

Exploring Stockholm Syndrome in James Joyce's "Eveline" (1904) and Margaret Atwood's

The Handmaid's Tale (1985)

Georgia Kapoula (6477356)

Literary Studies BA Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Cathelein Aaftink

Second Reader: Dr. Frank Brandsma

25 May 2021

Word Count: 6762

Citation Style: MLA

Abstract

This thesis focuses on James Joyce's 1904 short story "Eveline" and Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. The former story revolves around Eveline, a young Irish woman who assumes the role of her mother after she passed away. However, Eveline's life is harder than it may seem as she has to live with her abusive and alcoholic father who has totalitarian control over her life. On the other hand, the latter story revolves around Offred, whose life changed drastically when the government of the United States was overthrown and replaced by Gilead, a patriarchal regime that exploits women. Atwood herself claimed that her story is inspired by Joyce's ideas. Therefore, this thesis reads both stories through the assumed common link they may have: Stockholm Syndrome. Even though Stockholm Syndrome has not been officially recognised as a mental health disease and not sufficient research has been conducted on the topic, there are certain factors that have been associated with it. Therefore, this thesis firstly explores Stockholm Syndrome's theoretical framework in order to provide a deeper understanding of the ways it can be caused, how it can be identified, and its symptoms. In continuation, Stockholm Syndrome's theoretical framework functions as a filter through which the two stories are analysed. Furthermore, the purpose of providing this comparative analysis focuses on the similarities and differences the two stories have.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....4

Chapter One: Stockholm Syndrome.....6

Chapter Two: Eveline.....11

Chapter Three: The Handmaid’s Tale.....17

Chapter Four: Comparative Analysis.....23

Conclusion.....26

Works Cited.....27

Introduction

James Joyce's short story "Eveline" depicts the everyday Irish life during the early 19th century, while Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* takes place in a dystopian futuristic setting. Placing *The Handmaid's Tale* alongside "Eveline" developed from the "nightmare" of history concept that Atwood herself noted linked her work to the ideas of Joyce, whose protagonists try to detach themselves from the nightmares of their daily lives. More analytically, Atwood stated that "One of my rules was that I would not put any events into the book that had not already happened in what James Joyce called the "nightmare" of history..." (Ruhs 117).

Even though these stories might appear very different at first glance, there seems to be a link between them. Both Eveline and Offred have been victimized and suffer a range of abuse patterns. Yet, in both stories, the heroines have developed a connection with their abusers and do not try to change their lives, even though such opportunities have been presented. Furthermore, their stories exhibit similar instances which can be identified as Stockholm Syndrome's diagnostic criteria. Therefore, the primary question this thesis aims to answer is: do the heroines of "Eveline" and *The Handmaid's Tale* suffer from Stockholm Syndrome? In continuation, this thesis tries to determine to what extent Stockholm Syndrome has affected their actions and mindset. Finally, it also aims to raise awareness about the syndrome's dangers since it is thematised in different literary works

In order to prove this thesis' statement, specific steps are followed. More analytically, the second chapter serves as a fundamental basis, a theoretical approach of the Stockholm Syndrome in order to understand, perhaps, the reasons behind the actions of the heroines. This chapter entails Stockholm Syndrome's definition, possible causes, features that serve as diagnostic criteria, and its impact. The third chapter focuses on the main heroine, Eveline, of

Joyce's short story "Eveline." This chapter explores Eveline's story through the prism of Stockholm Syndrome. The fourth chapter focuses on the main heroine of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred. Similarly to the preceding chapter, it explores Offred's story which is linked to Stockholm Syndrome's theoretical framework. In continuation, a comparative analysis is offered in the fifth chapter, where the similarities and differences of both stories are explored.

Chapter One

Stockholm Syndrome

Stockholm Syndrome has been conceptualized as a condition in which “abductees bond with or express loyalty toward their captors in an effort to save their lives or make their ordeal more tolerable” (Adjoran et al. 454). The term first emerged in 1973 in order to explain the emotion of connectedness four hostages felt towards their kidnappers during, and after, a bank robbery (Namnyak et al. 2). Although in the beginning Stockholm Syndrome was limited only to kidnapping situations, the context in which it is being applied nowadays has been expanded. Adjoran et al. argue that the syndrome can manifest in a wider spectrum which may include “battered women, those who have experienced sexual or physical assaults, abused children, incest victims, prisoners of war or political terrorism, cult members, concentration camp prisoners, slaves, and prostitutes” (454). In this thesis, Stockholm Syndrome is interpreted as the positive bond between the abuser and the abused due to the latter’s captivity trauma. This chapter first addresses the various reasons for Stockholm Syndrome’s occurring. Next, the syndrome’s typical features are discussed. It is essential to note that there is an overlap between the syndrome’s causes and its diagnostic features (Namnyak et al. 6). Finally, Stockholm Syndrome’s psychological effects upon the victim possible are being elaborated.

