life-world. Such an elementary act, which exceeds the domain of the imaginary, is consistent with the neurotic and a part of what “gives the neurotic their existential value” (Evans 123).

Because Eveline rejects her material upbringing tout court, no worldly cause or essence beyond the mediating influence of the symbolic order may be held responsible for her actions. Eveline’s worrisome stance is not reducible to her strenuous circumstances. Indeed, Eveline’s neurosis motivates her character positively: her decision to leave is not a reaction to her father’s threatening presence, but an active attempt at opposing it; that is, her questioning proclivity serves as a necessary condition for rejecting her responsibilities at home i.e. in breaking her promise to her mother, running away from home, etc. (Evans 123).⁴⁰ Eveline not only responds to her conditions, but acts against them, a far-reaching motive that also “protects” her, seemingly, from bonding with the children. Of course, while the very source of Eveline’s failure in this attempt is located in her father and what he emblematizes, “Eveline” nonetheless bridges the connection between a particular subject’s symptomal structure and that subject’s broader political concern; so, while such a conflict falls short of claiming that Eveline “freely chooses” her

⁴⁰ Alternatively, if Eveline was perverse in her character she would not necessarily oppose her strenuous circumstances.
actions within the world in general, it does illustrate how Eveline’s neurosis is a
necessary condition for her behaviour and her epiphany.

Eveline’s neurosis is responsible for her attempt to leave home. Unfortunately,
Eveline fails in this attempt: Eveline does not escape from her life with her father.
Indeed, more abysmally, she is unable to sustain her will in opposing him. Eveline’s
neurotic propensity for existential acts has been, in the last instance, abrogated. Her
psyche is unable to sustain its expected capacity to resist the constraints imposed by the
symbolic order; that is, to break out of such constraints while necessarily recuperating the
loss in jouissance, reintegrating her subjectivity in a new relation to the symbolic order. It
is here that we may discern the palpable presence of a perverse economy of desire
operating within Eveline’s otherwise neurotic make-up.

The first clue to the presence of perversion rests in the nature of her father’s
authority, and its relation to the outside world. More accurately, it rests in her father’s
relation to the absence of an authoritative figure resident over his own tentative authority,
a figure symbolized by the nameless “priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the
wall” and who now lives in Melbourne (Dubliners 30). As testified by the fact that he
was a childhood friend and his photograph continues to hang upon the wall, the priest
appears to have been esteemed by her father. Although now an emblem of the past, the
priest connotes a time when, as Eveline says, her father was “not so bad” (Dubliners 29).
While symbolizing the onset of her father’s abuse, the literal and figural absence of the
priest also forebodes the aforementioned “relative demise of Symbolic efficiency”, a
development whose precondition Žižek sums up thus:

in the modern bourgeois nuclear family, the two functions of the father which
were previously separated, that is, embodied in different people (the pacifying
Ego Ideal, the point of ideal identification, and the ferocious superego, the agent of cruel prohibitions; the symbolic function of totem and the horror of taboo), are united in one and the same person (The Ticklish Subject 313).

Symbolic efficiency -- namely the ability for the subject to make sense of his or her world -- depends on this necessary “gap” between the subject’s Ego Ideal and superego. In the same way, then, the photo of the priest in “Eveline” stands in for the pacifying ego-ideal while Eveline’s father stands in for the ferocious superego of cruel prohibitions, a discrete opposition which, with the abandonment of the priest, has collapsed into one and the same person: Eveline’s father. Without protection from the pacifying influence of the symbolic father (the priest) Eveline is left to the mercy of the father her raised her, who, like the ferocious superego, cruelly forbids her from seeing Frank (Dubliners 32). Indeed, with the possible exception of Eveline’s employer, Eveline’s father becomes the only authority in Eveline’s life, the final result being that Eveline’s life in Dublin revolves almost entirely around pleasing her father’s arbitrary wishes and avoiding his volatile and unprincipled displeasure. With the demise of symbolic efficiency, Eveline’s life is reduced to anticipating her real father’s uncontrollable and unappeasable jouissance.

When dealing with hysterics such as Eveline, Žižek reminds us that,

the central figure of [the hysterics] universe is the ‘humiliated father’. That is she is obsessed with the signs of the real father’s weakness and failure, and criticizes him incessantly for not living up to his symbolic mandate” (The Ticklish Subject 334).

Today, however,

it is the very symbolic function of the father which is increasingly undermined – that is which is losing its performative efficiency; for that reason, a father is no longer perceived as one’s Ego Ideal, the (more or less failed, inadequate) bearer of symbolic authority, but as one’s ideal ego, imaginary competitor” (The Ticklish Subject 334).
Eveline hysterically interrogates and opposes her father’s authority (she disobeys him with regards to seeing Frank, she attempts to leave him, etc.); except now the very symbolic function through which she interrogates him no longer exists. Eveline has no Ego Ideal with which to properly judge her father’s obvious failed relation to this self-same ideal. With the demise of symbolic efficiency, there is no overarching measure - - neither law, nor morality, nor rationale – for a subject to structure her desire (namely, to interrogate her father) and, consequently, buttress or justify her actions. Eveline’s father has been reduced to the pre-symbolic Father of jouissance of psychoanalytic cosmology who existed, according to Freud, prior to his replacement by the Father of Law or logos. The final consequence is that both Eveline and her father unwittingly substitute the desire of the Big Other, the symbolic order, for their own personal desire, an association that results in the sexualizing of their relationship.

We begin to see how the relative demise of symbolic efficiency derives from the privileging of perversion. Eveline has not only been compelled to locate herself as the means of her father’s jouissance, like a subject of perversion, but also, in this capacity, to assume knowledge of her father’s unknowable desire. Eveline most clearly resembles the subject of perversion in this respect, being compelled to forgo the very quality that defines her subjectivity: the positing of a question. Describing the routine arguments between her and her father over money on Saturday, for example, Eveline explains how he would relent with the money but reply sarcastically, “had she any intention of buying Sunday’s dinner” (Dubliners 31)? Evidently, Eveline should know when to get dinner on the table; she should know what her father wants, what he desires, and have the money to obey it (even though she gives him the money). We may reasonably conclude that the
undermining of Eveline’s conscious thoughts by ideologically produced jouissance propel her hysterically out of the symbolic order into the psychotic void of the real.

The Consequences of Capitalism

My last point concerns the role of capitalism in “Eveline”. While capitalism is not foregrounded in “Eveline”, there are important clues indicating its distorting presence. The clearest link between capitalism and Eveline’s failed epiphany is Joyce’s theme of emigration. On the one hand, emigration symbolizes escape: the Irish subject’s escape from the paralysis of Dublin, the modern subject’s escape from modernity or even the neurotic’s escape from the privileging of perversion. On the other hand, emigrants in Joyce appear as subjects already subsumed to perversion; Frank, especially, emblematizes the modern emigrant subsumed to the ideology of capital. Frank not only aspires to emigrate from Ireland, but also, being once employed by the Allan line, functions in the story as a synecdoche for both the shipping industry and global capital. Frank is not a capitalist, of course, yet he constitutes a vital and necessary cog in the expansion of capital because he belongs to a burgeoning, trans-national and itinerant work force necessary for the expansion of global capital at the turn of the century.

Frank represents a relatively new manifestation of turn-of-the-century capitalism: the emergence of a working class that sells its labour on a global scale and does so bereft of anything else. By “bereft of everything else,” I do not mean he represents a worker that had nothing to sell except his or her labour, but rather, in a more abject sense, a worker who willingly concedes the unjust terms on which his or her labour was sold. Working class individuals such as Frank know they do not sell their labour freely, but feel and act
as if they did, a demeanor that prefigures today's right wing working class individual who also happily serves capital. The end result is the emergence of roguish opportunists, personality types who experience themselves as individuals seeking nothing else except to "fall on [their] feet" (D. 32). Workers such as Frank rationalize to themselves: "yes, I am forced to work in my job, but if I were really unhappy, I could always, at bottom, choose to find work elsewhere." Of course, the obverse, hidden aspect of this disavowal is that workers such as Frank accept as unproblematic the fact that they are not "on their feet" in the first place. The phrase "fall on his feet" expresses this precise ambiguity: it alerts us to the fact that Frank knows his success in Buenos Aires depends on the luck of the market (he falls on his feet); at the same time, his act of taking a wife suggests that Frank has accepted a modicum of responsibility in his life, a move that reveals beneath his blasé attitude a more serious hope, the possibility that the New World might afford a stability not provided by "western" markets. The excluded "third option" in Frank's disavowing stance, of course, is that he might oppose the global market rather then try to escape it; unfortunately, it is difficult to envisage a personality such as Frank's organizing a worker's strike against a company such as the Allan line. In light of his unconscious obeisance to capital, Frank represents another libidinal point to which Eveline has been seduced by the ideology of capital.

Another characteristic of the role of capitalism in Joyce's stories is that it resides almost entirely outside the subject's purview. By Joyce's time, trans-national capitalism had already, seemingly, taken into account the desire of the subjects it dominates. Consider the role of capital in the departure of the nameless priest on the wall. While it is possible that the priest left home to become a missionary, seeking to produce "good
Christian works,” such altruism is unlikely because, as Eveline’s impoverished situation testifies to, there is not a shortage of “charity cases” in Ireland. Joyce insinuates that the priest’s motives for going to Australia go beyond the call of duty. Seduced possibly by the platitude that “a better life awaits in New World”, the priest in “Eveline” has “given into temptation” seemingly, even though such temptations do not reflect his own pathological, selfish desires (jouissance as such). They represent, ironically, desires inculcated by ideological surplus-jouissance, a scenario we may speculate as both a cause and consequence of emigration in general, and one that condenses metaphorically the libidinally charged flux of colonization, British imperialism and venture capital.

Abdicating his symbolic authority, the priest, like Frank and Eveline, represents just another subject beholden to the call of an ideological surplus-jouissance facilitated by modernity. Ultimately, Eveline’s failed epiphany and corollary subsumption to ideology, as reflected in both Frank’s disavowal of capital and the priest’s symbolic absence, is conditioned by a world dominated by free market capitalism.

