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## A Genettean Analysis of Narrative in Joyce's Eveline: Focusing on Voice, Mood, and Tense

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### Abstract:

The current term paper/ assignment, 'A Genettean Analysis of Narrative in Joyce's Eveline: Focusing on Voice, Mood, and Tense', is an attempt to analyze the narrative structure of James Joyce short story, Eveline. Genette's framework has been successful in attracting scholarship lately, and is valued highly in terms of narratological analytical capacity. The analysis of Joyce's Eveline through the lens of Genette's model enables us understand the structural complexities as well as the thematic depth of the story. The analysis reveals that by artfully manipulating voice, mood and tense, Joyce has crafted the internal conflict and external situation in the story. This also highlights an intricate interplay between the form and content. Grasping this interplay help us comprehend emotional state within the narrative and thematic resonance.

**Keywords:** Prepositions; Localism; Conceptual domains; Semantic interpretation; Methodology; Swedish

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### Introduction

Short stories, popular prose fiction, immerse readers in fictional realm. The world that the readers dive into, is filled with diverse characters, settings, events, and actions that evoke the feelings of suspense, excitement, uncertainty, and satisfaction. Therefore, in an attempt to understand the meaning of, and analyzing a short story for academic purposes necessitates a critical approach. The readers as well as the researchers' perspective, during the course of analysis, is influenced by various factors: personal experiences, education, social and political positions, age, sexual orientation, gender, and race. These factors are integrated into various theories that serve as tools for explaining and understanding literature. However, many literary theories predominantly focus on the narrative's content rather than its structural elements. Consequently, readers often interpret the text from a particular perspective, limiting their comprehension of the story. This assignment is an attempt to analyze James Joyce's Eveline using Gerard Genette's model of narrative structure. His theory, potentially, allows us for an in-depth analysis of the narrative structure, facilitating a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the text.

James Joyce of Dublin, Ireland, is the author of the short story "Eveline"; it was included in his 1914 collection of Dubliner. The story revolves around Eveline, a young woman of

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Dublin. Eveline, who is caught by her familial responsibilities, longs to start a new life with her lover, Frank. The story, set in 20<sup>th</sup> century Dublin, highlights the challenges faced by women during that period. Additionally, broader themes of paralysis and escape are central to Joyce's writings. Moreover, the story is worth analysis as it explores a variety of themes such as family obligation, fearing the unseen and unknown, as well as a yearning for freedom. Joyce, through Eveline's internal conflict and her final decision, has commented on the ways society and personal forces inhibit individual agency. Furthermore, the story provides richer details about the setting, alongside deeper psychological insights. Together, these characteristics turn Eveline into a compelling study of human behaviour and societal norms.

Gerard Genette, a French structuralist theorist, offers a variety of concepts related to narrative components that can be applied to any literary work. These concepts help in understanding the unfolding actions and events of a narrative, the underlying ideas in the text, and the implications of these events. Genette's emphasis on story, narrative, and narration covers all the essential elements of a story: plot, setting, character, theme, and conflict. James Joyce in 'Eveline' intricately combines these elements, making it ideal for Genette's narratological analysis. Like many renowned short stories, the events are unfolded in a non-linear fashion, making it apt for studying narrative time, particularly through techniques such as analepsis (flashback) and prolepsis (flashforward). The primary objective of this assignment is to illustrate how the elements of the story and the sequence of events in "Eveline" function within Genette's analytical categories, to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the narrative.

## 1. Significance of the Study

The current study, an attempt to analyze Joyce's 'Eveline' using Genette's model of narratological analysis, is significant for the scholarship in literary theory and narratology. The analysis will reveal nuanced insights into the narrative structure as employed by Joyce: narrative order, duration and narration. Consequently, it will help understand the story, and the exploration of various themes during the course of narration. Finally, this study will validate and expand Genette's framework, illustrating its practical application for the analysis of literary texts.

## Theoretical Framework

Narratology, a theory, which studies similarities and differences within various literary texts, focusing, in particular, on the narrative-specific systems of rules that govern narrative creation and understanding. The field of narratology, with a structuralist tendency in general, views literary texts as rule-governed ways in which humans reconstruct their universe. It also reflects the structuralist aim to identify the necessary and optional components of textual types and characterize their modes of articulation. Gérard Genette offers a model to describe and analyze the structures and patterns that form literary texts. According to Genette, each literary text reveals its narrative structure, and analyzing this structure helps to understand its order. Following is an overview of Genette's model.

