After the Race

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES JOYCE

James Joyce was born on February 2, 1882 in Dublin, Ireland to a Catholic family. Joyce's parents, May and John Joyce, went on to have nine more surviving children, making James the eldest child of the family. Although John Joyce was able to temporarily secure prosperity for the Joyce family, he later dragged them into poverty after he was dismissed from his job in 1893 and started drinking heavily. James Joyce attended the University College Dublin from 1898 to 1902, during which time he became involved in the local literary society. Upon his graduation, he went to Paris to study medicine, but he quickly abandoned this endeavor and began developing his writing style. In 1904, Joyce was called back to Dublin to care for his dying mother, who passed away in August of that year. While back in Dublin, Joyce met his future wife, Nora Barnacle, and the two left Ireland a few months after Joyce's mother died. Disappointed with his home country, he would only ever return to Ireland for a handful of visits for the rest of his lifetime. Joyce and his wife settled in Trieste, a city in what is now Italy, where he supported their growing family by teaching English, and where the couple had two children: Giorgio and Lucia. At this time, he had already been working on *Dubliners*, but he would not have the satisfaction of seeing it published until 1914. After World War I broke out, Joyce moved to Zurich and then later to Paris, where he published his masterpiece *Ulysses* in 1922. Having now gained a considerable amount of fame as a modernist writer, Joyce attracted the attention and patronage of English activist Harriet Shaw Weaver, whose financial support allowed Joyce to fully dedicate himself to writing. Joyce escaped Paris and its Nazi occupation in 1940. He fled to Zurich where he died from a perforated ulcer on January 13, 1941.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

"After the Race" was written when the idea of Irish Home Rule was hotly debated in the country. Ireland had long been governed by England and, at the beginning of the 20th century, was considered part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Ireland endured exploitation at the hands of the British, which left the country impoverished. The city of Dublin especially experienced this poverty; in contrast to the more affluent southern side of the city, northern Dublin was riddled with crowded slums in horribly unsanitary conditions. One of the most notable Irish politicians of this time was Charles Stewart Parnell, who turned the Irish Parliamentary Party (who advocated for Irish Home Rule) into a major party. He was a Member of Parliament from 1875 to 1891, but his career was effectively destroyed in 1889, when it was revealed to the public that he had been living with the separated wife of another politician. This fall-out split the Liberal Party, who had adopted the policy of Irish Home Rule, and momentarily thwarted the effort. The 19th century and early 20th century were also marked by the Industrial Revolution and globalized trade, both of which strengthened and bolstered the middle class of working professionals. The characters Jimmy Doyle and Jimmy's father are part of this wealthy class.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

"After the Race" is one of fifteen stories in James Joyce's short story collection *Dubliners*. This collection of tales captures the grittiness of life in Dublin, Ireland, and especially focuses on the paralysis that, according to Joyce, prevented the country from achieving any meaningful economic, political, or social progress. Although a Modernist writer, Joyce was nonetheless influenced by Realist writers, such as Gustave Flaubert, whose novel *Madame Bovary* is one of the most famous examples of this genre. Realism's focus on everyday experiences is showcased in "After the Race" and the other *Dubliners* stories. While most of the other stories in *Dubliners* portray characters from the middle and lower classes, "After the Race" is about an upper-class Irishman, whose fixation on the European continent has similarities to Gabriel Conroy's, the protagonist of Joyce's story "The Dead." "After the Race" plays with the Modernist concept of stream-of-consciousness writing, a narrative mode that Joyce refines and exercises in his later books *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses*, and *Finnegans Wake*, the latter of which is notorious for pushing this narrative style to the edge of understanding. James Joyce is one of the most famous Modernists from the early 20th century and helped shape the genre, along with: Virginia Woolf, author of *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*; poet T.S. Eliot; critic and writer Ezra Pound, who serialized *Ulysses* in his magazine *The Little Review*; and others. Although *Dubliners* had been quickly eclipsed by Joyce's later works in the early 1900s, it is now enjoying renewed criticism and attention. In 2014, 100 years after the publication date of *Dubliners*, editor Thomas Morris gathered fifteen Irish writers to recreate the stories of the original book by Joyce; the resulting collection is called *Dubliners 100*.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** After the Race
- **When Written:** 1904
- **Where Written:** Dublin, Ireland

