particularly for female characters. Eveline's constrained interior environment becomes a metaphor for her internalized patriarchy and her inability to claim agency. This paper explores the narrative through the lens of feminist literary theory, questioning how Joyce's story represents the quest for female space – both literal and metaphorical – in a patriarchal and colonial Dublin.

The study is guided by the research questions; how Joyce's "Eveline" represents the confinement of women within domestic and psychological spaces; what ways does the story problematize the notion of escape and spatial agency for its female protagonist; and how does Joyce utilize spatial metaphors to critique the broader socio-cultural structures of early 20th-century Ireland?

The paper addresses the underexplored spatial dimension of female subjugation in Eveline. While many critics have focused on Joyce's themes of paralysis and epiphany, few have rigorously analysed the spatial dynamics that inform Eveline's entrapment and hesitation. The research thus interrogates the link between gender, domesticity, and spatial politics within a modernist and postcolonial Irish context and protagonist Eveline's awareness and attempt for comfortable female space.

The scholarly assumption supporting this study is that "Eveline" dramatizes the impossibility of a liberated female subjectivity within the confines of patriarchal space. The story suggests that Eveline's indecision and ultimate inertia stem not only from personal fear or psychological weakness but from an internalized spatial conditioning imposed by gendered expectations. Joyce, while critiquing Irish paralysis, simultaneously unveils the limited geographies afforded to women – where escape itself may merely signify a different form of bondage.

This research is justified by the need to deepen our understanding of Joyce's treatment of female consciousness through the lens of spatial confinement. Much scholarly work on Joyce's "Eveline" addresses her fear of change or family obligations but tends to neglect the spatial architecture of the story as symbolic of broader gendered experiences. In a world where spatial agency continues to reflect gender inequities – public vs private, work vs home, urban vs domestic – this reading situates "Eveline" within ongoing feminist debates around mobility, domesticity, and autonomy. Furthermore, considering the global relevance of spatial justice for women, especially in postcolonial and patriarchal contexts, this paper brings Joyce's modernism into conversation with contemporary feminist theory.

Feminism and Spatial Critique as a Theoretical Tool

The paper employs a qualitative literary analysis grounded in feminist literary criticism and spatial theory. It draws primarily on the work of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, Henri Lefebvre's The *Production of Space*, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, and

Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* for the rereading of "Eveline."

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* relates the constructed nature of female roles and confinement. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir argues that female identity is not innate but socially constructed through centuries of patriarchal ideology and cultural conditioning. She famously states, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," highlighting that femininity is imposed upon individuals by society rather than rooted in biology (de Beauvoir 283). De Beauvoir critiques how women are relegated to the role of the "Other" in relation to men, defined not by what they are but by what they lack. This construction confines women to domestic roles, denying them autonomy and freedom. Social institutions such as the family and religion perpetuate this confinement by promoting the ideal of the passive, self-sacrificing woman, thereby reinforcing gender inequality and limiting women's existential potential (de Beauvoir 289).

Similarly, Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*: *The Birth of the Prison* asserts on spatial ordering as a mechanism of control. In *Discipline and Punish*: *The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault reveals how spatial ordering functions as a key mechanism of social control in modern institutions such as prisons, schools, and hospitals. He argues that space is strategically organized to facilitate surveillance, discipline, and the normalization of behavior. The most notable example is the Panopticon, a circular prison design where inmates can be watched at all times without knowing when they are being observed—creating a system of internalized discipline (Foucault 200). This spatial arrangement enables power to operate invisibly and continuously, encouraging individuals to self-regulate their actions. Foucault demonstrates that spatial organization is not neutral but a deliberate tool used by modern power structures to produce obedient, "docile" bodies through constant observation and regulation (Foucault 202).

Further, Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* mentions how space is socially constructed and gendered. In *The Production of Space*: *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Henri Lefebvre argues that space is not merely a physical or geometric container but a social product shaped by power relations, ideology, and cultural practices. He introduces a triadic framework – perceived space (physical and material), conceived space (planned and represented), and lived space (experienced and symbolic)—to demonstrate how space is continuously produced and reproduced through social interactions (Lefebvre, 33). Lefebvre emphasizes that space reflects and reinforces dominant social structures, including gender roles. In patriarchal societies, public spaces are typically associated with masculinity and power, while domestic or private spaces are feminized and linked to confinement and passivity, thereby sustaining gender hierarchies through spatial division (Lefebvre, 121). Thus, space is both a product of social forces and an instrument for maintaining them.