### 3.1 Genette's Model

Genette's "Narrative Discourse" (1983) is widely regarded as a pivotal work in the field of narrative structure analysis (Shen 2005). Narrative structure, according to Genette (1980), consists of the three distinct levels: the story level, the discourse level, and the narration level (De Villier 2005).

- a. **Story level:** Known as 'fabula' in formalist terms, the story level refers to the chronological sequence of the events as they actually occurred within the narrative or fictional world.
- b. **Discourse level:** Termed as 'syuzhet' by the formalists, discourse level of Genette's model refers to the sequence in which the events are unfolded during the course of the narrative.
- c. **Narration level:** this involves the act of telling, or narrating these events by the narrator.

Genette's model is primarily concerned with the analysis of the narrative structure examining the relationships between each level (Bertens 2001). In order to illustrate relationship between the given levels, he distinguishes among these originally grammatical terms: voice, mood and tense. The terms have been manipulated metaphorically. They are elaborated as follow.

1. **Voice:** It is primarily concerned with "who speaks" in the narrative (Fludernik 2009). It includes subdivisions such as the time of narrating and person. *Subsequent narration*, one of the subdivisions of time of narrating, according to Genette's model, is one of the most important temporal position when the narrator recounts the events of the past. In the case of *prior narration*, the narrator describes the event that will occur in the future; they often the form of dreams and prophecies. *Simultaneous narration* is the kind of narration whereby the

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narrator recounts the events as they occur in the real-time. *Interpolated narration*, however, combines element of the subsequent and prior narration (Guillemette & Lévesque 2006). This fashion of narration is quite common in the narratives recounted by epistolary novels.

Person is the second subdivision of the voice, and has been divided into homodiegetic and hetrodiegetic narrator by Gennette. The very distinction between homodiegetic and hetrodiegetic person or narrator is based on their relation with the narrated world. The former is a part of the narrative world, whereas the latter is an outsider, not a part of the narrative being narrated (Fludernik, 2009). Traditionally, in the first person narrative (I narrative), the narrator is a character in the story, often the protagonist. However, according to this model, a homodiegetic person may not be the protagonist. Hetrodiegetic narrative, traditionally labeled as third-person narrative, makes use of third-person pronoun (s/he, they etc.) and the narrator is an outsider to the story-world. However, when the first-person pronoun denotes the protagonist, the narrative is termed autodiegetic (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). For instance, Defoes's 'Robinson Crusoe', accordingly, is considered to have a homodiegetic narrative since "I" refers to the protagonist, making it autodiegetic. On the contrary, , in Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea," the third-person pronoun "he" refers to the hero, Santiago, and the narrator is not part of the story, making it hetrodiegetic.

- 2. Mood:** *Mood*, according to Gennette's model, pertains to "who sees" or the perspective from which the events are perceived. It has further been divided into two facets: *distance* and *focalization*. Distance, the first subcategory of the mood, pertains to the degree of the narrator's distance from the narrated story, indicated by the fact that whether the characters' speeches are directly quoted or merely reported. When the narrator quotes speeches and thoughts verbatim, there is less distance between the narrator and the story world compared to when these are narrated in the narrator's own words as reported speeches (Fludernik 2009).

*Focalization*, according to Rimmon-Kenan, refer to the prism, perspective, or angle of vision through which a text is presented and verbalized by the narrator, though it is not necessarily their perspective (p. 73). Gennette's sub-categories of focalization are *external*, *internal*, and *zero focalization*. An *external focalization* pertains to perspective whereby the narrator describes the characters and the narrative realm from an outside view. The amount of the narrated information regarding the protagonist leave the audience in a mystery. *Internal focalization*, on the other hand, represents the view of the fictional realm through the eye of a character; the events are recounted in the viewpoint of one of the character of the story. The third facet of Gennette's focalization is zero focalization. This view, essentially a combination

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of the external and internal focalization, in other words, is equal to authorial narrator or omniscient narrator. The narrator, using an objective manner, narrates information that even the characters are unaware of.

- 3. Tense:** Tense is concerned with the temporal aspect of a narrative. It primarily focuses on the temporal relations between story and discourse within the narrative world. Tense, according to Gennette's model, encompasses three sub-categories: order, duration and frequency. Each subcategory answers a specific question: order addresses "when?" with terms like first, second, last, and before; duration answers "how long?" using measurements such as an hour, a month, or a year; and frequency answers "how often?" with expressions like two/many times a day, a week, or a page (Rimmon-Kenan 2002).