According to Graham, certain parameters contribute to the development of Stockholm Syndrome. The first reason is “the victim’s perception of a threat to survival” (Hooper et al. 100). Graham clarifies that the captors may intimidate the individuals during the captivity. Therefore, the abused, in return, feel fear, since the captors pose a threat to their safety. As a result, they prefer to comply with the captor’s wishes in order to survive (Graham et al. 5). The second reason Graham lists is “the victim’s perception of kindness from the perpetrator”

(Hooper et al. 100). During the confinement, the abused is threatened he will be harmed if he does not adhere to the abuser's terms. However, Graham argues, this threat may not be carried out. In this case, the victim that is overwhelmed with fear feels gratitude towards the captor for his generosity (Graham et al. 5). Also, a retrospective analysis of Stockholm Syndrome incidents confirmed that the victims showed better compliance when the abuser was friendly (Hooper et al. 100). Moreover, it is believed that Stockholm Syndrome might come about due to "the victim's isolation from perspectives other than those of their captors" (Hooper et al. 100). Studies indicate that during the captive state, the captors were exercising "brainwashing and mind-control" upon the victims (Adjoran et al. 457). Therefore, they were influenced by their captors since they were deprived of their right to exercise their own free will. Finally, Stockholm Syndrome may develop due to "the victim's perception of an inability to escape" (Hooper et al. 100). According to a Stockholm Syndrome case-study, the captive was "threatened with the idea that if she tried to escape she would be blown up" (Namnyak et al. 5). Therefore, in some situations, fear prevents individuals from acting.

To this day, literature and studies relevant to the syndrome appear to be limited and there is not sufficient evidence to classify it as a psychiatric condition. As a result, there are no official diagnostic criteria (Hooper et al. 100). However, after systematically examining and comparing different case-studies related to Stockholm Syndrome, specialists reached certain conclusions. The case-studies share four features that "may form a recognizable syndrome" (Namnyak et al. 1). The first feature states that each victim was threatened physically, sexually, and/or emotionally by the captor (Heghes and Schiopu 68). According to different reports, some hostages were verbally threatened with death while others were raped or tortured while others were tortured by the captors (Namnyak et al. 5). Furthermore, none but one of the victims escaped, even though such an opportunity was within their grasp. It can be argued that victims tend to remain quiet and have a tendency to not report the crime

(Chan 2). There are records of “hostages resisting being rescued by police” (Namnyak et al. 5). Another report states that a hostage came into contact with the police but did not utilize his opportunity to escape (Namnyak et al. 5). Moreover, each victim was isolated. Isolation “refers to removing that person from his family, friends, colleagues, social and professional activities and breaking any form of independence” (Heghes and Schiopu 68). Some instances mention hostages who were tied. In other reports, hostages were “kept in a small room with no windows”, “blindfolded in a closet” or “kept in a hole” (Namnyak et al. 5). Finally, the victims felt sympathetic towards their offenders, even after the captivity (Adjoran et al. 458). According to different reports, some victims kept in contact with their captors while others visited them in prison. In other cases, the victims chose not to testify against their abusers nor denounce them in public (Namnyak et al. 5).

Stockholm Syndrome’s victims seem to suffer from similar psychological effects after the captivity. Alexander and Klein write that they, normally, exhibit common cognitive, emotional, and social reactions. The cognitive reactions might include recurring flashbacks, denial of what has happened, or a sense of disorientation (Alexander and Klein 18). Records indicate that some victims assumed pseudo-identities to cope with the terrors they experienced. Other victims were so confused that they were “declared mentally incompetent to testify” (Namnyak et al. 5). The emotional reactions might entail feelings of helplessness, anger, or/and sadness (Alexander and Klein 18). Published documents confirm some hostages were angry towards police officers, before and after their rescue. Also, other captives expressed their grief over their captor’s suicide (Namnyak et al. 5). The social reactions might include estrangement and alienation (Alexander and Klein 18). There are records of hostages who were deeply impacted by the strict confinement and the sole interaction with their captors. These victims chose to communicate with the police and media through others, such as family members or lawyers (Namnyak et al. 5). Alexander and Klein also report two

extreme instances where the victim has been affected deeply by the syndrome. The first one is “frozen fright”. This reaction is defined as “a paralysis of the normal emotional reactivity of the individual”. In other words, the reality is overwhelming for the individual to such an extent that he is unable to process his emotions, thus, he is paralyzed (Alexander and Klein 18). The second extreme reaction is “psychological infantilism”. This reaction is characterized by “regressed behavior such as clinging and excessive dependence on the captors” (Alexander and Klein 18). It is argued that “the victim’s need to survive is stronger than his impulse to hate the person who has created the dilemma... This results in a particular form of pathological transference or identification, whereby the victim becomes attached to the captor” (Adjoran et al. 458).