Besides, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* argues on performativity and the reproduction of gender norms. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler challenges the notion of – gender as a fixed, biological identity, arguing instead that gender is performative - constituted through repeated acts, behaviors, and societal expectations. Individuals "perform" gender by enacting roles that align with culturally accepted norms, which, over time, come to appear natural or innate. This process of performativity reinforces and reproduces gender binaries and hierarchies, limiting the space for deviation or resistance. Butler asserts that since gender is not an essence but a stylized repetition of acts, it can be disrupted and redefined, making it a potential site of political resistance and subversion (Butler, 191). By exposing gender as a social construct, *Gender Trouble* opens possibilities for challenging and reshaping rigid gender norms.

Further, Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* argues colonial ideologies within narratives. In Culture and Imperialism, Edward Said explores how literature has historically supported imperial dominance by subtly embedding colonial ideologies within narratives of culture, civilization, and domesticity. He argues that even seemingly apolitical or private stories often reflect the broader dynamics of empire and control, where the domestic space can mirror the logic of colonization (Said 12). In James Joyce's "Eveline," the protagonist's domestic confinement and psychological paralysis parallel Colonized's colonial subjugation – Colonized's struggle for self-determination under Colonizer's rule. Colonized's submission to Colonial authority resonates with how imperial subjects internalize domination, reinforcing Said's view that cultural texts serve as vehicles for imperial power and resistance (Said, 24).

Furthermore, in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf argues that women's creative potential has historically been limited by economic dependence and the lack of private space, both literal and metaphorical. She asserts that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction," highlighting how material conditions shape intellectual freedom and artistic production (Woolf, 1929/2005, p. 4). Woolf's essay challenges patriarchal structures in literature and society by emphasizing that gender inequality is not merely a matter of talent but of systemic restrictions on women's access to education, property, and independence. Her work remains a foundational feminist text, underscoring the connection between gender, space, and creativity.

Moreover, close reading techniques are applied to Joyce's narrative structure, imagery, and characterization to analyze the textual representation of space and gender. The methodology is interpretive, not empirical, and aims to unpack the layered metaphors that govern Eveline's mental and spatial entrapment. the critical analysis paves its way on afore mentioned concepts.

Textual Analysis: Exploring Female Space Through a Narrative

Joyce's "Eveline" analyzed from different theorists like Beauvoir, Foucault, Lefebre, Butler, Said, and Woolf's applicable point of views. Eveline as other, restricted, colonized, and forced, tries for autonomy. The perspectives used to critically examine the story "Eveline" has paved the analysis towards Eveline's search for female space within the complicated and established socio-political patriarchal structure.

In *The Second Se*x, Simone de Beauvoir (2011) argues that women are not born with a predetermined essence but are instead made into "the Other" through patriarchal socialization. This framework is vividly applicable to James Joyce's "Eveline," in which the protagonist's identity is defined almost entirely in relation to others – her father, her deceased mother, her siblings, and her romantic partner, Frank. Eveline is portrayed not as an autonomous agent but as a dutiful daughter bound to inherited roles, mirroring Beauvoir's claim that women's existence is often structured as immanence rather than transcendence. Her inability to leave with Frank at the story's climax reflects the deep internalization of these gendered constraints, showing how societal norms limit women's capacity for self-determination (Beauvoir, 2011; Joyce, 1976).

Beauvoir (2011) also emphasizes the role of economic dependence in sustaining women's subordination, noting that material insecurity often reinforces their acceptance of oppressive roles. Eveline's situation embodies this reality: her low-paying job, lack of savings, and domestic obligations leave her vulnerable to her father's authority. The home, though a site of familiarity, is also the arena where she is overworked, undervalued, and emotionally confined. Joyce's depiction underscores Beauvoir's insight that women's labor—particularly domestic labor – remains invisible yet indispensable, tying them to spaces and duties that hinder liberation. Eveline's fear of the unknown is partly rooted in this economic precarity, reinforcing her decision to stay despite her longing for change (Beauvoir, 2011; Joyce, 1976).