- **When Published:** First published as a standalone story in a weekly publication called *The Irish Homestead* in December 1904. It was also part of James Joyce's short story collection *Dubliners*, which was published in 1914.
- **Literary Period:** Modernism
- **Genre:** Short story, Realism
- **Setting:** Dublin, Ireland
- **Climax:** When the card game finishes, leaving Jimmy Doyle a loser and significantly indebted to his companions
- **Antagonist:** Although the Englishman Routh sometimes plays the role of antagonist (as during the political argument at dinner, or in the card game that he wins at Jimmy's expense), Jimmy's own poor decisions and inaction are the more accurate antagonists.
- **Point of View:** Third person primarily limited to Jimmy Doyle's consciousness, although there are instances when this third person narrator is omniscient and describes other characters' inner thoughts and feelings as well.

EXTRA CREDIT

Setting the scene. In April of 1903, a year before he would return to Dublin to be with his dying mother, James Joyce interviewed a French race-car driver for the periodical *The Irish Times*. This driver, named Henri Fournier, was supposed to participate in the Gordon-Bennett automobile race that would take place in Ireland in July of 1903. Although Fournier did not end up participating after all, Joyce made the most of this exchange, and used the race as the setting for his story "After the Race."

Socialist sympathies. Capitalism and its effects are a central subject in "After the Race." Given the anti-capitalist sentiment in the story, it is not surprising that James Joyce maintained an interest in socialism throughout his life. While living in Dublin, he was earnestly involved in socialist organizations. After becoming disillusioned with the internal fights among socialists that blocked significant progress, his active participation waned. Nonetheless, his socialist sympathies remained throughout his life, and were frequently explored in his writing.

PLOT SUMMARY

Cars are driving toward Dublin, and spectators gather to watch them speed by. Occasionally, the locals cheer for the passing cars, especially the blue French cars. The French team is doing relatively well in this **race**; they won second and third place. The first-place winner is Belgian, though he was driving for the German team. Every time a blue car passes, the Irish spectators cheer twice as loud.

In one of these cars is a group of four excited men. One of them is the owner of the car, a French man named Charles Ségouin. He is accompanied by his Canadian cousin André Rivière, a Hungarian pianist named Villona, and a young man named Jimmy Doyle. Ségouin is pleased because the race has helped him to receive some support for the motor company he is going to start. Rivière is in good spirits because he is going to become manager of Ségouin's company. Villona is happy because he had a wonderful lunch. Doyle, however, is more excited than actually happy.

Jimmy is twenty-six years old and is the son of a wealthy Irishman. Jimmy's father had been an Irish Nationalist, but he moderated those views early on as he sought financial success. He became rich by opening a chain of butcher shops in and around Dublin and by taking police contracts to supply the police with his goods. He is now locally famous as being quite wealthy. Jimmy's father sent him to England for college and then to Dublin University. Jimmy also spent a term at Cambridge, where he met Ségouin. Jimmy was not a good student, and instead spent his time socializing. Although Jimmy's father scolds him for how much he spends, he is secretly proud of his son's extravagance.

As the car drives along, Jimmy struggles to understand what Ségouin and Rivière, who are in the front seats, are saying. Jimmy's excitement stems from three things: the thrill of driving quickly; the local fame that he has gained from being seen with Ségouin and his other continental companions (the Irish refer to people from mainland Europe as "continentals"; and having money. Jimmy believes that he has quite a lot of money, although he acknowledges that Ségouin would probably not be impressed. Additionally, Jimmy prides himself in knowing how much hard work goes into making money, which he is especially aware of now that he is on the verge of making a big investment in Ségouin's company. Between Ségouin's wealthy appearance and Jimmy's father's assurance that there is lots of money to be made in car manufacturing, Jimmy is confident of the investment.

When the group arrive in Dublin, Ségouin drops Jimmy and Villona off near the bank. The two men walk north to get to Jimmy's parents' house, where they will be staying. They need to get dressed for dinner that night with Ségouin and Rivière. At Jimmy's house, everyone is excited about the prospect of Jimmy's dinner with the continental Europeans. Jimmy looks quite handsome when he dresses up, which makes his father very proud. In fact, Jimmy's father is in such good spirits that he is friendly with Villona. Villona, however, doesn't pay attention to Jimmy's father, as he is feeling hungry and is looking forward to eating dinner.