As a result, we begin to see how Joyce’s writing operates with an awareness of the reality that ideology has already penetrated or “hollowed out” any civic or democratic potential in the modern subject. Capitalism’s imposition of perversion is in full swing by the turn of the century. “Eveline”’s denouement is neither exaggerated nor melodramatic: Eveline’s failed epiphany, her loss of will, is symptomatic of this global and historical transformation. By maintaining that Joyce depicts neurotic subjects struggling in a context that privileges the perverse, therefore, I want to make it clear that Joyce’s Dubliners not only depicts an ongoing conflict between neurosis and perversion, but that Joyce’s authorial subjectivity itself seeks out pathology. My critique does not
impose a framework on *Dubliners*: Joyce’s writing style itself takes into account the significance of pathology within (inter) subjective relations. Indeed, we may speculate that pathology is responsible for the stream-of-consciousness style that modernism is renowned for, brought to its peak in *Ulysses*. To be sure, Joyce *describes* many scenarios in *Dubliners*: in “Grace” and “Eveline” we see patriarchy and gender exploitation. In “Araby” and “Two Gallants” we see petty crime, poverty and the exploitative effects of money. In stories such as “Ivy Day in the Committee Room”, Joyce focuses on political malaise, ignorance and corruption. From this vantage point, Joyce’s *Dubliners* constitutes an admirable exercise in realism. At a deeper level, however, what requires recognition is that Joyce is political not *only* by virtue of the objects and themes he portrays, but by virtue of the attained point of view, “the subject position,” from which he describes such objects. “Eveline” itself illustrates how perspective has already become a terrain fraught with contestation and ideological affect, evident in the story’s claustrophobic, myopic feeling as well as Eveline’s struggle with herself, her father and their combined struggle with institutions such as church and family. We should ask therefore: how was Joyce’s style of modernism able “to see” and thus foreground pathology in the way that he does? From what vantage point was Joyce able to unconsciously perceive pathology as if he were, seemingly, “outside” its distorting effects?

The benefit of my pathological reading is that it attempts to “map out” the politics of desire. Through it, we might reveal the respective political significance of discourses other than capitalist ideology. While I suggest that modernism was primarily a neurotic discourse, we can also ask: what is the political standing of Orientalist writings, such as seen in “Araby”, or the Celtic Revivalist movement, such as seen in “A Mother”? What is
the pathological orientation of discourses, such as that proffered by the Church, in Irish society at the turn of the century? We can explore how such discourses situate themselves in relation to modern subjectivity and, in turn, appropriately construct subjectivity within their own particular discourses and narratives.
CHAPTER THREE

*Araby*

Another story depicting the epiphany as symptomatic of a neurotic subject struggling in a context that privileges the perverse is “Araby”. The story of a young boy’s romantic crush, “Araby” presents a much more complex instance of a failed epiphany than “Eveline”. While Eveline’s epiphany fails because her subjectivity does not return as ego, the boy’s epiphany in “Araby” fails because, although the character’s subjectivity does return as “ego” (as expected), the acquired knowledge is, tragically, perverted in the last instance. The narrator comes to negate the significance of his tentative enlightenment. So, although the boy exemplifies neurosis throughout the story, the ending concludes with his first experience of being compelled to pose as perverse, along with the burgeoning realization that the context in which he resides privileges such a stance. To facilitate this understanding, my argument focuses on the theme of love. Love provides a measure by which to evaluate the success or failure of the epiphany in “Araby”. Sympathetic to the boy, I contest arguments such as those provided by Margot Norris and Garry Leonard that marshal Lacanian theory in the service of undermining or rendering ironic the boy’s motivation and judgment. On the contrary, Lacan’s conception of desire, founded precisely on the premise that desire is misrecognition, supports the kind of love aimed at in Joyce’s stories. Love is not meaningless as such; only it takes the form of a fiction (“impossible” in the Lacanian sense) and depends on a *mutual* misrecognition of desire between subjects. In this sense, misrecognition sustains the identity of love, not undermines it.
Equally relevant to my case is the complex question of perspective in "Araby". Exploiting further the discrepancy between the narrator and his boyhood perception of Mangan's sister, I criticize Norris and Leonard for not pursuing the logic of misrecognition far enough. On the one hand, Leonard is correct: the boy misrecognizes his desire for Mangan's sister. On the other hand, Norris is also correct: the narrator's interpretation of "vanity" is likewise a form of misrecognition, a continued attempt at filling in a lack at the heart of desire. However, when these two narratives are seen as mutually implicating, as the unconscious collusion of two instances of misrecognition, a third illumination is revealed: the notional identity of love. The subject's recollection serves as a kind of "misrecognition of misrecognition" that exposes the reader, paradoxically, to a concept of "love" that is, in a very limited sense, recognizable. Such is the real epiphany underlying "Araby": a silent epiphany that alludes to a conception of love that is neither romantic nor vain. It informs the reader that a modicum of knowledge modifies the narrator's subjectivity even though its significance is lost to him. In the end, the narrator persists in disavowing the meaning of his own narrative and the reader perceives a character's epiphany in spite of that character. Although the narrator "knows" his innocent crush on a girl was just that, innocent, he persists in thinking that his feelings were negative (i.e. vain). The boy negates the significance of his epiphany and what this translates into is that "Araby" is a story portrayed through the eyes of a neurotic subject who poses as perverse. We see the world of "Araby" through - to recall Stephen in Ulysses -- the "lookingglass" of a neurotic who has been "cracked" by the perverse context in which he is forced to operate (Ulysses 14). The final proof of this assertion is the climax: the narrative portrays the very occasion, the mise en scene, in which the seed
of this stunted condition was first implanted, where the ideological logic of perversion first comes to seize the hapless neurotic subject by mimicking the symbolic order.

Finally, it is important not to reduce the boy’s neurotic perspective to a function of the narrator’s perversely influenced one; or, while the boy’s story is a reconstruction of the narrator’s, it is a reconstruction only insofar as it is a failed reconstruction of his boyhood experience. His boyhood story functions as the limit of the narrator’s story, and the upshot is that the reader is offered the boy’s story in spite of the narrator. The two narratives cancel each other out, an effect that betrays a deadlock over the guiding and inassimilable heart of the story: the notional object of love.

*Arguments of Love*

Debates over “Araby” have revolved around its veracity as a love story and “whether its closing self-allegorization constitutes an epiphany” (Norris 46). On one side of the debate, Joycean critics such as Warren Beck write: “palpably and poignantly a story of adolescent love, ‘Araby’ rises to the still larger representation of subjective division under the clash between the idealist’s ardor and adverse insuperable circumstances” (Norris 49). Sympathetic to the boy’s idealism, therefore, Beck traces the movement of “Araby” “through self determining events to self-realization in a Joycean epiphany.” 31 On the other side of the debate, critics such as Margot Norris endeavour “to complicate readings of ‘Araby’ as a love story” (Norris 49). Norris aims “to conjure up the unwitting or blind psychological oppression …obsessive lovers may inflict on their

31 Beck also attenuates the boy’s idealist trajectory. He adds that the boy does not come to appreciate what he learns via his epiphany because his epiphany “is too appalling for him” (Lewis 240). Already we are provided assessments consonant with perversion: the boy acquires knowledge that is significant, but disavows this very significance because it is “too appalling for him” (Lewis 240).
objects of desire” (Norris 49). For Norris, the epiphany does not figure the illuminated “enlightenment of anagnostisis”, but a particular kind of “illumination by blindness [whereby] the boy, who finds emptiness in “Araby” the figure of romance, is in turn found empty, a personification rather than a person, by the story” (Norris 46-7). Emphasizing the boy’s oppressive activity as obsessive lover, Norris situates the boy’s epiphany in a trajectory whose climax consists of the boy’s discovery that his original concept of love and desire for Mangan’s sister were, like the Araby bazaar, empty illusion all along. In this light, the story in “Araby” functions as the storyteller’s compensatory strategy for this earlier frustration, serving as a “production of artful language to supplement [his own] unsatisfied desire” (Norris 46).

Garry Leonard also rejects “Araby” as a love story. Presenting a more comprehensive Lacanian treatment of “Araby” than Norris, Leonard posits that the boy in “Araby” must “suppress the story of Mangan’s sister … in order to tell his story – in order to have a story – so that he can believe in the myth of himself” (Leonard 79). Leonard’s definition of the epiphany supplements this view: “the Joycean epiphany is the imaginary light that staves off Real darkness. The subject imagines himself to make the world real. In his new identity, the narrator [in “Araby’] is derided by ‘vanity’” (Leonard 93). The epiphany is a necessary tool in the sustenance of the fantasy of the self: the boy invents a love story so he can (re)invent his self and “stave off the Real” (Leonard 79). At this point, it is beneficial to compare Norris with Leonard. On the one hand, both Leonard and Norris recognize that there are two discrepant narratives in “Araby”. First, we have a boy who invents a story of knightly romance in order to deny a manifest lack in his desire and to sustain his sense of identity. Second, we have the same individual – older in age and
serving as narrator -- who invents the story told in "Araby" precisely to discredit his "foolish" tale of romance in order to avoid this same lack in desire. On the other hand, Norris makes the additional observation that the narrator's story is a deliberate continuation of his desire for Mangan's sister. This is important because, from this perspective, Norris offers a specific answer for the narrator's motivation, while Leonard reduces it to the usual explanation of a subject sustaining the illusory identity of his ego. Still, Leonard does not present the two narratives as entirely equal, a point worth noting.

Leonard writes:

[although] the boy's concluding observation about himself is a reinterpretation of the Real and, thus, is no more true than his earlier perception of Mangan's sister it does restore reality to him because instead of the intolerable scenario of seeing himself being seen by Mangan's sister, and by the annoyed and distracted shop girl, he now reports "I saw myself as a creature." (Leonard 80)

There are several things here: first, with the phrase "I saw myself as a creature" we see the concluding stage of the boy's epiphany. The boy recovers his gaze from Mangan's sister, regaining his "fallen" subjectivity. Second, more importantly, there is a qualitative difference in the boy's and narrator's interpretations of Mangan's sister: only with the second (re)interpretation of the Real does the subject regain a sense of self whereby "reality as such" is restored to him (Leonard 80). In short, the second interpretation of Mangan's sister is more effective or authentic, and Leonard's explanation for this shift in rationale is, "it is better to be [one's] own creature than to be feminized by the objectifying gaze of a woman" (Leonard 80). Leonard's preference warrants scrutiny for, in arguing that the second interpretation is "more real" (it "restores reality to him"), he makes the false assumption that the boy's story is only a reconstruction of the narrator's (Leonard 80).
Not surprisingly, at this point, difficulties with Leonard’s and Norris’s arguments begin to arise. For example, if “Araby” depicts a narrator who strives only to maintain the illusory coherence of his subjectivity, would this not become problematic given that the narrator’s own story depicts a moment where his subjectivity was severely jeopardized? Would not this recollection only remind him of his traumatic encounter, exposing him potentially to the same threat once again? Indeed, considering the many gaps and inexplicabilities in the story, the story does appear to stray dangerously close to the narrator losing once more the illusory consistency of his identity. Heeding this tension, seemingly, Norris at least specifies a particular motivation for the narrator’s storytelling i.e. it is a continuation of his desire for Mangan’s sister, and her approach at least points us in the right direction. We should look to the story for the narrator’s motivation, rather than resorting to psychoanalytical platitudes that overgeneralize human motivation as “misrecognition”. Unfortunately, however, Norris’s argument also goes astray. By ascribing the boy’s desire for Mangan’s sister to the same “quest for self-knowledge” that is just “another species in narcissism,” Norris neglects to see how “Araby” offers the reader not “another species of narcissism,” but a species of desire distinctly different from narcissism (Norris 46). “Araby” offers a mode of desire that reflects upon its own self-centered properties, yet may not be reduced to narcissism, vanity or selfishness. In fact, such a desire speculatively serves to “cancel out” the debilitating element of misrecognition implicated in desire, denoting a desire that is, at some level, recognized by the subject. Again, to demonstrate this overlooked desire, we must proceed carefully for my argument addresses Leonard’s mistaken idea that the little boy’s story is a function of the narrator’s story.
Love as objet petit a