Beauvoir's discussion of women's complicity in perpetuating their subordination is reflected in Eveline's internal struggle. While she resents aspects of her life, she also clings to the stability and identity it provides. This paradox illustrates Beauvoir's (2011) notion that the structures of patriarchy are sustained not only by men but also by women who have been socialized to see conformity as safety.

Eveline's passivity is thus not merely personal weakness but a symptom of what Beauvoir calls "bad faith," a refusal – or inability – to claim freedom in the face of uncertainty. Joyce's story, when read through Beauvoir's lens, becomes not only a portrait of an individual's paralysis but also a critique of the gendered systems that normalize women's self-denial (Beauvoir, 2011; Joyce, 1976).

Likewise, Michel Foucault (1995) argues in *Discipline and Punish* that modern systems of power rely on subtle mechanisms of discipline

that normalize compliance and internalize control. In James Joyce's "Eveline," this framework illuminates the ways Eveline's life is shaped by invisible yet powerful forces that dictate her behavior. The family home operates as a microcosm of the disciplinary society Foucault describes, where authority is maintained not through overt violence alone but through routines, moral codes, and constant observation. Eveline's father embodies the role of disciplinarian, using both verbal intimidation and economic control to limit her choices. These dynamics align with Foucault's view that discipline functions most effectively when individuals begin to police themselves, accepting societal rules as natural (Foucault, 1995; Joyce, 1976).

Foucault's (1995) concept of "docile bodies" further clarifies Eveline's condition. Her life is defined by repetitive tasks—caring for siblings, maintaining the household, and fulfilling duties at work—that structure her body and time into predictable patterns. These routines are not neutral but are tools of discipline that maintain the social order, ensuring that Eveline fulfills her role without questioning its legitimacy. The spatial arrangement of the home, too, functions as a site of control; its walls confine her physically while its social expectations constrain her psychologically. By presenting Eveline's paralysis in the face of escape, Joyce captures the internalized nature of discipline, where leaving the system feels more threatening than remaining within it (Foucault, 1995; Joyce, 1976).

The ending of "Eveline" demonstrates what Foucault identifies as the triumph of disciplinary power: the transformation of external authority into an internalized moral law. Standing at the dock, Eveline experiences no physical restriction – Frank does not force her to stay, and no one physically blocks her departure. Instead, it is the internalized voice of duty, shaped by years of discipline from family, church, and societal norms, that holds her back. Foucault (1995) notes that modern power systems succeed when they make resistance seem both futile and morally suspect. Eveline's immobilization thus symbolizes the ultimate success of disciplinary power, where control is exercised not through chains or bars but through the shaping of thought, emotion, and self-perception (Foucault, 1995; Joyce, 1976).

Henri Lefebvre (1991), in addition, argues in *The Production of Space* that space is not an inert backdrop but a social product shaped by cultural norms, political structures, and power relations. In James Joyce's "Eveline," this theoretical lens reveals how the domestic sphere functions as a socially constructed environment that both defines and confines the protagonist's life. Eveline's home is more than a physical dwelling; it is a representational space infused with the expectations of filial duty, religious morality, and gender roles. The rooms she inhabits carry the weight of memory—her mother's illness, her father's authority, and her own repetitive chores—all of which contribute to the reproduction of a space that limits her autonomy. This reflects Lefebvre's claim that space embodies and

reinforces social hierarchies (Lefebvre, 1991; Joyce, 1976).

Lefebvre's (1991) distinction between "perceived space" and "lived space" offers further insight into Eveline's dilemma. Perceived space, tied to the routines of everyday life, is evident in Eveline's predictable movements between home, church, and workplace. These spaces are structured for efficiency and social control, ensuring that her role as caregiver and wage earner remains fixed. In contrast, her imagined escape with Frank represents a potential shift toward "lived space," a realm of personal meaning and emotional fulfillment. However, the power of socially produced space – reinforced by familial obligation and moral duty – prevents this transition. The habitual familiarity of her domestic environment exerts a gravitational pull that makes the prospect of leaving feel dangerous and destabilizing (Lefebvre, 1991; Joyce, 1976).

The story's conclusion illustrates Lefebvre's (1991) notion that space is a site of struggle, where the possibility of transformation is often constrained by the persistence of dominant spatial orders. The dock scene embodies a liminal space between the life Eveline knows and the life she could have, yet the symbolic boundaries of home extend into this transitional setting, immobilizing her. This suggests that the production of space is not only about physical arrangements but about the internalized meanings and power dynamics that accompany them. Joyce's depiction of Eveline's paralysis thus emphasizes Lefebvre's insight that space, once socially constructed, exerts a powerful influence over individual behavior, often making departure from entrenched structures nearly impossible (Lefebvre, 1991; Joyce, 1976).