The dinner is delicious and confirms for Jimmy that Ségouin has excellent taste. While at dinner, they are joined by Routh, an Englishman that Ségouin knew at Cambridge. The conversation between the men is lively. Villona speaks to Routh about his love of old instruments and English songs while Rivière engages Jimmy on the quality of French mechanics. When the

discussion turns to politics, things get very heated between Jimmy and Routh, so much so that Ségouin intervenes with a toast.

After dinner, they all walk in Stephen's Green, where they come across Rivière's American acquaintance Farley. They take a car and then a train to Farley's yacht. When they arrive, Villona starts playing songs on the piano in the cabin while the other men dance. Farley eventually tires out, so they sit down to have a small supper, although they really just end up drinking.

Jimmy, Ségouin, Rivière, Routh, and Farley start to **play cards**, while Villona keeps playing the piano. They play many games, one after the next, while drinking even more. As the stakes climb, I.O.U.s begin to be handed out. Jimmy isn't sure who's winning, but he definitely knows that he's losing. By now he is quite drunk, and he keeps confusing his cards and needs the other men to sort out his I.O.U.s for him. He wishes the game would end; eventually, one of the men suggests one last game.

The piano is silent, which suggests that Villona is up on deck. Jimmy feels terrible about the game and his losses, but he tries to be excited for Routh and Ségouin, both of whom are leading. At last, Routh wins, and debts get settled, revealing that Farley and Jimmy have lost the most. Beginning to feel hungover, Jimmy slumps at the table and knows that he is going to regret the game in the morning. For now, however, he is glad to sink into forgetful sleep. Suddenly, the door opens to reveal Villona, who announces the dawn.

CHARACTERS

Jimmy Doyle – The story's protagonist is a young Irishman named Jimmy Doyle. Jimmy is twenty-six years old and has a brown moustache and "rather innocent looking grey eyes." Jimmy's father is a wealthy man, whose money supported Jimmy through his education: first at a Catholic college in England; then at Dublin University for law; and lastly at Cambridge for a term. It was at Cambridge that Jimmy met the Frenchmen Charles Ségouin, in whose **car** Jimmy rides for the first half of the story, although it is made clear that the two men are "not much more than acquaintances." Jimmy was never a serious student, and instead spent much of his time socializing within "motoring circles." Although he has made some smaller financial blunders in his life, he believes that his knowledge of how much work goes into making money will prevent him from making any truly disastrous mistakes. With his father's blessing, he is planning on investing in Ségouin's not-yet-founded motor car company, from which he hopes to make a lot of money. Jimmy enjoys the notoriety he attracts from being with his continental European acquaintances, and it is suggested that he feels that these European associations set him apart from other Irish people, even as his outburst about politics while drinking with the Englishman Routh indicates that he feels that the Irish should be taken more seriously by other European powers. The story depicts Jimmy as insecure about his standing within the broader world as a wealthy Irishman—rather than feeling confident, he is always looking for indications of his own worthiness, whether in the admiration of his countrymen or the attention of European continentals. Throughout, the story subtly implies that this insecurity is leading Jimmy toward disaster; in fact, the story suggests that Jimmy himself vaguely senses this, but can't do anything to stop it. As Jimmy goes through the evening with his continental acquaintances—eating dinner, giving speeches, talking politics, and **playing cards**—Jimmy seems to be being humored and exploited; and to be exploiting himself to get the affirmation he needs. In its ending, when a hopelessly drunk Jimmy hopes to escape into sleep from the thought of his substantial losses in cards, only to find that it is already dawn, the story suggests that Jimmy's desire to be accepted among the continentals is an unsustainable path that will lead to his ruin. Jimmy can also be seen as being a symbol for both the general Irish populace, and specifically for the Irish upper class—and a criticism of the self-hating traits that Joyce saw in his fellow Irish citizens.