The correct response to the assumption that the boy’s narrative is a function of the narrator’s is twofold. On the one hand, yes, the boy’s story is a function of the narrator’s story. The boy’s story poses as an attempt by the narrator to sustain the illusory coherence of his identity. On the other hand, it is precisely in this regard that the narrator fails; he fails in his attempt to subsume his boyhood story to his own self-serving interpretation. His reconstruction, as it were, “founders” on his boyhood narrative. Indeed, this failure is nothing but the narrator’s story and, more importantly, such a failure is not due to any formulaic notion of misrecognition, or foundering on the taboo rocks of the real. On the contrary, the real, like the narrator’s epiphanic failure, is a structural “after-effect” derived solely from the failure of the symbolic order. This is the whole point of the Lacanian objet petit a: as an empty stand-in for an already existent absence, the objet petit a is always and only a structural illusion created by the symbolic order. As Zizek expresses this seeming paradoxical logic in Tarrying with the Negative, “there is no logic of Prohibition involved in the notion of the Real qua the impossible-nonsymbolizable” (129). Rather, insofar as “Lacan’s strategy is to prevent any tabooing of the Real...one can ‘touch the real’ only by applying oneself to its symbolization, up to the very failure of this endeavor...In short, the status of the Real is thoroughly non-substantial: it is a product of failed attempts to integrate it into the Symbolic” (129). In this sense, the real is “internal” to the symbolic order. The narrator in “Araby” experiences an epiphany exactly by applying himself to the symbolization of the Real; specifically, by applying himself towards a conscious reconstruction of his childhood,
towards an interpretation of his experience with Mangan’s sister. The limit to the
narrator’s story is his own boyhood story, and the real that Leonard speaks of is the
structural illusion provided by the inassimilability between the two narratives.
Consequently, as in “Eveline”, ideology is not responsible for the boy’s epiphany as such
-- this is caused by his symbolization -- but only its failure.

To further demonstrate this point, it helps to recount the boy’s epiphany from his
own point of view. In this way, we can see how, in less theoretical terms, the narrator
undermines himself by his own words. So, while the narrator undoubtedly believes that
his feeling for Mangan’s sister was his own vanity, his boyhood discourse renders
impotent this conclusion: the narrator’s discourse betrays the fact that he does not believe
his self-accusation of vanity, and it is for this reason he is telling the story. The narrator
waxes nostalgic about his youth because, at the unconscious level, he registers the falsity
of his final presumption. To perceive this lack of conviction, we need only recall the
vivid and poetic rendering of his childhood. It was a time when “the cold air stung us and
we played until our bodies glowed,” when

the career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses
where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages, to the back doors
of the dark dripping gardens where odours arose from the ashpits, to the dark
odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook
music from the buckled harness. (Dubliners 21-22)

The narrator upholds his youthful self with fondness, nostalgia and innocence, a positive
characterization that colours and sways our perception of the boy’s attitude towards
Mangan’s sister. Such an attitude, while self-absorbed and slightly obsessive, hardly
reveals a boy who is vain. For this reason, the reader is tacitly encouraged to question the
sincerity of the narrator’s pronouncement and, on this point, my position is diametrically
opposed to Norris’s. For Norris, “Araby”’s beautiful language is elaborate but “empty”; “[‘Araby’] takes its own beautiful rhetorical language and makes the story empty and ineffective” (Norris 46). In direct contrast, I assert that “Araby”’s “beautiful rhetorical language” effectively refutes the narrator’s condemnation of vanity. The conclusion does not undermine his story: his story, the narrator’s rhetorical and beautiful style of language, undermines his own finalizing and pathetic attempt to indict his boyhood self.

To restate the question, why does the boy accuse himself of vanity? On the one hand, in spite of a lack of evidence demonstrating actual vain behavior by the boy, the unavoidable reality of its utterance alerts us to “something else” at work in the boy’s original narrative. Somehow, the narrator is unable to sustain a positive image of his experience: both his romance narrative and nostalgic rendering of this same narrative collapse inexplicably into the pronouncement of vanity. The upshot is that it imbues his harmless puppy love with a seriousness and gravity not otherwise present in the story. On the other hand, if “Araby” is not a story about childhood puppy love per se and yet it is also not a story of insidious vanity, what is “Araby” about? For it is clear that, for some reason, the narrator feels the necessity to reflect upon and reevaluate his perception of Mangan’s sister and, moreover, he thinks this reevaluation needs telling. Seen from this perspective, we may infer that the explanation for this “something else” must be found in the reflexive and interrogative gesture performed by the narrator, in the rhetorical turn between the two narratives. We must ask: if the narrator believes his story is a lesson in vanity, in the general sense of constituting an “excessive pride in or admiration of one’s own appearance or achievements”, why does he reminisce in a fashion that fails to convince us of precisely this quality (OED)? The answer to this question is that, by
returning to the occasion of his failed epiphany, the narrator unconsciously strives to reevaluate the meaning of his experience; and this insistent drive to return to his experience discloses a dynamic exceeding the impulse to bolster "the subject's imaginary sense of self" as contended by Leonard (Leonard 80). Such a gesture is subtler than it might appear: the narrator's story in "Araby" is not merely a story or memory, but a specifically nostalgic story. The narrator has elected to recall and retell his past experience for some reason and this reflection, so I assert, betrays an aspiration that goes beyond the common assumption of desire defined as misrecognition. This sentimental "excess" in "Araby" has a plentitude and content in its own right, and therefore a libidinal corollary that needs to be specified.

As stated, this unspecified, unconscious and reflexive trope in "Araby" is the notional object of "love". Because love is the epiphany, love serves as the immediate link between the two narratives, as the objet petit a of this unique dialectic of desire performed in "Araby". The pathway to understanding this notional sense of love is repressed from explicit purview of both reader and narrator: it lies, not "outside" the text, but at an invisible meeting point between the thematic opposites of romantic-love and vanity. Deduction is critical to perceiving this hidden point. We are provided with two choices: 1) if vanity and the boy's knightly ideal are both misrecognitions, and yet there is no alternative motivation for the shift in the boy's sensibility, then misrecognition must itself be the answer. Unfortunately, such an explanation reduces us to the position that, because desire-equals-misrecognition, the boy necessarily fails to attain what he wants because by definition his desire is misrecognition. Seemingly, either we must reject this conclusion as unacceptably tautological or, going deeper into psychoanalytic abstraction,
posit this contradiction as a manifestation of the real. We are forced to assert that the real explains the boy’s motivation insofar as desire is, by definition, misrecognition precisely because it partakes of the real. Exempt from formal systems such as logic, the real is, in theory, a possible albeit unhelpful explanation for such a paradox.

Fortunately, "Araby" presents us a third alternative for explaining the boy’s experience: love. Where does this particular sentiment lie? Recalling Leonard’s main premise that the boy is a function of the girl’s desire, it is revealing that the boy reports her desire thus: “It would be a splendid bazaar, she said; she would love to go” (my italics; D. 23). We may posit this as the first instance of misrecognition: the boy misinterprets her notion of love as the romantic-knightly conception of love. The question that arises is: what does the girl really mean by love? What does she understand it to be? Naturally, the boy misunderstands her use of the word love, preferring to interpret it in the sense of courtly love, undoubtedly learned from books such as Walter Scott’s The Abbot, which he finds in the back room. At the same time, the question of the girl’s real intention is impossible to answer with any certainty -- and yet this in no way hinders my argument: we must persist in our affirmation that the sentiment misrecognized is love. Why? Because the failure of achieving his knightly fantasy of love results precisely in the fleeting realization that love was “something other” than his particular interpretation of it was. This very realization, his epiphany, catches him in an inconsistency comprised of three simultaneous elements. First, he realizes that he “had it all wrong,” that he did not interpret Mangan’s sister’s sense of love accurately. Second, he deduces that, given his most recent and traumatic emotional reaction to the mere notion of love, that love must mean “something.” And, finally, the instant he realizes its
latent significance (along with the painful realization that he does not possess the correct meaning of love) he also learns that love is a necessary desire. While love does not refer to anything (it has the status of a fiction) the boy realizes that love is nonetheless a necessary fiction. The implicit rationale of his epiphany can be summarized thus: love does not exist in reality, but the subject must believe in it to exist. The boy not only realizes that his pursuit of Mangan’s sister was valid, but that it is a necessary pursuit; and yet, with the final tragic twist that dooms his epiphany, it is this realization that he refuses to accept. He refuses to admit that it is a necessary pursuit, and it is this refusal that “is” his failed epiphany. Instead, he sutures over the moment with the insincere-interpretation of vanity.

The notion of love serves as the objet petit a that initiates his quest to the Araby bazaar. Simply, it is the minimal reason that he is telling the story; the original vocal prompt that imbues his quest with purpose, serving as its base of verification. Put differently, it is not the content behind the word (the meaning or intention) but simply its articulation or enunciation by Mangan’s sister that instigates the boy’s quest. Love, to use Žižek words, “is the ‘small other’, the object-cause of desire, a tiny particle of dust which gives body to the lack in the big Other, the symbolic order” (Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? 254). As a “purely negative malfunctioning” that “acquires positive existence” the objet petit a is “the object-cause of desire, at its purest: a certain nothing at all, an entity about which it is not clear even if it ‘really exists’ or not, which none the less, like the eye of a storm, causes a gigantic commotion all around” (Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? 256). Žižek’s description fits exactly the role of love in “Araby”; the boy’s conception is brought about precisely through a kind of misrecognition-of-
misrecognition, an abject moment consisting of two sequential failures in narrative. So, as inconsequential and irrecoverable as this notion of love is within the story, serving as just another failure beneath everything else, it is the hidden absence around which all of "Araby" revolves. Indeed, is "Araby" really an allegory on the perils of childhood vanity? Or, as I have argued, does the narrator not reminisce over the Araby experience because he laments the simultaneous attainment and negation of a notion called love, first encountered with Mangan's sister, and then vanquished by his encounter with the Araby bazaar? Leonard and Norris, failing to perceive this third motivational sentiment (imprecisely attributing it to the real), remain oblivious to the cause of his epiphany and its failure (Norris 46). Its failure, at the same time, rests not in misrecognition or in his transferential relationship with Mangan's sister, but in ideological determinants peripheral to his relation with Mangan's sister (which I specify below). In short, they derive from the Araby bazaar.