Overall, Stockholm Syndrome is defined as the emotional connectedness the abused feels towards his abuser. The victim chooses to put his own needs aside in order to please the captor due to the “dominant-subordinate” dynamics of their relationship (Hooper et al. 102). According to Graham, Stockholm Syndrome can manifest because of “(a) the victim’s perception of a threat to survival, (b) the victim’s perception of kindness from the perpetrator, (c) the victim’s isolation from perspectives other than those of their captors, and (d) the victim’s perception of an inability to escape” (Hooper et al. 100). In other words, it may be argued that this unusual bond is stimulated by the victim’s need to survive and lack of agency. Stockholm Syndrome case-studies indicate that they share certain features such as (a) abuse and (b) isolation inflicted upon the hostage by the captor, (c) the hostage’s inability to escape, and most importantly, (d) the hostage exhibited sympathetic feelings towards his captor. Finally, Stockholm Syndrome’s psychological impact upon the victim by the abuser has certain common features. These effects may be (a) cognitive, (b) emotional, and (c) social. Also, there are extreme cases where the victim may suffer from (a) frozen fright or/and (b) psychological infantilism. In the chapters that follow, these features of Stockholm

Syndrome function as a thematic filter in my analyses and interpretations of the short story
“Eveline” and *The Handmaid’s Tale*.

Chapter Two

Eveline

James Joyce's short story "Eveline" portrays the ordinary Irish life at the very beginning of the twentieth century. "Eveline" and the other short stories included in *Dubliners* share similar themes such as female oppression in Ireland (Turckeli 1). Bearing that in mind, the story revolves around the central heroine, Eveline, who feels entrapped and yearns for a better life. The domestic abuse that has been inflicted upon her and her family by her alcoholic father has left her emotionally paralyzed and incapable of escaping. Despite her father's torment, she has glimpses of a former life where he was kinder. As a result, she feels sympathetic towards him and compelled to live close to him. The obligation Eveline feels is enhanced by the promise she made to her mother prior to her death, to keep the family together. Therefore, Eveline does not choose to elope with her lover, Frank. Ben-Merre argues that Joyce fails to provide a direct answer to why Eveline made this choice. On the contrary, the story's mystery is shrouded "further with one of his sacredly mystic ellipses" (458). Norris argues that "The most significant ellipsis in the story is, of course, what happens in Eveline's mind between her two extreme and opposite terrors: her memory of her mother's dementia spurring her to escape and her paralysis on the dock when she cannot go" (Ben-Merre 458). On the other hand, Paul Stassi argues that "the security and comforts of Eveline's broken home have outweighed her fear of an unknown future" (458). However, this chapter offers another interpretation regarding Eveline's inability to escape. In this chapter, her story is thoroughly explored in order to establish whether and, if so, to which extent, Eveline suffers from Stockholm Syndrome. In order to prove this thesis's statement, this chapter addresses instances throughout the short story where Stockholm Syndrome's causes, features and psychological effects upon Eveline, are evident.

In order to determine whether Eveline suffers from Stockholm Syndrome, it is imperative to point out the causes that may have been responsible for the development of the syndrome. The first cause is the threat against the victim's survival (Hooper et al. 100). Eveline's father is an abuser on many counts as he was emotionally and physically abusing Eveline, her mother, and her brothers. As a child, she was a witness to her father's harmful attitude towards her family, but "he had never gone for her" (Joyce 30). However, as a young adult, she experiences the abuse herself since "he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother's sake" (30). Also, Eveline admits that "even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence" (30). Therefore, Eveline has undoubtedly been victimized. As noted in Stockholm Syndrome's theoretical framework, abuse is not only a cause of the Syndrome but also one of the main features that form its diagnosis.

The second cause is the victim's sense of kindness from the captor (Hooper et al. 100). As her departure comes closer, Eveline focuses on her relationship with her father. She has recollections of a past life where "her father was not so bad" (Joyce 29). Eveline does not wish to blame her father entirely. She is still emotionally attached to him, despite the emotional and physical abuse he has dealt her. Eveline's inner thoughts surrounding her father are naturally confusing, as she is bound by familial duty and a natural craving to love him. On one hand, she seems intent on defending him, and reminding herself that he was not always this way. Yet, nevertheless, her fear of her father is evident. Despite his actions, she tends to seek ways to justify his behavior and somehow put her life in a more pleasing frame: "[N]ow that she was about to leave it, she did not find it a wholly undesirable life" (Joyce 31). The affection her father exhibited in the past which she experiences through recurring flashbacks, are intertwined with Stockholm Syndrome; the former as a cause for the syndrome's development and the latter as the syndrome's cognitive effect upon the victim.