Further, Judith Butler (1990) argues in *Gender Trouble* that gender is not an innate, stable identity but a performative construct—produced and maintained through the repetition of socially sanctioned behaviors. In James Joyce's "Eveline," this theory clarifies how the protagonist's identity as a dutiful daughter and caregiver emerges not from personal choice but from conformity to culturally prescribed feminine roles. Eveline's daily life is structured around acts of care, obedience, and sacrifice, which Butler would interpret as gender performances that solidify her position within a patriarchal order. These performances, repeated over time, make her role appear natural and inevitable, obscuring its socially constructed nature (Butler, 1990; Joyce, 1976).

Butler (1990) also notes that subversion of gender norms is fraught with difficulty because deviation threatens the stability of identity itself. Eveline's plan to leave Ireland with Frank represents a potential break from the feminine script of self-denial, yet it also destabilizes the identity she has internalized. The uncertainty she feels at the dock mirrors Butler's assertion that gender performances gain their authority through repetition; breaking that repetition exposes the fragility of identity and produces fear. Eveline's hesitation thus reflects the tension

between the desire for self-determination and the gravitational pull of normative gender performances reinforced by family, religion, and social expectations (Butler, 1990; Joyce, 1976).

Butler's (1990) concept of performativity helps explain Eveline's paralysis as more than a personal weakness—it is the result of a lifetime of scripted behaviors that have been normalized through cultural repetition. By refusing to board the ship, Eveline reaffirms her place within the gendered order, continuing the cycle of performance that defines her. Joyce's narrative, read through Butler's lens, becomes a study of how deeply entrenched performances resist disruption, even when change is possible. Eveline's story thus exemplifies Butler's view that gender is sustained not by biological destiny but by the continual reenactment of roles, making liberation as much a matter of unlearning as of action (Butler, 1990; Joyce, 1976).

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said (1994) argues that literature often reflects the power structures and cultural dynamics of imperial contexts, even in seemingly domestic narratives. James Joyce's "Eveline" can be read through this lens as an allegory of colonial paralysis in Ireland under British rule. Eveline's sense of obligation to her father and her fear of the unknown parallel the nation's ambivalent relationship with colonial authority—simultaneously desiring escape and clinging to the familiarity of subjugation. Said's framework reveals that Eveline's domestic struggles are not isolated from larger historical forces but are shaped by a culture conditioned under imperial domination, where notions of loyalty, duty, and moral propriety reinforce compliance (Said, 1994; Joyce, 1976).

Said (1994) also emphasizes that imperialism works by shaping subjectivity through cultural narratives that normalize hierarchy. Eveline's worldview has been molded by religious instruction, patriarchal family structures, and nationalist sentiment, all of which align with the internalized control characteristic of colonial cultures. Her imagined life abroad with Frank represents not only a personal liberation but a symbolic break from the colonial home. Yet her inability to act demonstrates the psychological impact of imperial ideology an internalized fear of venturing beyond the known boundaries imposed by the dominant culture. In this way, Eveline's paralysis mirrors the hesitation of colonized societies to fully embrace independence, even when the opportunity arises (Said, 1994; Joyce, 1976).

More to say, Said's (1994) concept of "contrapuntal reading" invites us to see Eveline's story as operating on multiple registers: a domestic drama about personal choice and a political allegory about colonial entrapment. The domestic space in "Eveline" is a microcosm of a colonized nation—orderly, bounded, and governed by authority figures whose power is rarely challenged. Eveline's final decision to remain can thus be understood as the triumph of imperial cultural conditioning, where the familiar chains of duty outweigh the uncertain promise of freedom. Joyce's subtle narrative aligns with

Said's argument that even intimate stories carry the imprint of empire, revealing how private lives are deeply entangled with public histories of domination (Said, 1994; Joyce, 1976).