When Misrecognition Equals Recognition

Having located the impetus behind the boy's epiphany, the next task is to account for its failure. Unlike the epiphany, its failure lies in social and ideological factors that reside external to the individual's subjective make-up. Such factors are not reducible to psychoanalytical explanations and, from this perspective, "Araby" exposes how institutional apparatuses such as the Araby bazaar are able to penetrate, alter and control the type of subjective roles that individuals take upon themselves. Although I tentatively contrast the notion of a perverse, fetishistic image of a woman (summed up under the term "idol") with the neurotic's image of the Woman, my more basic point is that the
Araby bazaar itself is the source of ideological interpellation. Araby eliminates the boy’s narrative of Christian idealism and replaces it with the illusory perception that reality consists only of cheap commodities; it replaces his idealistic desire for Mangan’s sister with the self-reproach of vanity; and, lastly, it convinces him that all men and women relate in a perverse manner. My final proof of this power lies in Leonard’s mistaken yet revealing interpretation of the shopkeeper.

In part, Leonard’s assessment of the shopkeeper is correct. The shopkeeper does contribute to the boy’s failed epiphany; she disintegrates the boy’s falsifying image of the Woman previously projected onto Mangan’s sister. At the same time, Leonard does not register how the shopkeeper’s gender is insufficient to explaining the full experience of the boy. He overlooks how the bazaar itself preempts the boy’s interpretation of the shopkeeper, an oversight traceable to the fact that “the masculine and the feminine waltz around the non-relation of the sexes with two-step of mutual misrecognition” is not the condition that undermines the subject, but the very condition for the subject (Leonard 87). In short, the subject would not exist without misrecognition, a criticism that corresponds to my above treatment of the narrator. Leonard and Norris misread the dynamic between two particular perspectives except, in this case, the two perspectives are not the narrator and his boyhood self (as above), but the boy’s and the shopkeeper’s. Indeed, this dynamic also applies to the relation between the boy and Mangan’s sister’s perspective, a point worth dwelling on as it compares nicely with his relation to the shopkeeper: I am alluding to Leonard’s intriguing observation that Mangan’s sister, aware of the little boy’s behaviour, “has noticed him looking and is looking back at him” (Leonard 76). For Leonard, Joyce not only makes Mangan’s sister’s subjective presence felt within the story
but also, more profoundly, renders the boy a function of her desire. The subject of

"Araby"

is the desire of Mangan’s sister in the sense that her function in the boy’s
narration as absence and lack is what permits his subjective presence. He
represses awareness of the question of her desire by incorporating it into what he
presents as his quest. As a result, what he takes to be his identity has been
constructed relative to another (Mangan’s sister) and is destined to be taken apart
in relation to someone else (the shop girl at the bazaar). The appropriating gaze he
directs to Mangan’s sister is reflected back to him – in an inverted and
disorienting form – by the indifferent gaze of the shop girl who asks if he wants to
buy something. (Leonard 74-75)

The small but crucial problem with Leonard’s account is that, while the little boy
represses awareness of the question of Mangan’s sister’s desire “to permit his subjective
presence”, he does so by incorporating her desire but not her identity (Leonard 74-75).

Mangan’s sister’s presence is irrelevant to his desire; by contrast, her desire as such is not
irrelevant to his identity. In fact, the boy reacts precisely to her express wish to go to the
Araby bazaar. She says, “she would love to go” (Dubliners 23). His desire is not
constructed relative to her identity, but serves as an after-effect or consequence of the
blind, unconscious complicity between his desire and her desire, such that our assessment
of their relation must keep separate the categories of “Identity” and “Desire”. Leonard’s
claim that Mangan’s sister is aware of the little boy’s efforts requires strict qualification,
therefore. For, it must be recalled, if desire is necessarily a kind of misrecognition, and
the boy is constructed relative to her desire, it follows that he is constructed according to
Mangan’s sister’s own particular brand of misrecognition (her desire). As a result, while
she comes to apprehend the little boy’s behaviour, as Leonard persuasively shows, it is
impossible to determine if she comprehends his behaviour: in what sense is she really
aware of the boy’s obsession, desire or thoughts? Given this ambiguity in Leonard’s
thesis, I maintain that the identity of the of the little boy is maintained precisely by the inferred element of mutual misrecognition between him and her; and, furthermore, that their mutual misrecognition does not undo each other’s subjectivity but is the positive condition for it. Recalling the shopkeeper, therefore, this condition also applies to the boy’s experience in the bazaar. If the boy’s identity is taken apart by the shop girl, it is not her identity as Woman that takes him apart (because, as a subject she would misrecognise him), but her identity as a shopkeeper takes apart the boy’s identity; or, more precisely, it is the desire of her ideological identity as shopkeeper that colours the boy’s interpretation of the shop keeper. The bazaar subsumes her image as the Woman and imposes its own tailored and perverse “image” of “the woman”, an “image” inseparable from her abstract identity as the shop keeper.

An additional problem with Leonard’s assertion that the shopkeeper triggers his epiphany is that the boy’s epiphany starts well before he sees the shopkeeper, and only after he encounters the bazaar. Compare the boy’s demeanor when he leaves home to his demeanor as he enters the bazaar: at first, he energetically and purposively “[strides] down Buckingham Street towards the station” where “the sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled me to the purpose of my journey” (Dubliners 26). At this point, the boy certainly does not consider his character vain: the activity of the streets stimulates his memory and encourages him on his quest, and his energetic, impatient bearing continues on the train as he recounts its “intolerable delay” (Dubliners 26). However, his attitude changes as soon as he sets his eyes upon “the large building which displayed the magical name” (Dubliners 26). Rather than anticipating his purchase as he did in the streets, he becomes transfixed at the atmosphere of the bazaar.
Distracted, he listens to “a silence like that which pervades a church after a service” and, with increasing paralysis, he “[walks] into the centre of the bazaar timidly” (Dubliners 26). At this moment, we may infer that his epiphany has begun. His agency already impaired, he stands trancelike “listen[ing] to the fall of coins”; finally, at its absolute nadir the narrator confesses to “[remembering] with difficulty why [he] had come” as he is reduced to “vaguely” hearing the shopkeeper’s conversation (Dubliners 26-7). Such a shift in register — where he does not merely forget, but struggles to remember his task — betrays the critical moment when his subjectivity drops out of the Symbolic Order. As a result, we may conclude the boy’s epiphany starts when he enters the premises of the bazaar, a moment that occurs long before he encounters the shopkeeper’s particular gaze. The ideological “magic” of the bazaar, not the shopkeeper as Woman, serves to steal the individual’s subjectivity away from the Symbolic Order.

*Woman, woman or...*

Still, the shopkeeper plays a crucial part in his failed epiphany. Her identity is figured less as the neurotic’s fantasy of “the Woman” or its antithesis “the woman,” however, but even more abjectly, as a form of “property.” The shopkeeper functions as a fetishized instance of the woman, a reified image not unclaimed by representation; as the shopkeeper she is both the property and personification of the Araby bazaar. At this point, I have uncovered another “Woman” in “Araby”: a *perverse* representation of the Woman, a figure who stands between the boy’s image of the Woman and Leonard’s elicitation of the woman. Objectified as a quantum unit of labour, the woman, as shopkeeper, is subsumed by a mode of desire whose terms are set by the Araby bazaar.
Again, he is not taken apart by her identity as shopkeeper *per se*, but, remarkably, by the mode of desire that the designation “shopkeeper” stands for. In effect, her abject status as labor poses as a libidinal presence that the boy’s subjectivity senses. To this end, we may infer that, if the Araby bazaar initiates his failed epiphany, then it is the shop girl who completes it. She is the final variable in the boy’s experience that convinces him that his motivation towards Mangan’s sister is vain. The shopkeeper *enables* his return to the Symbolic Order, even though it is on the tragic condition that he disavow his previously held narrative of the Woman (projected onto Mangan’s sister) and substitute it for the bazaar’s ideologically constructed *idol* of a woman (one rooted in perversion).

The shopkeeper, like the bazaar, is emblematic of cultural and social perversion. Her attitude towards the men at the counter confirms my point: in complete contrast to the boy’s relationship with Mangan’s sister -- a relationship in which mutual misrecognition necessarily plays a part -- the shop keeper and men *are* aware of their desire. As seen in their light, meaningless banter, both parties are aware that their flirting is a game, that their talk is neither mere conversation nor genuine courtship. In their flirting, each party knows *that the other knows* that their talk is not to be taken seriously. To perceive this, consider the snippets of conversion overheard by the boy: the men appear to tease the shop keeper into confessing a piece of information which she had previously admitted to, yet which she now claims is a fib (*Dubliners* 87). Whatever this information, we can reasonably infer that the men are not really concerned with the content of the conversation, but only the reaction they draw from the shopkeeper. In effect, they do not want to know what the shopkeeper had admitted to in the past because both parties, being perverse, assume knowledge of the Big Other. While subjects who are
pervasive attempt to take into account the lack inherent to desire, they necessarily fail in
this attempt. The shopkeeper and men’s play is “empty”, so to speak, even though they
continue to act as if this were not the case. Unlike the boy and Mangan’s sister, who
struggle to repress knowledge of each other’s conscious selves, the shopkeeper and the
men each knowingly take into consideration what the other knows, while disregarding
this very knowledge. On the one hand, the boy’s desire is, while mistaken, sincere with
regards to Mangan’s sister. On the other hand, the men and the shopkeeper’s desire is
correct, they know the lack at the heart of desire, and yet are insincere. This expresses
exactly the difference between a perverse relationship and a neurotic relationship; one is
rooted in disavowal, and the other in repression.