The third cause is the fact that the victim adopts his captor's opinions (Hooper et al. 100). Her father's perceptions and opinions are important to her, regardless of their impact upon her. Her father tried to isolate her by forbidding her to meet her lover, Frank. Since "her father had found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say to him" (Joyce 32). Eveline decided to "meet her lover secretly" (32). Her lover, Frank, is presented as "kind, manly, open-hearted" (Joyce 31). In other words, he is the polar opposite of her father. Frank has a life beyond Dublin, in Buenos Aires where he has "a home waiting for her" (31). Frank's devotion offers Eveline, not just an escape but also the chance to lead a different life. He is a man who seems ready to support her, but regardless of his feelings, her father's views and opinions still come first in Eveline's mind. Also, Eveline's choice proves she has no agency. The fact that she chose her father's approval over her relationship lays the ground for the development of the syndrome.

Moving on to Stockholm Syndrome's features, it was already established that the victim, Eveline in this case, has been abused. The second feature of Stockholm Syndrome refers to the fact that none of the victims ended up escaping (Namnyak et al. 5). By the time of the departure, the moment Eveline has the chance to escape, it becomes, perhaps, clearer, that she will continue to choose what she knows over something new. Habib writes that "we have seen nothing that would suggest her determination to go with Frank; all that we have seen indicate the opposite, strengthening our conviction in her want of conscious will" (1). Eveline's story does not indicate that she truly intends to escape. Even though there is a glimpse of desire to get away from her father, Eveline's attachment to him becomes clearer as the departure date approaches. Eveline seems to be unable to move on; everywhere she looks, she is simply reminded of the past. This makes the ending of the story where Eveline chooses not to leave her current life behind and form a new life with Frank, inevitable. Even though "he rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow ... Her eyes gave him no sign of

love or farewell or recognition” (Joyce 34). Eveline had the opportunity to escape but did not utilize it. Furthermore, the lack of recognition towards Frank may indicate that Eveline is emotionally withdrawn, a syndrome’s cognitive effect, and alienated from her surroundings, a syndrome’s social effect.

The third feature of Stockholm Syndrome is isolation. The violence that is inflicted upon Eveline takes place within a confined space; her household. Furthermore, her life is being controlled by her dominant father who makes all the decisions. These facts leave Eveline trapped in a life she does not desire. The feeling of isolation is apparent in the opening of the story. Joyce writes how Eveline is “sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains” (Joyce 29). There are several keywords just in this quote that stand out. In particular, Eveline is not just behind a “window” (29) but also behind “window curtains” (29). She is, quite literally, trapped behind multiple layers, staring out at a reality she is not fully part of. Sandamali argues that “this scene symbolizes an animal in the cage or a prisoner who is sitting behind iron bars” (4). Furthermore, the window symbolizes Eveline’s entrapment and imprisonment (4). Stockholm Syndrome indicates that the abused feels entrapped. In Eveline’s situation, the feeling of entrapment does not simply refer to the confined environment in which she lives, but also to the limited choices she has.

Although a few psychological reactions to Stockholm Syndrome have already pointed out, there are other additional instances in the story. The choices Eveline has made so far, intensify the feeling of entrapment and foreshadow the ending of the story. She is seemingly in a world that is closing down upon her; she sees the images of suffocation and the corrosive influences that are destroying her life (Veazey, 25). Because of this, she considers eloping with the man who loves her, Frank. Eveline states that “in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that...People would treat her with respect then. She

would not be treated as her mother had been” (Joyce 30). There is hope, momentarily, that she could have a brighter future away from Dublin. Yet, this hope is ephemeral. Veazey writes that negative feelings regarding the future intrude Eveline’s mind. He states that “Though her thoughts have turned towards escaping his world that is slowly suffocating her, the sea that could be her freedom becomes just one more element of drowning and destruction” (25). Therefore, Eveline’s lack of hope may be interpreted as a Stockholm Syndrome’s emotional reaction.

Part of Eveline’s struggle regarding the emotional attachment she has to her father is because of the specific mindset she has been brought up with; Eveline is “trapped in a web of social expectations and constraints, women intend from the strict patriarchal society of Dublin” (Turkeli 3). She may have been abused by this man, but he is still her father, and she is still his daughter. Therefore, it can be argued that Eveline suffers from psychological infantilism, an excessive dependence on her abusive father despite his behavior. On her mother’s deathbed, Eveline commits to “keep the home together” (Joyce 33) and in doing so, she affiliates herself with the female role of holding the family together. Furthermore, this memory is juxtaposed against another, in which she remembers “her father putting on her mother’s bonnet to make the children laugh” (Joyce 32). Eveline seems to have epiphanic moments during which she realizes how abusive her father can be. The fear of her father’s violent threats manifests physically upon Eveline through “palpitations” (Joyce 30). However, most of the time she is passively gazing through the window, reflecting upon a kinder paternal figure. Therefore, it can be argued that she is in denial. She seems to experience “frozen fright”, a mental paralysis caused by fear, an extreme reaction to Stockholm Syndrome.