Charles Ségouin – Charles Ségouin is a French man who owns the **car** that Jimmy Doyle, André Rivière, and Villona are riding in at the end of the race. Ségouin serves as a symbolic representative for the French in the story. At the beginning of the story, he is in good spirits because of the French team's success in the **race**, and because he has received some orders for the motor company that he is purportedly opening in Paris. He has also been working to persuade Jimmy to invest in this company. Ségouin appears to be rich, and apparently owns several large hotels in France. As the story progresses, Ségouin proves himself to have good taste (he sets up an excellent dinner at his hotel), and an able manager of the conversation among the group of men who gather for that dinner. Yet there is always the sense in the story that Ségouin may not be entirely on the up-and-up. It's not clear just how legitimate his not-yet-founded motor company is. His efforts to get Jimmy to invest are manipulative (he implies that he is doing Jimmy a favor by letting him put money into the venture), and his hotel wealth is unconfirmed. Further, his demeanor through the night seems to imply a willingness to humor Jimmy while taking advantage of him—getting Jimmy drunk, then crushing him at **cards**. The implication is that Ségouin may be playing on Jimmy's insecurities in order to exploit him, with a further suggestion that the French more generally may be exploiting the wealthy Irish class in similar ways.

Jimmy Doyle's father – Jimmy Doyle's father is a wealthy Irish businessman who acquired his money by managing a chain of butcher shops that are now established across Dublin. Although he had been an Irish nationalist as a youth (an advocator for Irish Home Rule), the story makes clear that he "modified his views"—and implies that he sold out on his

political beliefs, and on Irish self-determination, in order to achieve financial success. That success is also built on his choice to enter into police contracts, which practically speaking means he sells meat to the jails and barracks, but has the broader significance of meaning that he makes his money by working in concert with the English authorities who rule Ireland. With his money, he sent Jimmy to a college in England, followed by Dublin university and then a semester in Cambridge. Although he pretends to appear angry at his son's sometimes frivolous expenses, he is actually proud of his son's spending. He encourages his son's connection with Charles Ségouin, as he believes there is lots of money to be made in the **motoring** business and he is proud of his son's continental associations. Along with Jimmy, he represents the Irish upper class, and how it has abandoned the needs of Ireland in pursuing its own wealth, and yet is likely to suffer failure as it pursues opportunity and stature among the wealthier, more worldly continental Europeans.

Villona – Villona is a poor, but talented, Hungarian pianist who is one of the six men who make up the partying group along with Jimmy Doyle. He also serves as a symbolic representative as Hungary and as a foil character for Jimmy Doyle. Joyce uses the contrast between Villona and Jimmy to illustrate his opinion of how the Irish should act in order to progress as a country. At the time that the story was written, Hungary had secured some governmental and fiscal independence from Austria, the country that had been ruling them, in the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 (although Joyce appears to be glorifying the reception of this political arrangement, as many Hungarians actually bitterly resented it and Hungary did not achieve total independence until 1918). While Jimmy is fixated on getting attention from his continental companions and on keeping up in their capitalist pursuits, Villona is satisfied with meeting his needs (glimpses into his consciousness reveal a focus on food) and exploring his artistic pursuits. Instead of talking about **cars** and capital at dinner, he tries to engage an uninterested Routh in a discussion about old English songs and instruments. While the other men **play cards**, he plays the piano and even leaves the cabin when they gamble, actions that demonstrate his disinterest in participating in the money games of the other men and his prioritization of art. Villona's decision to not participate in their capitalist schemes illustrates how the country of Hungary is acting independently—fiscally, politically, and socially—from the other national powers that would otherwise control them. Villona offers a juxtaposition to Jimmy that serves to more clearly reveal Jimmy's (and the Irish's more generally) desperate dependance on other countries' socioeconomic structures and approval. Additionally, while Jimmy is "too excited to be genuinely happy," Villona is "an optimist by nature," which suggests that Villona, because of his freedom from the insidious nature of capitalism, actually experiences happiness and is spared the spiritual despair that haunts Jimmy and, by extension, the Irish.

Routh – Routh is an Englishman who meets up with the group of men at dinner. He is the symbolic representative for England in the story. There are multiple references to a tight connection between Routh and Charles Ségouin (notably their friendship from Cambridge and Jimmy Doyle's imagining them as a "graceful" pair) that demonstrate how the historically powerful countries of England and France, to the exclusion and exploitation of others, always come out on top. Symbolically, Routh wins the **card game** that ruins Jimmy, an outcome that speaks to the historic abuse of the Irish at the hands of the English.