In the end, upon entering the bazaar, the boy slowly becomes what the bazaar
wants him to be: perverse. The boy comes to accept perversion as the norm regarding
how men and women relate (a norm synonymous with the fetishistic relationship that
consumers have with commodities), a response derived from the bazaar’s successful
simulation of the symbolic order. The boy mistakenly comes to believe that all women
are like the shopkeeper, that what he was really pursuing all along was not the desire of
Mangan’s sister but, in fact, the perverse desire of a woman figured as the shopkeeper.
Given this error, we are able to see why the boy considers himself as vain: he sees
himself like the men at the counter, as someone who insincerely flirts with women to
boost their ego. His overreaction alerts us to the fact that he conflates the world as such
with the staged world of the Araby bazaar (namely, he pronounces his very character as
vain), which only means he is fooled into substituting the symbolic order for ideology.
Finally, it is crucial not to confuse the boy’s pursuit of a gift, a neurotic endeavour, with
the pursuit of a commodity, a perverse endeavour. Strictly speaking, even if it is true that the gift he pursues is a fetish, such a detail does not necessarily commit the boy to perversion. For Lacan, a neurotic subject can perform acts that are perverse and vice-versa (hence, my insistence on the distinction between a structural and a symptomatic reading of Joyce). Over and above this general premise, however, it remains a mistake to categorize the boy’s gift as an “object” as such, let alone a fetish. While the boy does seem to want to buy “something”, it also true that the boy does not know what “object” he wants, nor is it clear if the boy comprehends what it means to buy a commodity. From this vantage point, the boy’s gift continues to resemble, not an object, but the image of Mangan’s sister herself, one whose image he bears “safely through the throng of foes” (23). In this sense, the gift resembles more of a symbol, sign or chalice, not a specific object, one whose significance is destroyed precisely at the moment when the boy perceives its materialization (commodification or fetishization). The shop’s pathetic array of “porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets” destroys the boy’s neurotic image of the “gift of love”, triggering his failed epiphany (Dubliners 27).
CHAPTER FOUR

"The Dead"

My final chapter argues that "The Dead" depicts the only successful epiphany in *Dubliners*. Unlike Eveline and the boy in "Araby", Gabriel successfully overcomes his unconscious attachments to capitalist ideology. Beginning with Gabriel's anxiety, I illustrate first how Gabriel's neurosis is emblematic of the Misses Morkans' Christmas party. Like the party, Gabriel represents a neurotic subjectivity besieged in a context that privileges the perverse, a context whose pathological bias manifests itself in Gabriel's treatment of women and the partygoers' treatment of the church. Next, I show how Gabriel moves past his perverse idolization of women through an acceptance of Gretta's past love for Michael Furey. While doing so, I contrast "The Dead"'s positivism with *Dubliners*’ otherwise negative vision of reality. Touching briefly upon the question of Joyce's literary mode, I insist that, while the theme of romance in "The Dead" might appear maudlin or even a betrayal of Joyce's earlier fidelity to realism in *Dubliners*, Joyce's distinctive use of romance is consistent with his combined use of the realist and modernist modes of writing. Joyce's writing takes the realist mode to its "limit," a limit that exposes realism to a truth that it by definition must never admit: the necessity of fiction for a coherent understanding of reality. As Žižek articulates it, "the moment we subtract fictions from reality, reality itself loses its discursive-logical consistency"; in a similar vein, therefore, Gabriel's acceptance of the notional object of love is, in contrast with the boy from "Araby", also what prevents him from having a failed epiphany, precluding his world from "losing its discursive-logical consistency" (T.N. 88). At
bottom, Gabriel's acceptance of Gretta's love narrative constitutes the act that creates the symbolic leverage and critical means for Gabriel's overcoming of perversion and, by extension, dissolving his libidinal attachments to the ideology of capital.

A History of "The Dead"

While "The Dead" has been considered "among the most read short novels in English", its criticism can be categorized into two basic camps: an "optimistic camp" and a "pessimistic camp" (Schwartz 81). The optimistic camp generally postulates, "Gabriel achieves heroic transcendence and achieves a new level of self-knowledge as he transcends his material circumstances" (Schwartz 78). Critics who belong to this particular perspective of "The Dead" include such figures as William York Tindall, Kenneth Burke and Richard Ellman (Schwartz 78). Tyndall, for example, speaks of Gabriel's "enlargement" and "moral expansion", stating, "Gabriel, facing reality at last, goes westward to encounter life and death" (Schwartz 78). Alternatively, those who belong to the pessimistic camp include figures such as Edward Brandabur, Phillip Herring, Vincent Pecora and Garry Leonard. Brandabur argues that "Gabriel anticipates the paralysis which will befall him" an anticipation which leads him to an "annihilation he has not only anticipated but invited" (Schwartz 78). Phillip Herring posits: "Isolated by education, temperament, and egotism, Conroy is defeated by forces that conspire against him, and his ultimate awareness of inadequacy as a man" (Leonard 78). Others, like Vincent P. Pecora and Garry Leonard maintain that the conclusion does not concern Gabriel's painful awareness of a truth but depicts his final collapse into fantasy or
delusion. For Pecora, “Gabriel in no way overcomes or transcends the conditions of his existence. Rather, he merely recapitulates them unconsciously in this self-pitying fantasy...Gabriel [sees] “mystical” union with all humanity as the only possible escape from the real humiliation of his Dublin life” (Leonard 78). Leonard cites reasons of gender for Gabriel’s closing moments. For Leonard, “The Dead” is preeminently a story of Gabriel’s failure “to confirm the fictional unity of his masculine subjectivity”; thus, Gabriel’s subjectivity dissolves when he realizes that Gretta will not authenticate that “something” in his voice that “connects him to his belief in the Woman and his own phallic function” (Leonard 307). So, while Gabriel sees “[Gretta] for the first time as a woman and not the Woman”, the price he pays for “this privileged glimpse into the Real is that the falsity of his subjective consciousness, and all its myriad deceptions, attacks him at once and divorces him from his own reflection” (Leonard 307).  

Significantly, while Leonard admits that Gabriel gains a glimpse of the Real, he does not perceive that Gabriel experiences an epiphany. Simply, Gabriel’s final moments before falling asleep in the story serve as another instance of subjective delusion.

Once again, Leonard is important to my case. Although he articulates his position in terms of Lacanian psychoanalysis, his interpretation of the ending of “The Dead” is almost diametrically opposed to mine. In nearly all of his readings of *Dubliners* in *Reading Dubliners Again: A Lacanian Perspective*, Leonard starts with the Lacanian premise that “the Woman” is a symptom of man, and concludes by demonstrating how male subjects such as Gabriel struggle to maintain their masculine identity in the face of real women who threaten their image of “the Woman” (and on which their masculine

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32 Seen this way, Gabriel’s epiphany (although Leonard does not mention the epiphany in his essay on “The Dead”) is pyrrhic: while he does not seem consigned to psychosis, dispelled into the psychotic of the Real, he does appear to reside at the level of *jouissance*. 


identity depends). Leonard elaborates, "The Woman is a symptom that the man believes in order to keep at bay the fragmentary, non-identificatory, premirror phase that permanently undermines his subjective consciousness" (298). While I do not dispute this dynamic, Lacan's model of subjectivity or Lacan's view on gender, there is more to Joyce's stories than the antagonism between gender and identity. Certainly, at first glance, Gabriel's primary struggle seems to be between him and the female characters: first Lily, then Miss Ivors, and lastly Gretta. Each serves as an instance of "the woman" (not "the Woman") failing to pose as the symptom of "the Woman" and, for this reason, jeopardizing the stability of Gabriel's precarious masculine identity (Leonard 298).

However, while this analysis is satisfactory of Lacan in Leonard's strict sense, it falls short of "The Dead". To see this inadequacy, we need to return to the ambiguity in Leonard's interpretation of the conclusion insofar as, one, he does not specify the exact fate of Gabriel's subjectivity and, two, he disregards the epiphany in his treatment of Gabriel. While he admits that Gabriel undergoes "a dissolution of identity", Leonard does not venture to speculate on the nature of this dissolution beyond a Freudian terminology of "conscious" and "unconscious" (Leonard 298). He remarks merely that Gabriel drifts "in the gap of his desire", somewhere between "the lumberroom of the unconscious and...subjective consciousness," an ambiguity that prevents him from realizing the full purpose of the epiphany in Joyce's writing (Leonard 308). Accordingly, Leonard fails to explain if Gabriel's subjectivity actually sustains itself in the symbolic order, or if, given the unraveling of his subjectivity, it is sustained by the realm of jouissance, or even if it falls past both orders into the psychotic void of the real.

Leonard's explanation is imprecise, a problem that leads him to overlook the central
function of the epiphany in Joyce’s writing, and, by extension, the real conflict in “The Dead.”

*Gabriel’s Neurosis*

The proper direction towards understanding this conflict in “The Dead” resides in the complex substance of Gabriel’s anxiety. Upon scrutiny, Gabriel’s anxiety reveals itself as a psychic response that exceeds the two central motives ascribed to him by Leonard. It exceeds on the one hand the motivation to “confirm the fictional unity of this masculine subjectivity,” while on the other hand to confirm his existence by seducing the Other into “authenticating it for him” (Leonard 298). The anxiety over his after-dinner speech, the anxiety he suffers when he is “discomposed by [Lily’s] bitter and sudden retort” expresses more than a subject whose only aspiration is to forestall threats to his subjectivity, or seduce the Other (played in this case by the audience at the party) into believing his illusory self-image (*Dubliners* 289). In short, Gabriel’s worry involves itself precisely with this predicament. Gabriel, at a certain level, already knows that his anxiety -- an effect of his precarious dependency on others -- is problematic. There is a self-critical bent in Gabriel’s temperament; a quality that exposes the fact that Gabriel is a highly neurotic individual. Gabriel not only responds like a masculine subject as noted by Leonard, but he responds like a neurotic subject. To be sure, Gabriel obeys and fears the symbolic order – and yet there is an additional and distinctly plaintive quality about Gabriel’s worry. He worries about the role assigned to himself but, more fundamentally, he agonizes over why he accepted this assignment in the first place: why has the job of dinner speech been assigned to him? Why must he be forced to uphold his masculine
subjectivity? This complaining aspect, or inner voice of protest, betrays a mode of resistance in Gabriel not registered by Leonard’s analysis. Gabriel, in his own self-reproachful drive, struggles against the Symbolic Order. Indeed, this struggle is most pronounced when directed at himself: as a neurotic, Gabriel interrogates the Big Other’s lack but he also interrogates his own lack, an inclination overlooked by most politically oriented commentaries on pathology that characterize the neurotic as conservative in outlook. Gabriel strives not only to sustain the self in the face of the Other; paradoxically, he also strives to undo himself in the face of the Other.

The most striking example of this motivation occurs just before his dinner speech. Contemplating his speech, Gabriel confides miserably to himself: “he would fail with them just as he had a failed with the girl in the pantry. His whole speech was a mistake from first to last, an utter failure” (Dubliners 179). The first detail that stands out is that Gabriel overreacts to his situation. Gabriel’s thinking is irrational: how does his “failed” dinner speech connect to his failure in the pantry with Lily? Furthermore, what warrants the hyperbole that Gabriel’s whole speech “was a mistake from first to last” before he has even presented it? Can a dinner speech, however poorly written, be that bad? For Leonard, the motivation for Gabriel’s overreaction is hypocritical and self-serving. He maintains that “Gabriel is an uneasy man because he has successfully marketed himself as one who knows everything he needs to know...[but] what he knows is meaningless and serves only to keep him ignorant about the fragmentary nature of his subjective consciousness” (Leonard 291). However, since my argument is that Gabriel demonstrates an awareness of the difference between who he is and how others perceive him, Gabriel not only dreads being “caught out” in his hypocritical self-marketing but also, more
deeply, loathes himself in this very hypocrisy. Gabriel's self-reproach is wholly condemning.