In conclusion, three possible causes for the development of Stockholm Syndrome have been located in the story. These include the victim’s, Eveline’s in this case, (a) abuse,

(b) perception of generosity from her father, and (c) isolation. In other words, Eveline has spent her life in a confined environment where she is being controlled and abused by her father. Furthermore, Eveline's (a) abuse, (b) isolation, (c) choice to not escape, and (d) attachment to her father, are features that may form the basis for Stockholm Syndrome's diagnosis. Moreover, the syndrome's psychological impact upon Eveline is evident. Eveline exhibits (a) cognitive, (b) emotional, and (c) social symptoms. Also, she seems to suffer from frozen fright and psychological infantilism. Overall, the only Stockholm Syndrome's aspect that is not present in the story, is Eveline's perception of (physical) inability to escape. On the contrary, Eveline had the chance to proceed with eloping with Frank but chose otherwise. One possible explanation could be, perhaps, the way Eveline was raised. She is a young woman in Ireland, and "gender roles which are stated by society put women in borders and strict their actions" (Turkeli 2). Nevertheless, it can be argued that Eveline suffers from a severe form of Stockholm Syndrome. As noted in the introductory chapter of this thesis, there seems to be a link between "Eveline" and *The Handmaid's Tale*. This thesis interprets this link as the nightmare of Stockholm Syndrome. In continuation, the said syndrome is explored in the latter story.

Chapter Three

The Handmaid's Tale

Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* portrays a dystopian society of subjugation and regression. The author herself, inspired by actual socio-political events that occurred during the 1980s, has stated that her work is part of the speculative fiction genre; "Science fiction has monsters and spaceships; speculative fiction could really happen." (Armstrong 2). More analytically, the novel is inspired by the rising power of patriarchy and Christianity in the USA that attacked female reproductive rights (3). The narrative revolves around a Handmaid named Offred, whose body has become a property of the state. Like every other Handmaid, Offred is assigned to a Commander to reproduce offspring. In the land of Gilead, the women who are fertile are essential; they are viewed explicitly as "two-legged wombs" who have assumed the role of a reproductive machines (Stael 456). On the other hand, the infertile women are being sentenced to a slow death. They are sent to the toxic dumps where they work themselves into the grave by clearing the contaminated environment. Even though the handmaids were enslaved, maltreated, and oppressed, there are some instances in the novel where their sympathetic feelings towards their oppressors are present. Therefore, it can be argued that they suffer from Stockholm Syndrome. This chapter examines closely the story of the handmaid Offred, who also seems to suffer from said syndrome. Textual evidence that derives from the story is used to locate Stockholm Syndrome's causes, features, and psychological effects upon Offred.

In order to determine whether Offred is a Stockholm Syndrome victim, it is imperative to pinpoint the causes that may be responsible for the syndrome's development. The first cause is the threat against the victim's survival (Hooper et al. 100). Offred states that the handmaids have to obey the aunts who are exerting control over them and abusing them.

The aunts “had electric cattle prods slung on thongs from their leather belts” (Atwood 2). Offred knows that if she disobeys, she will be tortured. She recalls another disobedient handmaid whose “feet would not fit into her shoes, they were too swollen. It was the feet they'd do, for a first offense...After that the hands” (86). Furthermore, Offred has to obey the commander's wife, otherwise, she will give her trouble (13). She knows that in Gilead “there's Scriptural precedent” (14) that allows the wives to maltreat the handmaids. Therefore, Offred is afraid for her safety since various possible individuals can harm her. Overall, Offred's abuse is both a Stockholm Syndrome's cause and feature.

The second cause is the victim's sense of the captor's kindness (Hooper et al. 100). The fact that the commander treats her as something more than a reproductive machine seems to implicate things, as it affects the way Offred feels. Offred agrees to meet him secretly and during those meetings, he offers her presents and an ephemeral thrill that helps her escape from her monotonous daily routine (Atwood 143). She thinks of his generosity as a “luxury” and their arrangement “is like being on a date” (Atwood 133). Even though she understands that these arrangements are beneficial to him as well, after his generous actions, he is not “a thing” to her anymore (Atwood 151). Therefore, Offred has a perception of kindness from her perpetrator, the commander in that case, and due to that, she exhibits sympathetic feelings towards him. These sympathetic feelings Offred has cultivated, are, by definition, the very essence of Stockholm Syndrome (Adjoran et al. 458).