*Order* involves the sequence of the events in a story and their sequential arrangement in the narrative. Order includes "analepsis" (flashback) and "prolepsis" (flash-forward) (Shen 2005: 137). For example, in a detective story, the chronological order of events might be: a murder occurs (event A1), the detective finds and arrests the murderer (event B2), and the criminal is sentenced (event C3). However, the text might present these events as B1, A2, and C3, where A2 is an analepsis. Prolepsis, on the other hand, reveals future events ahead of their time (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 50). According to Shen (2005: 138), this reordering of events utilizes different linguistic techniques to produce various effects.

*Duration*, according to Gennette (1980), refers to the relationship between the actual time that the events take to unfold and the textual length devoted to recount them. It distinguishes between story time and discourse time- the time events take in the real-world and the time the narration of those events take (Black, 2002). For example, the narration, "two years passed" covers a long period in the story time, but indicates a short discourse time. A brief event can be narrated extensively, with a longer discourse time and a short story time.

*Frequency* primarily examines the number of times an event or incident occur in the story compared to how many times it is narrated in the discourse (Black, 2006). This temporal aspect of the model creates a relationship between the repetition of the story events and the narrative statements that describe them (Gennette, 1980).

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- (1) Voice: (a) Time of Narrating: (1) Subsequent  
(2) Simultaneous  
(3) Prior  
(4) Interpolated  
(b) Person: (1) Homodiegetic  
(2) Hetrodiegetic
- (2) Mood: (a) Distance  
(b) Focalization: (1) Zero Focalization  
(2) Internal Focalization  
(3) External Focalization
- (3) Tense: (a) Order  
(b) Duration  
(c) Frequency

(adapted from Fludernik 2009: 99)

### Joyce's Eveline and Gennette's Model: An Analysis

Following a thorough discussion of Gennette's model of narrative analysis, this section of the assignment is dedicated to the analysis of the short story, Eveline by James Joyce.

1. **Voice:** As stated above, voice, according to Gennette's model refers to two aspects of two aspects of narrative structure: Time of narrating and person. These concepts have been elaborated above. Now we are going to examine instances of these elements in Joyce's Eveline.

a. **Time of narrating in Eveline:** Time of narrating is one of the sub-categories of Gennette's model. In Joyce's Evelin, the time of narrating is crucial to the narration as well as the understanding of the narrative. This concept has been further categorized into *subsequent narration*, *prior narration*, *simultaneous* and *interpolated narration*. When it comes to Eveline, the major portion of the recounted events are the ones occurred in the past and then narrated. Hence, it can be said that the narrative is primarily a subsequent narrative because the time of narration is after they occurred. Further, the verb-form, linguistically, is another evidence of the fact that the major portion contains the narration of events occurred in the past.

"She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odor of the dust cretonne. She was tired."

(Joyce, 1914)

In the above passage, the narrator uses simple past tense to recounts events of the past.



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Moreover, it is pertinent to note here, that Joyce, alongside subsequent narration, has made use of simultaneous time of narrating. This is quite evident in the case of the direct speeches during the course of narration. However, not all the direct speeches contain simultaneous time of narrating. Following are the passages from the story:

“I know these sailor chaps.”

(Joyce, 1914)

“Miss Hill, don’t you see these ladies are waiting?”

“Look lively, Miss Hill, please.”

(Joyce, 1914)

**b. Person in Eveline:** Person, according Gennette, refers to the voice narrating the events of the story-the narrator. It is concerned with whether the narrator is a character and insider to the narrative or not; whether the whether it has been narrated by “I” or “S/he”. Eveline is primarily a hetrodiegetic narrative since the events are recounted by an outsider. The frequent use of third-person is the evident of the fact.

c. “She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odor of the dust cretonne. She was tired.”

(Joyce, 1914)

**2. Mood:** As discussed above, mood is concerned with two facets of narrative structure-distance and focalization. They are discussed in relation with Joyce’s Eveline as follow.

**a. Distance in Joyce’s Eveline:** Distance pertains to the degree of the narrator’s distance from the narrated story, indicated by the fact that whether the characters' speeches are directly quoted or merely reported. When the narrator quotes speeches and thoughts verbatim, there is less distance between the narrator and the story world. However, when the events are recounted in the narrator’s words, the narrator is considered to be distant. James Joyce’s Eveline makes skilful use of both direct as well as the indirect discourse during the course of narration. Much of Eveline’s reflections, during the story, are recounted indirectly. By doing so, Joyce has created a causal relationship between the external events and her internal reactions to those events.

"She was tired."

(Joyce, 1914)

However, the narrative contains instances where Joyce’s narrator present the dialogue directly. Here are the examples:

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“I know these sailor chaps.”

(Joyce, 1914)

“Miss Hill, don’t you see these ladies are waiting?”

“Look lively, Miss Hill, please.”