Such is the extent of Gabriel’s pathos, a pathos that exceeds Leonard’s purview. For this reason, it is not enough to blame the Big Other for Gabriel’s anxiety and self-regard. Gabriel poses an equal -- if not greater -- threat to himself. In this respect, Gabriel’s pathos is darker and more volatile then Leonard recognizes. For example, think about Gabriel’s thoughts before he and Gretta go to bed. Lusting after Gretta, Gabriel deliberates on ways to seduce her and, failing in his first attempt at seducing her -- already “trembling with annoyance” because he feels rejected by her tired indifference -- momentarily considers, “to take her as she was would be brutal” (Schwartz 218).

Disturbingly, Gabriel intimates raping Gretta: has he taken her “as she was” before? My point here is not to depict Gabriel as necessarily a violent and brutal man (he does, if nothing else, recognize the brutality of his thought); nor is it to valorize Gabriel’s disposition; rather, it is to highlight that Gabriel’s instability is indicative of a subject who is not merely reacting to circumstances. Despite his surface thoughts, Gabriel is a subject who is largely out of control, an unsteadiness that is a function of his attitude towards the Symbolic Order and not a function of the Symbolic Order. His volatility, therefore, precisely because of its destructive bent, is the condition that enables Gabriel to overcome the demands of the Symbolic Order in the end; it bypasses the symbolic order’s regulatory function, destroying his perverse attachments to ideologically upheld jouissance.
Opposing the Other

Joyce’s intimation of rape encapsulates the tension between acting towards the symbolic order, and acting as a function of the symbolic order. What immediately stands out in Gabriel’s gesture towards rape is that, while initially jarring, it is vague and fleeting. Gabriel touches upon it briefly, only to immediately reject it. Such evasiveness is telling, because it reveals the difference between a rape fantasy and a real potential to commit rape. Actual rape, it must be recognized, constitutes an eminently psychotic act because it entails a complete rejection of all relations to the Other. Entailing a foreclosure of the symbolic, rape is the epitome of the subject’s taking a direct “shortcut” to jouissance. While Gabriel treads the line between these two options (for reasons unique to him), in the end, Gabriel represents a neurotic who fantasizes about rape in spite of himself, a fantasy he successfully represses in the last instance. From this vantage-point, Gabriel’s gesture towards rape is symptomatic of the fact that he could not rape Gretta: he only fantasizes he could because, in the end, he could not. As Lacan reminds us, “neurotics simply dream of being perverts, which is quite natural, for how else could they attain their partner?” (The Seminars: Book XX 87). Fantasies of rape are just one more way for Gabriel to shore up his failing illusion of masculinity by convincing himself, pathetically, that he could, if he wanted to, overpower Gretta. On the other hand, I nevertheless maintain that Gabriel still poses a threat to Gretta in that his singular psychical trait is to successfully oppose the injunctions of the Other. The difference is that, if Gabriel had leapt into the psychotic void to commit rape, the irony would be that he would be doing it not to satisfy his jouissance (as would a pervert, who, theoretically, could knowingly rape an individual) but simply to spite the Other. Gabriel,
being reduced to psychosis, would not even "know" what he is doing, an act that would reduce his action to a blind discharge of violence. From a legal standpoint, such an act would constitute an act of insanity, before it would constitute an act of rape.

So, without minimizing the seriousness of this threat, the important point is that Gabriel's gesture remains consistent with his capacity to oppose the symbolic order instead of reacting to the demands of the symbolic order. Of course, if Joyce had concluded "The Dead" with Gabriel actually raping Gretta, the story would have taken an immeasurably different turn. Gabriel would not have experienced a successful epiphany and the story's point of view would, most likely, have been altered. Much like Eveline or Farrington in "Counterparts", Gabriel's subjectivity would have been erased at the conclusion of the story.

Overall, "The Dead" presents four possibilities for Gabriel. First, if Gabriel in the end suddenly raped or tried to rape Gretta, we would be forced to concede that Gabriel had the potential to commit rape. Gabriel would appear to us as a psychotic with little or no redeeming value. Secondly, if Joyce depicted Gabriel consciously enjoying his fantasies of rape we would know that Gabriel's subjectivity had succumbed to perversion. Smeared with the obscenity of jouissance, Gabriel would become a distasteful fellow who consciously gets off on fantasies about rape. Third, since Gabriel does manage to repress his rape fantasy, as demonstrated by its veiled, distorted articulation and his repugnance to its brutality, Gabriel proves he is neither psychotic nor perverse. Gabriel "knows" the difference between fantasy and the reality of the symbolic order (T.D. 218). Finally, fourth, Gabriel's attitude exceeds even this possibility. Gabriel's hysterical ambiguity, his brief letting slip of this fantasy, must be seen as
Gabriel’s paradoxical way of not only repressing the Other (still a reaction to the lack of the Other) but as constituting the neurotic’s questioning response to the question of the Other, a gesture that contains within it two meanings. On the one hand, Gabriel’s reaction to the Big Other takes the shape of, “why do you make me fantasize about rape, when you yourself say it is wrong?” Such a response is typical to the neurotic. On the other hand, Gabriel’s gesture towards rape also functions as a counter threat to the Other. His threat of rape is done, paradoxically, to oppose rape, to oppose the Big Other’s compulsion to make him fantasize of rape. We may express it thus: “do you understand that I really might reject you Big Other by committing the very psychotic act you want me to take? Do you realize I will not only oppose your ‘laws’ forbidding rape, but also, in doing so, scandalously expose how your very laws create the desire for rape?” In this sense, Gabriel’s threat of rape is not used to threaten Greta, nor to satisfy the Other’s jouissance but to “harm” the symbolic itself.

It is helpful to compare Gabriel with Farrington from “Counterparts”. The difference between Gabriel’s neurotic questioning and Farrington’s perverse subsumption to ideological surplus-jouissance is the difference between acting towards the symbolic order and acting as a function of the symbolic order. Unlike Gabriel, Farrington is a function of the symbolic order. Being thoroughly perverse, Farrington does not contemplate his desiring behaviour in either its moral or symbolic significance. With regards to his alcoholism, for example, the struggle concerns not whether he should or should not drink, but whether he has enough money to continue drinking. Farrington is not a struggling alcoholic: he is an alcoholic. He is a subject who enlists all reason and morality in the service of pleasure and, not surprisingly, is exemplary of the subject of
perversion. All principled thought is obscenely made to serve desire, and not vice versa. Farrington, unlike Gabriel, would not hesitate in committing an act of rape, a psychotic act that approximates the “insane” beating he gives his son. What is most frightening about Farrington’s behaviour, however, is the sheer fragility of Farrington’s subjectivity; namely, the comparative ease with which he rejects the symbolic order and commits a psychotic act. The explanation for this utter inability to resist temptation is that Farrington’s weakness derives not merely from his perverse attachments to *jouissance*, but also from a symbolic order whose efficiency is, tragically, already in decline. To this end, it must be realized that Farrington’s removal from the symbolic is *not* the same as Gabriel’s willful act of opposing the symbolic order. Farrington’s ease of transition into psychosis derives from the (decline of the) symbolic order, whereas Gabriel -- although he too leaps out and opposes the symbolic order -- does so only so that he may re-enter it on his own symbolic terms. Unlike Farrington, Gabriel bolsters and renews the symbolic order.\(^{33}\)

*Perversion and “The Dead”*

Having argued that Gabriel is neurotic, it remains to be demonstrated that Gabriel resides in a context that privileges perversion. To argue the effect of perversion in “The

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\(^{33}\) Farrington is enslaved to an even more insidious mode of subjection than *jouissance*. I mention it because this type of subjection lucidly illustrates the difference between *jouissance*, and the ideological surplus-*jouissance* of capital. Farrington’s behaviour is perverse not only in a symbolic sense, but also in an ideally or an “objective” sense. Farrington is subjected to an ideologically perverse Other who controls subjects *not* via the path of the signifier, but through wielding *jouissance* directly. We see this process in the series of taverns frequented by Farrington. Unable to comprehend the symbolic worth of subjects, the taverns in “Counterparts” function very much like Deleuzian “desiring-machines” into which Farrington’s alcoholism “plugs in,” *jouissance* being synonymous with the materiality of chemicals ingested directly (Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Psychoanalysis 286-7). Ultimately, however, in the final act of beating his son, Farrington is not a futuristic embodiment of an ever changing and schizoid “subject” irreducible to the past. Farrington, like Eveline’s father, merely represents a pathetic return to the status of a pre-symbolic father immersed in *jouissance* who still competes with his sons.
Dead”, I will address two critical scenarios: the Morkans’ party and Gabriel’s relation towards women. First of all, it must be understood that the Morkans’ party is eminently neurotic. Thus the Morkans’ party stands for the tentative *status quo* or the “normal” functioning of Symbolic Order; accordingly, the dominant defense formation taken by the subjects at the party is repression. (We must recall my distinction in CHAPTER ONE when discussing Burns, between the neurosis of tradition and the perversity of modernity, the latter expressed in such things as capitalism, the church, etc.). As Leonard recognizes, the Morkans’ party and Gabriel’s after-dinner speech emphasize tradition, continuity, stability, clarity, and a comprehensible universe. Within this setting, individuals attempt to rule over their personal worlds of identity confusion, shifting modes of subjectivity, and unpredictable suspensions of conscious thought. The price of all this superficial order is that the Morkan sisters and their guests, in attempting to rule everything that is present, are ruled by everything that is absent. (Leonard 291)

By attempting to “rule over their personal worlds”, the attendees repress the “truth of their desire” (Leonard 291). In place of this truth, the people at the party opt for conversation that is “compulsively banal...because what they wish to say is so alarming” and here we catch a glimpse of the more commonly known side of subjects who are neurotic: neurotics are considered to be conservative in their relation to the *status quo* (Leonard 291). They repress either desires that run contrary to the demands of the Symbolic Order, or knowledge that depicts them in an unfavourable light. Typically, neurotics are regarded as personality types that avoid change, while the perverse subject is conceived as transgressive of the *status quo*; the pervert penetrates to the truth of desire. But what is the truth of desire in “The Dead”? We are afforded insights to such a truth throughout “The Dead”. As Leonard observes, we see the truth of desire in Gabriel’s panicky reaction to Lily’s bitter retort concerning “the men nowadays” (“The
Dead” 292). We see it in Gabriel’s bitter retort to Gretta about a possible trip to the west of Ireland (Leonard 292).