Moreover, the third cause is the fact that the victim adopts the captor's opinions (Hooper et al. 100). Gayret argues that “the Republic of Gilead constitutes a form of mental violence so as to discipline its female subjects by affecting their minds and lacking fortification of the self...in which the Aunts dictate the faiths of new ideology and implement control over the female masses” (106). An instance where this becomes clear in the novel is when Offred sees the female Japanese tourists during her walks. Offred feels repelled since

they are underdressed and admits that “it has taken so little time to change our minds, about things like this” (Atwood 27). Furthermore, she accepts the role the patriarchal society of Gilead has designed for her: “We are for breeding purposes... We are two-legged wombs, that’s all” (Atwood 29). Therefore, Offred has adopted the perception of her captors.

Finally, the fourth cause is the victim’s inability to escape (Hooper et al. 100). This is contextualized within the fictional world of Gilead, a place where the all-seeing eye is everywhere. The Panopticon concept of Jeremy Bentham is realized in the text; the surveillance of everyone’s daily life is an apparent feature, so no one is actually safe or free. From the commander to the doctor who examines Offred, to Offred herself, there is no-one who is secure from the gaze. Hammer argues that “the novel constantly emphasizes the omnipresence of the scrutinizing gaze; the word ‘eye’ is everywhere; the secret police are called ‘eyes,’ and the farewell greeting “under his eye” refers to the divine gaze but also testifies to the fact that everyone is indeed under the eye of someone else” (Hammer 42). Therefore, it can be argued that, even if a handmaid desired to escape, she would most likely fail due to the constant surveillance. All those who fail to escape or do not comply with Gilead’s laws are executed and hanged on The Wall. They are “made into examples, for the rest” (Atwood 32). This, even more, horrible fate enhances Offred’s inability to escape.

In continuation, Stockholm Syndrome’s theoretical framework lists four features that can be used as its diagnostic criteria. This chapter has already located two of them that refer to Offred’s abuse by her captors, and Offred’s expression of sympathetic feelings towards the commander. The third feature refers to the victim’s isolation. The regime of Gilead has imposed a law that forbids women’s access to literacy (Atwood 36) because “the abuser fears the victim’s imagination” (Graham et al. 226). However, Offred is isolated physically as well. She is forced to live at the commander’s house and most of her time, she is locked in her room. Therefore, most of her time, Offred is not preoccupied with anything, aside from

her thoughts. She is not allowed out, except for her daily walks (Atwood 2), during which she is accompanied by another handmaid. Offred thinks that “she is my spy, as I am hers. If either of us slips through the net...the other will be accountable” (Atwood 17). Therefore, Offred is confined, both physically, and mentally.

The final Stockholm Syndrome feature indicates that the victims do not, in fact, escape (Namnyak et al. 5). Even though it has already been established that Offred is unable to escape due to the constant surveillance, she has an opportunity to escape Gilead’s dictatorship by working with the resistance. However, she refuses. On the contrary, Offred accepts her fate as a reproduction machine when she thinks to herself “I’ll empty myself, truly, become a chalice...I’ll forget about the others, I’ll stop complaining” (Atwood 218). She knows that resisting requires courage and heroism, qualities she does not possess. Offred admits to herself that “I’ll say anything they like, I’ll incriminate anyone. It’s true, the first scream, whimper even, and I’ll turn to jelly, I’ll confess to any crime, I’ll end up hanging from a hook on the Wall.” (Atwood 251). Therefore, she chooses to accept her fate passively and does not even attempt to obtain a better future for herself. At the same time, it can be argued that Offred is not resisting because she is terrified by the fate that awaits her, in case she fails; she will be hanged at the Wall along with the other traitors. This may be interpreted as frozen fright, the paralyzing fear to act when the victim is under the influence of the syndrome.

Throughout the novel, there is textual evidence that demonstrates further the syndrome’s impact upon Offred. Her daily life is harsh, also because there is little to no chance to escape, even mentally. Thus, she spends most of the time lost in her thoughts. These thoughts are mostly flashbacks of her previous life where she was “able to choose” (Atwood 24). Even though she fantasizes about a life she does not have any more, and has “these attacks of the past, like faintness, a wave sweeping” (Atwood 48), helplessness overwhelms her. She knows she is unable to escape her fate as “there is nothing to be done”

(Atwood 48). The recurring flashbacks are listed as a cognitive symptom due to the syndrome, while helplessness is listed as an emotional one.

Furthermore, the fact that Offred has no saying over her own body, has alienated from her own self. Offred looks at herself and fails to recognize her own body: “my nakedness is strange to me already” (Atwood 59). Moreover, during the Ceremony, when Offred is forced to have a sexual intercourse with the commander with his wife present, Offred searches for a way to cope with this unpleasant incident. She chooses to detach herself mentally from what is happening, by pretending “not to be present, not in the flesh” (Atwood 125). Gayret argues that “as the female body is shattered into sexual functions and degraded...the system bulldozes into the female self-conception” (111). Thus, Offred is not only alienated from herself, but also from her surroundings. Based on these incidents, it is evident that Offred struggles socially as well, due to Stockholm Syndrome.

