

# "Paralyzed in Winesburg, Ohio, or Grotesques in Dublin" Defining the Structure of Epicleti

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## ABSTRACT

In a letter to Constantine Curran, in July 1904, James Joyce wrote: „I am writing a series of epicleti – ten – for a paper ... I call the series Dubliners.“ The term epicleti has been interpreted as a misspelled form of “epiclesis”, the process of transubstantiation as defined by the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. This went hand in hand with Joyce’s interpretation of the role of an artist as „a priest of eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life”. Wolfhard Steppe convincingly argued that epicleti was a misreading of Joyce’s handwriting and that in fact the word written is epicles, but the notion of epiclesis still remains a valuable way of interpreting the works of James Joyce, and McDermott, in a study of Joyce and Raymond Carver, has argued that epicleti itself can be considered a genre of short story. Taking this perspective, the main focus of the paper is to define the very structure of epicleti by systematically examining each of the genre’s key features, including the notion of transubstantiation and epiphany, as well as setting and characters traits. To have a variation of samples, we will use a frequently pointed out similarity between Dubliners (1914) and Winesburg, Ohio (1919) written by Sherwood Anderson. A number of scholars, including Zlotnick and Curry, examined this relation, focusing mainly on the comparison of the works and/or disbanding the possibility of imitation, respectively. Studies such as these offer a useful framework, but do not go in depth with the notion of an epicleti, and what it means for a story to be regarded as one. Using the comparison we aim to isolate the main elements of the structure, examining at the same time the place of a single structure within the frame of the whole collection, defining a genre of short story writing which can be usefully called epicleti