And still, despite these examples, Leonard’s account again falls short. While his observations are accurate, he does go not far enough in elaborating upon such moments. He overlooks fleeting yet critical expressions of desire that are qualitatively different from the ones he provides. One such oversight is Aunt Kate’s speech about the Catholic Church’s replacement of women with boys in the choir. Aunt Kate’s speech is notable because, unlike Leonard’s examples, the desire that erupts from her concerns not only a subject (Aunt Kate herself), or a relation between subjects, but between a subject and an institution (Aunt Kate and the Church). This is important as it opens the way to seeing how the individuals at the Morkans’ party represent neurotics besieged in a context that is perverse. While Aunt Kate’s eruption constitutes an example of a subject’s repressed desire interrupting the narrative of tradition carefully crafted at the party (a narrative which Aunt Kate undoubtedly also desires), she, nevertheless, betrays an eminently perverse mode of desire that exceeds her own neurotic desire.

There are four steps to be made: first, there is the party. As a testament to tradition, the order of desire is eminently neurotic; the partygoers meet, conservatively, to support this makeshift symbolic order. Second, Aunt Kate blurts out in anger the truth of her desire, threatening in spite of herself to disrupt the atmosphere of respectability and stability attending her party. This constitutes another particular expression of desire, a desire I also label as neurotic, because of its eruptive interrogating quality. Thirdly, at the same time, it is not just the truth of her desire or “an Other” that she is speaking, but the truth of an institution, an underling detail that is critical for my present elaboration of
ideology. For this reason, and fourthly, and we may infer within her heated moment the hidden functioning of a perverse mode of desire revealed by the disavowing stance in her argumentation.

There are two instances of disavowal articulated in Aunt Kate’s speech. The first appears when Aunt Kate exclaims,

I know all about the honour of God, Mary Jane, but I think it’s not at all honourable for the pope to turn out the women out of the choirs that have slaved there all their lives and put little whippersnappers of boys over their heads. I suppose it is for the good of the Church if the pope does it. But it’s not just, Mary Jane, and it’s not right. (my italics; Dubliners 36)

On the surface, the italicized statement appears consistent with Aunt Kate’s overall critique of the Church. Essentially, she contrasts the honour of God with the dishonour or self-interest of the Church and by adding “I suppose it is for the good of the Church” she continues to imply the Church’s behaviour is immoral and damaging. The Church has enacted its decree for its own selfish reasons. Yet there is another way to interpret this sentence: namely, that Aunt Kate does not intend her statement in a disapproving or sarcastic sense. Rather, despite her heated emotion and keen sense of injustice, she momentarily and unintentionally falters in her speech, thus blunting the whole thrust of her complaint with the afterthought, “I suppose it is for the good of the Church” (Dubliners 36). Read this way, Aunt Kate’s statement is to be taken literally. She implies that the Church does creates something good with its decree, her rationale becoming, effectively, “while what the pope did was dishonourable, at least his actions were good for the Church.” Her logic regarding the Church is not only contradictory, but contradictory in the sense that she disavows her disparate claims: her implicit rationale becomes, “I know what the Church did was bad, but I will at least continue to say it was
good”; even more distortedly, “while I know I am saying the Church is bad, I will continue to say that it is good.”

Further evidence of perversion unveils itself shortly after her initial outburst. When Aunt Kate turns to Mr. Browne to ameliorate the potential scandal of her words, prompted by Mary Jane, she states “O, I don’t question the pope’s being right. I’m only a stupid old woman and I wouldn’t presume to do such a thing” (Dubliners 37). While the content of Aunt Kate’s statements can be interpreted in a number of different ways, a proper understanding of Aunt Kate’s tone of voice is critical: how sarcastic or ironic is Aunt Kate? How sincere? In this instance, the reader should not only take her words sincerely, but also realize that Aunt Kate takes her words quite literally. Most of what Aunt Kate says is sincere such that, although the statement “I am a stupid woman” hardly means Aunt Kate in fact believes she is stupid, it can not be dismissed as rhetorical flourish. On the surface, certainly, her hyperbole is intentionally self-effacing in the presence of the partygoers; at a deeper level, however, the reader still understands that Aunt Kate is relatively uneducated, that she knows she is uneducated and, therefore, in this very self-understanding, represents an individual who is unlikely to seriously contest authority. Hence, too, the more basic attitude of humility in her statement: she would never presume to question the pope’s authority, a presumption in keeping with her awareness that she is uneducated and a poor old woman. Her pretense at contesting the Pope’s authority is impotent bluster, therefore, and Aunt Kate presents to us a series of contradictory emotions and thoughts that take a form of contradiction called disavowal, even though it must also be recognized that Aunt Kate does not consciously intend to reveal this underlying attitude (instead, it is betrayed by her words). That it, she does not
weigh both sides of the issue and then decide to disavow certain priorities over others: on the contrary, the presence of perversion surfaces suddenly and without warning in the midst of Aunt Kate’s hysteric anger at the Church.

So, embedded at the heart of Aunt Kate’s desire, we see another desire at work. We see a perverse mode of desire functioning within an otherwise neurotic subject. While Aunt Kate is clearly hysterical, symbolically (her outburst is an hysterical outburst), her ideological significance renders her perverse. Indeed, not surprisingly, Aunt Kate’s inner desire is undermined when the church is discussed, reflecting how the church is itself perverse and how this perversity manifests itself within its worshippers.34 Finally, given that Aunt Kate’s desire originates with the Church, we may extrapolate that what is at work in subjects such as Aunt Kate is ideological surplus-*jouissance*. Not only are her thoughts deceived, but more fundamentally, her emotions are deceived, and in this sense the Church functions like the Araby bazaar. Each determines the subject at the level of his or her desire, a point of congruence between the market and the Church that Joyce parallels directly in “Araby” when the boy recognizes in the bazaar “a silence like that which pervades a church after a service” (26).

As a result, Leonard is only partly correct in saying that the definitive pathological stance at the party is repression. From Leonard’s perspective, the impression is left that the members of the party need only, ideally, articulate their innermost desires to begin to solve their problems. While such a possibility is at best tenuous, it is untrue that repression is the definitive pathological stance at the party. As seen in the case of Aunt Kate’s outburst, there exists a more insidious pathological

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34 For a detailed rendering of the relation between perversion and the Church, see Žižek’s *The Puppet and the Dwarf*. 
presence circulating at the party, one resilient to the possibilities of opposing repression through speech. "The Dead" portrays the opposite scenario -- one where the articulation of desires itself signifies one's repression. Aunt Kate's utterance does not evince liberation, but is symptomatic of an ideological form already at work inside her psyche, one that has already taken into account the mechanism of repression in fantasy formation. Not only does this have the effect of sapping Aunt Kate's conviction and emotional thrust of her argument, but it alerts us to how ideology can distort even the most foundational premises of psychoanalysis: the necessity of speech for consciousness. Certainly, Aunt Kate continues to be ruled or dominated by "an Other's desire", except in this case such an Other is **not** the Symbolic Order (as already noted, our present analysis has already accounted for the Symbolic Order, which **was** successfully "pushed aside" by Aunt Kate's overwhelming emotional ejaculation). Instead, such an "Other" or manifestation of desire must be located elsewhere, in an Other that is **not** a subject or an Other and resides beyond the formal constraints of the Symbolic Order in **jouissance**. In short, we must look in the form of her thought, but in the very substance of her desire, within her **jouissance**. Aunt Kate's words are undermined by an ideologically inscribed desire, the surplus-**jouissance** of ideological interpellation. Here, Aunt Kate is much like Eveline: we see a perverse mode of **jouissance** effectively undermining a neurotic subject's capacity to transgress and exploit the lack in the Symbolic Order.

*Success At Last: Gabriel's Epiphany*

Posing as the Other, institutions such as the church and the market are also responsible for the production of **jouissance** directly. As Žižek recognizes, one of
Lacan's definitions of *jouissance* is synonymous with ideology: each bypasses the Symbolic Order to serve only itself (*The Sublime Object of Ideology* 84). In "The Dead", there is a crucial difference between the orthodox phallic order as represented by the party, and the form of patriarchal authority exercised by the Church. The dead not only rule the party guests (they are ruled by the symbolic order) but ideological forces outside their conscious purview equally rule them. Thus there exists an additional political variable not properly registered by Leonard's analysis of Gabriel: Gabriel, like Aunt Kate, is also "infected" by perversion, an ideological indoctrination we see in his treatment of women. While the contrast between Gabriel's neurosis and perverse behaviour may be discerned in all three of his encounters with women (Lily, Miss Ivors, and Gretta), his confrontation with Gretta is the most revealing because it is here that his perverse attachment to the objectification of women is confronted and overcome.

There are two key distinctions to be made. On the one hand, Leonard correctly observes that neurotics such as Gabriel bear an image of the Woman, a point basic to Lacan. On the other hand, Leonard falsely asserts that the concluding dynamic between Gretta and Gabriel consists of Gabriel "[seeing] her for the first time as a woman and not the Woman" (Leonard 307). What dissolves is *not* Gabriel's image of the Woman but Gabriel's perverse, idolatrous image of women; or, more precisely, Gabriel struggles with this very ambiguity: between his perversely acquired assumptions regarding women, and his underlying image of the Woman. Gabriel struggles with an internalized notion of women that fetishizes them, that perceives them as objects, while his more fundamental neurotic propensity renders them as the Woman. This distinction is subtle but crucial to understanding Gabriel's epiphany. For example, when Gabriel sees Gretta on the
staircase and asks, “what is a woman a symbol of?” Gabriel does not merely indulge in his idealized image of the Woman. On the contrary, by placing Gretta on a metaphorical pedestal, Gabriel idolizes a fetishized instance of “a woman”. He worships her in her particularity (like an idol) as opposed to her ostensibly universal symbolization as “the Women” (like a symbol), the typical fantasy of the neurotic. The difference between what Gabriel does and says is key here. If Gabriel were truly evoking the image of “Woman”, he would not self-consciously address what he is doing in such a way (this would be repressed). Neurotics directly symbolize things; they do not contemplate knowingly what things symbolize. Against this background, Gabriel’s statement “what is a woman a symbol of?” serves as an instance of Gabriel being caught in the logic of disavowal: Gabriel knows that a woman is not a symbol of anything, yet he symbolizes her anyway. Not surprisingly, it is around this time that Gabriel begins to lust after Gretta, to follow a perverse strand of desire towards his wife. Of course, what also must be recognized is the interrogative vehicle that facilitates this disavowal, as it alerts us to Gabriel’s persistent struggle to translate a perverse notion of women into a neurotic one. He asks what is a woman a symbol of? Gabriel’s view of Gretta on the staircase is conflicting, therefore, epitomizing his perverse attitude towards women on the surface, while performing the more typically neurotic practice of interrogating the symbolic order. Instead of assuming an ideological understanding of woman -- as he does with Lily and Miss Ivors -- Gabriel at least speculates about the meaning of Gretta and her significance to him.