In conclusion, all the possible causes for the development of Stockholm Syndrome have been located in the story. These include the victim's, Offred's in this case, (a) abuse, (b) perception of generosity from the Commander, (c) isolation, and (d) inability to escape. In other words, Offred lives in a confined environment she cannot escape, where she is being controlled and abused by multiple people. Furthermore, Offred's (a) abuse, (b) isolation, (c) decision not to escape, and (d) sympathetic feelings towards the Commander, are features that may form the basis for Stockholm Syndrome's diagnosis. Moreover, the syndrome's psychological impact upon Offred is evident. Eveline exhibits (a) cognitive, (b) emotional, and (c) social symptoms. Also, she seems to suffer from frozen fright. Overall, the only Stockholm Syndrome's aspect that is not present in the story, is Offred exhibiting symptoms of psychological infantilism. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Offred suffers from a severe form of Stockholm Syndrome. In continuation, this thesis places the two stories of “Eveline”

and *The Handmaid's Tale* side by side, in order to offer a comparative analysis through the lens of Stockholm Syndrome.

Chapter Four

Comparative Analysis

James Joyce's "Eveline" and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* are literary texts that, at first glance, may seem to be completely different. Eveline's story reflects the ordinary Irish life in the city of Dublin at the beginning of the twentieth century, while Offred's story reflects a futuristic dystopian society in North America. More essentially, Eveline grew up in a close community in which family values are deeply important and the female role is to support the household. On the other hand, Offred is a modern woman with a successful career who is allowed to have intimate relationships outside the marital bonds. Therefore, the two women have been raised according to different values, and have different limitations regarding their way of living. Yet, the stories share similar themes such as the oppression of patriarchal societies, female subjugation and lack of agency. This thesis, so far, has already proved that the heroines of each story seem to suffer from Stockholm Syndrome. In continuation, this chapter offers a comparative reading of "Eveline" and *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Starting with Stockholm Syndrome's causes, in Joyce's "Eveline," most of them have been detected. Eveline is afraid for her safety as her father often threatens her. Furthermore, the flashbacks she has of a past life where her father was kinder influence her opinion on him as she believes he can still display good behavior. Finally, she is so eager to please her father so she chooses her father over Frank. However, these causes that have been identified with Stockholm Syndrome, may also be associated with the Irish ordinary life of the early twentieth century. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, gender roles were designed in such a way that restricted female freedom and expression of identity. On the other hand, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, all of the causes have been detected. Offred is also afraid for her safety as

threats come from variant individuals. Also, in her grim daily routine she receives kindness from the commander who treats her with generosity. Furthermore, she admits to herself that she has adopted her captors' ideas and is eager to obey them. Finally, the constant surveillance of Gilead leave her no options to escape. Similarly, these incidents have been inspired by actual events related to female oppression in the USA during the early 1980s.

In continuation, Stockholm Syndrome can be identified through a series of features. As a child, Eveline was a witness of her father's abuse towards her family members. As an adult, she is being emotionally abused by him. Furthermore, she is afraid his threats will be carried out and he will harm her physically, as well. Eveline's father controls her completely and he tries to isolate her. This is evident when he forbites her from seeing Frank. However, Eveline has recurring flashbacks of her past life when her father was kinder and she expresses sympathetic feelings towards him. In the end of the story, even though she had the opportunity to build a better life for herself with Frank away from her father's grasp, she chose not to proceed with her plan. Bearing in mind the fact that Joyce describes the ordinary Irish life, the ending of "Eveline" could, perhaps, be expected. She will make the choices she is expected to make. On the other hand, Offred lives in an environment where she is being physically, emotionally, and sexually abused. Furthermore, her abuse comes from different individuals. She spends most of her time physically isolated in her room. However, she is also mentally isolated as she has no access to education and other activities, such as reading. Additionally, she is not allowed to speak with anyone freely. She expresses sympathetic feelings towards one of her captors, the commander, whose gestures are perceived as generous. Even though Offred cannot easily escape due to the constant surveillance, she refuses to fight for a better future by not working with the rebels.

Finally, the victims seem to exhibit certain symptoms when they are influenced by Stockholm Syndrome. Both Eveline and Offred exhibit cognitive, social, and emotional

symptoms. These include recurring flashbacks of their past lives, feelings of helplessness and sadness due to the unpleasant lives they lead and limited choices they have, and finally, estrangement from themselves and their surroundings. Furthermore, both Eveline and Offred exhibit extreme symptoms due to Stockholm Syndrome. More analytically, Eveline suffers from frozen fright, a profound fear that enhances her mental paralysis, and psychological infantilism, a deep dependance upon her father. On the other hand, Offred suffers only from frozen fright.