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf (1929/2005) argues that women's creative and personal agency is constrained by the lack of physical and financial autonomy. James Joyce's "Eveline" exemplifies this dynamic, as the protagonist is trapped within her domestic responsibilities, unable to imagine a life independent of her father and household duties. Eveline's home functions as both a literal and symbolic space that restricts her freedom, reflecting Woolf's assertion that without a private space and material independence, women are constrained in their choices and self-expression (Woolf, 1929/2005; Joyce, 1976).

Woolf (1929/2005) emphasizes the importance of solitude and financial independence in fostering self-determination. Eveline's inability to leave Ireland with Frank illustrates the consequences of lacking both. Her domestic labor, emotional obligations, and economic dependence on her father reinforce her confinement, leaving her paralyzed at the threshold of opportunity. Joyce's narrative highlights how these material and spatial limitations prevent Eveline from actualizing her desires, supporting Woolf's claim that systemic obstacles—rather than personal indecision alone—constrain women's autonomy (Woolf, 1929/2005; Joyce, 1976).

Eveline's paralysis at the story's climax underscores Woolf's broader critique of societal structures that limit women's mobility. The tension between herlonging for independence and her ingrained sense of duty mirrors Woolf's argument that women must possess both a room of their own and financial security to exercise agency fully. Joyce's story thus dramatizes the internalization of societal restrictions, showing that the absence of personal space and economic means can render liberation psychologically and socially unattainable. Eveline's story serves as a literary illustration of Woolf's assertion that without autonomy, women are often forced to remain in prescribed roles, despite aspirations for freedom (Woolf, 1929/2005; Joyce, 1976).

Consequently, the Eveline's spatial condition appears within the patriarchal and economic trap; however, her memory of mother not only reminds her oppressive and forced duty of a female towards her family but also works as her thirst for her own space though the sign of impossible is there. Her familial suppression forces her to plan for eloping with Frank and cancellation points towards her quest to create her space in familiar to unfamiliar space.

Conclusion: A Way Out

James Joyce's "Eveline" has been read through multiple theoretical lenses that illuminate the protagonist's paralysis within social, gendered, and spatial structures. Simone de Beauvoir's (2011) feminist perspective highlights how Eveline's identity is constructed by societal expectations, positioning her as the "Other" in relation

to male authority and domestic duty. Her hesitation to leave with Frank illustrates the internalization of gendered norms that confine women to roles of care and obedience, reflecting Beauvoir's assertion that women are often prevented from exercising autonomy. Judith Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity complements this view, showing how Eveline's repetitive acts of caregiving and dutiful behavior constitute the performance of socially sanctioned femininity, making transgression psychologically difficult.

Similarly, from a spatial and disciplinary perspective, Henri Lefebvre (1991) and Michel Foucault (1995) provide insight into the forces shaping Eveline's environment and psyche. Lefebvre's theory of the production of space reveals how Eveline's home is a socially constructed site that both defines and limits her possibilities, embedding familial, religious, and cultural expectations into the domestic environment. Foucault's notion of discipline demonstrates that Eveline's compliance is reinforced not only by external authority but by internalized norms, producing self-regulation that makes leaving seem impossible. The intersection of spatial confinement and disciplinary power underscores how socio-cultural structures act upon the body and mind, constraining individual agency.

Furthermore, Edward Said's (1994) postcolonial framework and Virginia Woolf's (1929/2005) reflections on autonomy further contextualize Eveline's limitations. Said's analysis positions Eveline's paralysis as analogous to the internalized effects of imperial culture, where fear of the unknown and adherence to inherited norms reflect broader social and historical constraints. Woolf emphasizes the necessity of personal and financial autonomy for women's freedom, showing that Eveline's lack of both space and economic independence makes escape psychologically and practically difficult. Collectively, these theories illuminate Eveline's struggle as a convergence of gendered expectations, spatial production, disciplinary power, and historical-cultural conditioning, demonstrating how Joyce's narrative portrays the intricate mechanisms that inhibit female self-determination (Beauvoir, 2011; Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1995; Lefebvre, 1991; Said, 1994; Woolf, 1929/2005; Joyce, 1976).

Conclusively, with postcolonial framework, reflections of autonomy, power dynamics, spatial perspectives, othering and restriction imposed on female here; Eveline, is caged. The psychological and physical attempts made by Eveline was her thirst that is her search for her autonomous space, which shows some prospects for future endeavours. She can establish better female space in familiar place; place of birth Dublin Ireland than the unknown place and even unimagined dangers with Frank in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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