In the end, Gabriel successfully overcomes his perverse attitude to women.

Indeed, Gabriel is successful precisely in that he achieves the opposite of what Leonard
deems as problematic with Gabriel: Gabriel’s epiphany is successful because he realizes his image of “the Woman” which he had previously lost, and not vice-versa.\(^{35}\) Similarly, Gabriel experiences an encounter with the real, although his encounter does not occur at the end when Gabriel’s soul swoons (as Leonard contends). Instead, Gabriel’s epiphany occurs when he discovers that Gretta loved Michael Furey, when Gretta states “I think he died for me” whereupon “a vague terror seize[s] Gabriel” (221). In the face of forces (the impending real) gathering against him in his “vague world,” “[Gabriel] shook himself free of it with an effort of reason and continued to caress her hand” (222). Within this condensed moment, Gabriel’s subjectivity critically drops out of the Symbolic Order and yet quickly returns, allowing Gabriel a new sense of life and enlightenment. Gabriel comprehends what has happened to him – that Gretta loved someone else more than him -- and accepts the significance of this event, including the fact that he himself never loved someone in that passionate way. Gabriel accepts his new position in the symbolic order unveiled to him by Gretta, and, while not begrudging Gretta this advantage, perceives at the same time that love is a necessary fiction for understanding reality. We are apt to recall Abrams’ basic definition of the literary epiphany: an epiphany is “the description... of the sudden flare into revelation of an ordinary object or scene” (Abrams 26). With the revelation of Gretta’s love, Gabriel learns that love as such ex-ists (meaning that, in fictional form, love must exist). He realizes that “[Gretta] had had that romance in her life: a man in her life had died for her sake”; at the same time, he realizes that “he had never felt like that himself towards any woman but he knew that such a feeling must be

\(^{35}\) As for Leonard’s elicitation of ‘the real woman’ this, seemingly, bears no part in the story. Indeed, I suggest that notions of the real woman are themselves ideological images \textit{par excellence}: we must ask “when is there an identity such as “the woman” existent outside the Symbolic Order?” -- a question that points to the possibility that perhaps the ‘the woman’ in its common sense usage \textit{is} a perverse image of the woman.
love" (*Dubliners* 59). In contrast with the boy in "Araby", Gabriel learns something about himself and the world.

"The Dead" possesses not just a positive ending in the sense of enlightenment, but also a positive ending in the sense that Gabriel overcomes a moral test. By test, I mean Gabriel overcomes the difficult challenge of accepting a form of knowledge whose attainment depends precisely on his humiliation. The questions raised during Gabriel’s epiphany are: will he take Gretta’s word as sincere? Or, will he interpret it as a threat to his masculine ego, becoming even more estranged from his wife? Gabriel’s achievement is easy to overlook unless we emphasize that Gabriel willingly *admits* he never experienced such a love (*Dubliners* 59). Gabriel’s self-willed rejection of his own personal ego is the condition for his re-entry into the symbolic order; and the outcome is that Gabriel’s seemingly naïve acceptance of a romantic love story is not the condition that undermines Gabriel’s insight, but its very condition. He gains an understanding of love by acknowledging to himself that he never experienced “that kind of love” (*Dubliners* 59). Gabriel’s acquired knowledge is not mistaken or ironic, but the productive result of Gabriel’s return to an alternative point in the symbolic order; from this perspective, his humiliation is synonymous with the liquidation of perversely instilled ideological surplus-*jouissance* in Gabriel. To be sure, in appealing to the cliché of ‘true love’ Joyce’s love narrative is pure fantasy, yet it is a fantasy only in the strictly realist sense of the word. Outside of realism, to accuse Gabriel of gullibility is hardly a criticism. It blemishes neither Gabriel’s character, the meaningfulness of his experiences nor his powers of perception. Quite the opposite, Gabriel’s point of view is well grounded in truth, precisely to the extent that he exposes the paradoxical truth that truth depends on
fiction. To rebuke Gabriel for capitulating to a fictional notion such as love is mistaken, not because what this claim says is untrue, but because it misunderstands what fiction in the first place is. The lesson to be learned from "The Dead" is that fiction -- like the homeostatic function of Freud's pleasure principle -- bears the potential to stave off the suffocating influence of jouissance, an invaluable quality in today's world saturated by ideological surplus-jouissance (Dubliners 59). The upshot is that Gabriel overcomes his perverse lust for Gretta and forgoes his jouissance -- the injunction to enjoy — for the necessary albeit fictional identity of love.

Consequently, the moment when Gabriel's soul swoons refers not to his epiphany. On the contrary, Gabriel's soul swoons when the perverse chains of ideology have finally been dropped, allowing Gabriel a positive vision of the future, a moment where he can decide that it "had come for him to set out on his journey westward" (225). Thus the view that Gabriel's subjectivity unravels at the end of "The Dead" is misleading. What dies is merely the self that we, the reader, perceive from our already assumed perspective of ideology. Joyce describes that Gabriel leaves Dublin and the reader alike to go westward, a significant detail because, contrary to Joyce's personal preference in associating Ireland with its European heritage rather than its Celtic one, "The Dead" portrays Celtic Ireland as positive. It sides Gabriel roughly with the views of Yeats and the Celtic revivalists. The explanation for this counterintuitive ending is that it serves as Gabriel and Joyce's implicit rejection of the perverse fetishes of Church, marketplace and modernity. It is a rejection of modernity's trendiness and fetishistic "galoshes," all the other capitalistic indicators that mark its presence in Ireland and Europe (Dubliners 176).
CONCLUSION

The central aim of my thesis has been to demonstrate that Joyce’s writing, “successfully hystericonizes the perverse subject of late capitalist market relations” (*The Ticklish Subject* 248). As shown in my readings of “Eveline”, and “Araby” and “Eveline”, Joyce’s *Dubliners* stands as Joyce’s opening salvo into the political yet unconscious struggle to hystericonize the perverse subject of capitalism. Indeed, like a soldier who continues to hold the high ground, *Dubliners* persistently invokes hysteria in the perverse subject of capitalism. Joyce’s affective quality has not diminished over time; his writing’s anxiety, intensity and radicality remain palpable. For this reason, Joyce’s writing not only continues to shed considerable light on the little known terrain between ideology and pathology, but exposes the fact that the relation between ideology and the modern subject has, structurally, remained the same: perverse. Capitalism has not “progressed” through history; on the contrary, Joyce’s writing “speaks to us” precisely because we continue to disavow capitalism’s increasingly rapacious and perverse destruction. The modern subject’s fascination with the *jouissance* of the Other has not solved the problems of “History” but only deferred indefinitely their return, a return augured by the Joycean epiphany.

Attempting to stay sensitive to this correspondence between Joyce and the contemporary subject, my thesis has proposed the following: one, that Joyce’s writing is neurotic in structure; two, Joyce’s writing depicts neurotic characters struggling in a social, cultural and political context that privileges the perverse; and, three, Joyce locates the source of this ongoing privilege in capitalist ideology. Pathology is central to these objectives as it exposes how capitalism privileges and undermines the subject of
perversion while revealing the grounds on which Joyce resists this privilege. Capitalism privileges perversion through a manipulation of surplus-
jouissance. At the same time, Joyce resists this perversion via the neurotic capacity for anxiously transgressing bonds of jouissance, and the primary vehicle for this resistance is the literary epiphany. In Dubliners, the epiphany is symptomatic of the struggle between the subject of neurosis and the subject of perversion. Drawing from Lacan’s own articulation of the Joycean epiphany, therefore, my thesis elucidates how an epiphany is not just an existential, psychical or aesthetic phenomenon but also a political phenomenon, a facet strikingly revealed in “Eveline”. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, Eveline’s subjectivity is liquidated wholesale by her failed epiphany, by a perverse jouissance derivative of not any psychical anomaly, but ideology. Eveline’s ideologically cultivated surplus-jouissance, facilitated through her father, ultimately usurps and rejects her symbolic self.

Ideology is a notion that both mimics and is alien to the symbolic order. As seen in “Eveline”, ideology bears the capacity “to take the form of thought while not being thought” (The Sublime Object of Ideology 19). At the same time, while ideology and the symbolic order are excluded from each other, they nevertheless reside, simultaneously, in the subject. This combined quality is especially evinced in “Araby” whose point of view reflects a neurotic forced to see the world through the “cracked lens” of perversion. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, the crux of “Araby” is that, while the subject remains intact, the power dynamic between jouissance and the symbolic order is irreparably reversed. The boy’s failed epiphany compels him to exchange a neurotic image of a Woman for a perverse one because of an excess of ideological surplus-jouissance (which he misrecognizes as vanity). The boy’s perverse understanding of women ultimately
vanquishes his earlier, neurotic image of the Woman due to the Araby bazaar’s ability to mimic the symbolic order.

Finally, by registering how ideology and the symbolic order constitute discrepant orders within the subject, my last chapter illustrates how Joyce’s writing itself struggles with the perverse influence of capitalist ideology on the subject. This impetus is most evident in “The Dead”. “The Dead” reveals Joyce’s tacit awareness that pathology as such is not the problem, but a particular ideological manifestation of pathology is the problem. In fact, Joyce’s writing uses pathology to oppose an already existing pathological privilege fostered by capitalism. For, just as ideology fools subjects such as the boy in “Araby” into thinking it constitutes the symbolic order, Joyce’s writing employs pathology to fool the subject of perversion into thinking he or she can satisfy Joyce’s desire, a scenario played out in “The Dead”. Gabriel exemplifies an interpellated subject who undergoes Joyce’s strategy of fostering anxiety. Prior to his epiphany, Gabriel poses as a subject who believes he can satisfy the desire of the Other; thus with Gretta, Gabriel wants to “see some ardour in her eyes first. He longed to be master of her strange mood” (Dubliners 218). Gabriel desires to see Gretta’s desire and, in this way, control her. Yet Joyce quickly extinguishes this fantasy. Gretta’s confession that she was not thinking of Gabriel but of Furey, forces Gabriel to abandon his perverse fantasy and to resituate himself in relation to the Other. Gabriel is reminded that jouissance can not satisfy a subject unless he or she admits that they are first a subject of the symbolic, a feat he accomplishes by admitting the necessity of love. Joyce’s writing instills anxiety into the Gabriel to oppose the ideology operating behind his perverse regard for women. Via such effects, Joyce’s writing continues to challenge the ideology of capital.
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