Conclusion

Bearing in mind Stockholm Syndrome's theoretical framework, parallels were drawn between James Joyce's "Eveline" and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. As explained in the previous chapters, both heroines live in an environment that enables the development of Stockholm Syndrome. In Offred's case, all of these are applicable while in Eveline's case the first three possible causes apply. In continuation, all of Stockholm Syndrome's features have been detected in both stories. Finally, Eveline exhibits all symptoms, while Offred exhibits all but the psychological infantilism. Therefore, it can be argued that even though the two heroines come from different backgrounds, they lead similar lives as both of them are victims of Stockholm Syndrome.

However, it is essential to note once again that Stockholm Syndrome has not been officially recognized as mental disease. "Eveline" describes a story that was perceived as normal in Ireland while *The Handmaid's Tale* describes a story that could potentially happen. Therefore, the setting of both stories is structured in such a way that restricts female agency. Whether they are not, truly, victims of the syndrome, enough evidence that, at least theoretically, has been associated with the syndrome's existence.

Finally, it is important to note once more that not enough research has been done on Stockholm Syndrome neither have these stories been analyzed through the syndrome's prism to such extent. Therefore, this thesis might serve as a tool to complementary analysis on Stockholm Syndrome, and on analysis of other literary texts that may entail similar themes. Furthermore, it might raise awareness about female oppression that is still occurring in many households, and its possible association with mental health issues.

Works Cited

- Adjoran, Michael et al. "Stockholm Syndrome as Vernacular Resource." *The Sociological Quarterly*. Taylor & Francis Online, 2016, pp. 454-74.
- Alexander, David A. and Susan Klein. "Kidnapping and Hostage-taking: A Review of Effects, Coping and Resilience." *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*. SAGE Journals, Vol. 102, No.1, 2009, pp. 16-21.
- Armstrong, Jennifer K. "Why *The Handmaid's Tale* is So Relevant Today." *Academia*, 2018, pp. 1-21.
- Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Anchor Books, 1998.
- Ben-Merre, David. "Eveline Ever After." *James Joyce Quarterly*. University of Tulsa, Vol. 49, No. ¾, 2012, pp. 455-71.
- Chan, Ko Ling. "Gender Differences in Self-Reports of Intimate Partner Violence: A Review.", *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, Vol. 16, No. 16, Spring 2011, pp. 167-75.
- Gayret, Gokcenaz. "'Walking Wombs': Loss of Individuality and Self-Alienation in *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood." *Journal of The Institute of Science*. Kafkas University, Vol. 2, 2019, pp. 103-21.
- Graham, Dee L. et al. "A Scale for Identifying "Stockholm Syndrome" Reactions in Young Dating Women: Factor Structure, Reliability, and Validity." *Violence and Victims*. Springer Publishing, 1995, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 3-22.
- Graham, Dee L. *Loving to Survive: Sexual Terror, Men's Violence, and Women's Lives*. New York University Press, 1994.

- Habib, Ramy. "Examining Eveline: A Study in the Origins of the Paralyzed Subject in Joyce's *Dubliners*." *Inquiries Journal*, Vol 9, No. 1, 2017, page 1.
- Heghes, Nicoleta-Elena and Christina Gabriela Schiopu. "The Stockholm Syndrome: Psychosocial Varieties and Interdisciplinary Implications." *Research Association for Interdisciplinary Studies*. Rais, 2019, pp. 66-72.
- Hooper, Lisa et al. *Models of Psychopathology: Generational Processes and Relational Roles*. Springer, 2014.
- Joyce, James. "Eveline." *Dubliners*. Penguin Classics, 1991, pp. 29-34.
- Namnyak, Mary, et al. "'Stockholm Syndrome': Psychiatric Diagnosis or Urban Myth?" *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*. PubMed, Vol. 117, No.1, 2008, pp. 1-8.
- Ruhs, Theodora. "I'm Ravenous for News: Using *The Handmaid's Tale* to Explore the Role of Journalism", *The Handmaid's Tale: Teaching Dystopia, Feminism, and Resistance Across Disciplines and Borders*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, pp. 117-34.
- Sandamali, Sugandika. "Investigating Themes and Techniques that Employ in "Eveline" by James Joyce: Stream of Consciousness as The Main Technique." *Grin*, 2015, pp. 1-11.
- Staels, Hilde. "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*: Resistance through Narrating" *English Studies*, Vol. 76, No. 5, 1995, pp. 455-67.
- Turkeli, Ayca. "The Oppression and Paralysis of Women in Joyce's "Eveline" and "The Boarding House"". *Academia*, 2018, pp. 1-8.
- Veazey, Lacey L. "Drowning in Eveline", *The Oswald Review*, Vol 5, No. 1, 2005, pp. 23-36.