(Joyce, 1914)

Interestingly, much of the story is filtered through Eveline’s thoughts and feelings, the readers do not get engaged with the other characters. They are, rather, brought closer to Eveline. The manipulation of narrative distance by James Joyce presents a moving portrait of a young woman torn between her familial duties and her yearning for freedom. This nuanced use and manipulation of distance in Eveline adds more to the emotional impact of the story.

**b. Focalization in Eveline:** *Focalization*, one of the sub-categories of Genette’s concept of mood is primarily pertains to the prism, perspective, or angle of vision through which a text is presented and verbalized by the narrator. Genette’s sub-categories of focalization include *external*, *internal*, and *zero focalization*. They have been elaborated above. As stated above, in internal focalization, the narrative is presented through a specific character’s perspective or viewpoint. In Eveline, James Joyce has opted for internal focalization. This type of focalization, in the case of Eveline, is closely aligned with focal character, Eveline’s thoughts and feelings. Joyce choice of this particular type focalization enables the reader fully understand Eveline’s internal struggle, and her emotional state. Additionally, apart from the focal character of the story, readers are given no access to other characters’ internal thoughts and emotions. In other words, Joyce has allowed immerse in the protagonist’s world only, allowing the readers experience the protagonist’s struggle with her family duties and freedom intimately.

### 3. Tense

It primarily focuses on the temporal relations between story and discourse within the narrative world. Tense, according Genette’s model, encompasses three sub-categories: order, duration and frequency.

**a. Order of narrative in Eveline:** *Order* involves the sequence of the events in a story and their sequential arrangement in the narrative. Order includes "analepsis" (flashback) and "prolepsis" (flash-forward) (Shen 2005: 137). In the case of Joyce’s Eveline, the story begins in media res; she reflects on her past while sitting by the window. Much of the narration takes



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place in flashbacks-analepsis. Instances includes Eveline's memories of her mother, her promise with her mother etc.

*"Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne."*

(Joyce, 1914)

However, the story has no clear examples of prolepsis. It does not jump forward, rather stay focused on the present and past of Eveline.

**b. Duration in Eveline:** *Duration*, according to Gennette (1980), refers to the relationship between the actual time that the events take to unfold and the textual length devoted to recount them. It distinguishes between story time and discourse time- the time events take in the real-world and the time the narration of those events take (Black, 2002). Scene is one of the sub-categories of Gennette's concept of duration; the time of narration matches the story time. In the story, scene is evident during the course of narration in the dialogue between Eveline and Frank.

*Summary* is another facet of Gennette's concept of narrative duration. It pertains to where the narrative time is shorter than the story time. In Joyce's story, much of Eveline's recollections of her relationship with her father and her mother's hard life are summarized. Joyce, using this narrative technique, provides the readers with a quick overview of the past events. Ellipsis is another techniques employed by Joyce. He has skipped a variety of events, particularly her childhood. This helps the readers stay focused on the crucial events in the story. In sum, James Joyce has masterfully manipulated the duration of narration to help readers experience and understand Eveline's struggles and her emotional state.

**c. Frequency in Eveline:** It primarily examines the number of times an event or incident occur in the story compared to how many times it is narrated in the discourse (Black, 2006). This temporal aspect of the model creates a relationship between the repetition of the story events and the narrative statements that describe them (Gennette, 1980). Joyce, in *Eveline*, makes use of both singulative as well as repetitive narration. The former narration is evident where Eveline has to take a critical decision on the dock. This single focus of narration does not only build tension in the narrative, it highlights the key turning point during the course of narration too. Similarly, *Eveline* contains repetitive narration too. Joyce revisits Eveline's promise with her mother to keep the family together. This adds more to the readers' understanding of its centrality to her conflict. These repetitions highlights the inevitable sense of her duty. In sum, Joyce has employed both singulative and repetitive narration in *Eveline*,

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providing a multifaceted view of Eveline's life and her struggles. The skillful manipulation of frequency has paved way for multilayered narration, effectively communicating the protagonist's internal struggle and her emotional state.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of Joyce's Eveline using Gerard Genette's model of narrative structure helps us understand not only the structural complexity of the story, but thematic depth and exploration too. Analyzing the narrative in terms of voice, mood, and tense allows us to understand the ways in which Joyce has crafted both internal conflict and external circumstances in the story. Joyce' artful manipulation of voice, mood and frequency has highlighted the intricate interplay between the form and content; we can grasp the ways these techniques add more to the emotional state of the story as well as the thematic resonance. Last but not the least, Genette's framework of narrative structure not only helps us understand Eveline's narrative, but also highlights Joyce's relevance in exploring human experiences and societal limitations.

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