

Dubliners Final Project: "Sofians" Short Story & Analysis

Length - *Story*: 4-5 pages (can be longer); *Analysis*: 1-2 pages (can be longer)

Due Dates – *First draft*: 12 October, hard copy in class; *Final*: 31 October, uploaded on Turnitin.com

Weight – *Rough draft* (process work): 30 points; *Story* (major assignment): 50 points; *Analysis*: 40 points; *Map*: 10 points

In this assignment, your task is to write a story in which Sofia is as real and richly observed a place as Dublin is in Joyce's story collection. As we've worked on the stories in Dubliners, we've focused on how theme, setting, plot, and character influence our understanding of the city. In this story, I am asking you to use these elements to demonstrate the essential life of Sofia.

I. Story (50 points) - Your story will be assessed on the quality of attention you give to the following elements:

1. SETTING (10 points) (*Why is place important? How does our sense of home impact and define us?*)

The setting of your story should be as recognizable to someone who has lived in Sofia as Joyce's settings are to *Dubliners*. To that end, you should (as Joyce does) choose a real-life setting(s) that feels emblematic or representative of some aspect of Sofian life. Your setting(s) can be inside or outside, and it should be richly imagined and detailed. It should also be **mappable**, and you must **attach a map**. You can draw this map or print one out from Google Maps (or a similar service). You must mark on the map where your story takes place, including any routes your characters travel.

2. CHARACTER (10 points) (*What kinds of imprisonment exist and how do we set ourselves free?*)

As with Joyce's stories, your main character should represent or experience some type of real or figurative imprisonment and be driven by the desire for escape or freedom of whatever kind you choose. Imitating Joyce's techniques, you must find a way to give your character the same sense of psychological *reality*. Think about how Joyce communicates a character's history, emotions, thoughts; think about the details he uses to make them seem real. Your character can be of any age, gender, or social status.

3. "NATIONAL PSYCHE" (10 points) (*What role do memory, language, and stories play in our lives and our sense of self?*)

In the same way that the historical and political past of Ireland seeps into Joyce's stories, think about how Bulgaria's past influences the spirit of its people today, and try to reflect that reality in your fiction. Think: What are the "quintessential" Bulgarian characteristics and personality traits that you can reflect in your characters and conflict? What is Bulgaria's cultural identity and legacy, and how does it reside particularly in the inhabitants of its capitol city?

4. EPIPHANY (10 points) (*How do we arrive at moments of epiphany and self-realization, and how do we continue afterwards?*)

Again as in Joyce, your central character should undergo some acquisition of knowledge or new self-awareness. This epiphany (along with the character's struggle with imprisonment/escape and other oppositions) should also serve to grant a larger, more universal significance to your local details.

5. STYLE / LITERARY TECHNIQUES (10 points)

We've discussed and you've written about (and annotated!) some of the common literary techniques that Joyce employs in his stories. Throughout the story, you should draw from Joyce as a model and as inspiration (it might be a good idea to choose one specific story as a "mentor text" and incorporate

some of the same techniques). This is of course your story and your voice, but Joyce is a master of prose, so take some time to reflect on and learn from the master.

*A note on **mood**: While Joyce's stories tend to be melancholy, your story needn't be; though you are imitating certain aspects of Joyce's style, you should feel entirely free to write a happy story, even a funny one, or a parody. (Of course you are also free to be as glum as you like.)*

II. Draft (20 points: due 12 October)

As 12 October is D-Day (Dubliners Day!) as far as turning in all remaining related work on this text, I am leaving this assignment fairly open-ended as far as what and how much you have to do. Basically, the purpose is to make sure you do some thinking about this project while the book is still fresh in your mind (you will be finishing the project while we are reading our next book), and that you review the project requirements so that you can ask any questions in advance.

This assignment will be given a completion grade (full points for an on-time assignment) and can range from a 1-paragraph proposal to a story outline to a full draft. At a minimum for full completion credit, you must submit a 1-paragraph proposal that includes the following:

- Initial thoughts/brainstorming on #1-3 of the 5 story categories listed on the front of this handout
- The title of the main Dubliners story you want to use as a mentor text/primary inspiration and why
- Any early ideas for parallels you want to draw between your story and your mentor text
- It must be typed!

The proposal is not a commitment! Just because you write something in your proposal does not mean you necessarily have to follow through on it in your final story. Of course, the more thoughtful you can be, the more useful this assignment is as a pre-writing tool. And, if you are able to start outlining or drafting the actual story, I can begin to give you specific feedback (story outlines/drafts will, of course, also receive full completion credit, and if you submit a story outline/draft, you do not *also* have to write a proposal, although you may find it helpful to do so).

Feel free to also include questions to me about the assignment. I will check these over and return them to you, along with any answers to your questions.

III. Analysis (40 points)

Your analysis should explain to me which story(ies) you drew inspiration from and the parallels you tried to achieve between your story and Joyce's, taking me through the 5 categories I am using to evaluate your story and illustrating to me how you have accomplished all of the requirements.

Pay particular attention to your written analysis of Category 5: Style / Literary Techniques. In this section, you should provide some detailed textual analysis of your own story. What kind of structural, story, and language elements did you try to incorporate, and for what effect? It's almost like a self-annotation.

Throughout the analysis, much like any other literary analysis, you must use **textual evidence**: in this case, quotations from your own story, cited by page number, to support your claims. This may feel a little weird, but it's a valuable tool to reflect on your own writing and language abilities.

This analysis is a formal writing assignment and should be typed and formatted accordingly, along with the story.