

# Reader Response to James Joyce's The Dead

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## Reader Response to Joyce's The Dead

James Joyce's story "The Dead" has a tremendous impact on the readers, especially those who are familiar with the political situation in Ireland at the time about which the Joyce wrote the final story in *Dubliners*. In exploring the meaning of James Joyce's long short-story, "The Dead", there are many critical approaches to take. Each approach gives readers a lens, a set of guidelines through which to examine and express ideas of the meaning of "The Dead." Joyce himself said that the idea of paralysis was the intended theme of all the stories in *The Dubliners*

of which "The Dead" is the final story.

Of all critical approaches, reader

response works best for me. This approach examines the images, symbols,

point-of-view, characterization and setting of "The Dead" in such a way as

to reveal the theme of paralysis that Joyce intended. The two characters

that appeal to me are, Gabriel and his wife Gretta who are invited every

year to a family gathering by Gabriels two aunts on New Years eve. Gabriel,

who is a university [professor](#), does not want to be identified with Ireland.

He wants to be identifies as a citizen of the world. His [arrogance](#) is

revealed in his interaction with others. A

primary example would be the way he treats his wife Gretta as an object.

As Peter J. Rabinowitz informs one that in reader response

criticism the "...activity of reading always alters the text at hand. Unless

we are limiting ourselves to reading in the sense of uninflected recitation,

reading is never a [passive](#) activity to which the reader contributes nothing.

In the reader res...

... middle of paper ...

... Gabriel is

paralyzed emotionally, as he does not know what is going to happen next.

In conclusion the narrators attitude towards the events is perhaps

how he wants the reader to interpret the events. The narrator perhaps

wants to tell the reader despite all the tension at that time, the people

in Dublin still want to forget the problem and enjoy at least on New Years

Day where it can be with their loved ones to relax.

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