André Rivière – André Rivière is Charles Ségouin's Canadian cousin and is the story's representative for Canada, although he is connected in a tangential manner to France: he is Ségouin's cousin; he intends to become manager of Ségouin's proposed motor car business in Paris; he speaks French; and he is proud of France's success in the **race**. Through the extension of Rivière's cultural identity Joyce implies two things. First, Rivière, like Jimmy Doyle, is interested in associating himself with more powerful countries. Second, with Rivière showing a kind of cultural and financial compliance to the French, Joyce communicates the idea that a socioeconomic hierarchy exists between countries, and that the colonizing countries (England and France), by exploiting others, are at the top. Canada had, at one point, been colonized by the French. But Rivière is himself also French (he is directly related to Ségouin) which means that he is not one of the groups of people who were colonized by the French. Rather, he is more closely linked to the colonizers than the colonized. In this way, he and Jimmy are different, as Jimmy is an Irishman whose family is Irish. Through these subtleties, Joyce demonstrates the sliding scale of power amassed through colonization. While the country that colonizes others typically holds the most wealth and cultural control, the people who hail from that country and who settle in the colonized areas inherit some of that power as well, even if it is diluted. Meanwhile, those who are colonized, Joyce demonstrates, experience the worst and most brutal effects of colonization. In the final scene, Joyce illustrates this ladder of power by having Rivière lose to Ségouin in the **card game**, but still place above Jimmy.

Farley – Farley is an American and is described as being a "short fat man." He, like the other characters, serves as a symbol for his home country. He knows André Rivière, although their connection is never explained. His yacht, where the men gamble, is named after Newport, a city in Rhode Island that was famous for the many rich "robber barons" who lived there. Given both the possession of a yacht and its namesake, Farley is presumably an extremely wealthy man. When the group **plays cards**, Farley and Jimmy Doyle are "the heaviest losers," which might at first suggest that the United States is also a loser when competing with other countries. But given Farley's immense wealth, it is likely that his losses won't affect him as

much as Jimmy's will affect Jimmy. The story, then, seems to portray Americans as being crass and unsophisticated compared to the Europeans, and yet also so wealthy and powerful that it doesn't matter.

THEMES

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IRELAND AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

James Joyce's story "After the Race" was published and set at the beginning of the 20th century, when Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. In practice, this political arrangement meant that Ireland was ruled by England, and English exploitation had left much of Ireland impoverished. The Irish capital of Dublin, in fact, had some of the highest inequality in the world. Given this dire situation, Irish unrest over English rule was increasing, and Irish Nationalists increasingly pushed for some measure of—or even complete—independence from England. In sum, in these early years of the 20th century, Ireland lagged behind much of the Western world politically and economically. "After the Race," which is set during the real-life Gordon-Bennett automobile **race** of 1903, portrays the international capitalistic competition in which Ireland found itself left behind. The purpose of the race was to show off the **cars** (and the manufacturing might) of France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States through the means of a race across Ireland. In the story, Joyce uses the six named characters to represent six different countries: Jimmy Doyle for Ireland; Charles Ségouin for France; André Rivière for Canada; Villona for Hungary; Routh for England; and Farley for the United States. The story follows Jimmy and his relations with the other men through their day, which concludes with a **game** of cards that leaves Jimmy hungover, regretful, and indebted to his companions. Jimmy's experiences with these men capture the secondary status of the Irish, even the relatively wealthy Irish such as Jimmy and his family. Jimmy's poor decisions and financial losses, which are set against the background of the poverty and inertia that paralyze the Irish, make clear how the Irish economic and political situation, combined with Ireland's own sense of inferiority as a result of this situation, ensured that, in competition with other Western nations, Ireland is doomed to lose.

The setting of the automobile race in Ireland establishes the background of poverty, inaction, and self-accepted inadequacy that prevent the Irish from achieving economic and political progress. Ireland does not figure among the competitors of the automobile race, which illustrates that, while still under English rule, Ireland did not possess the resources and independence needed to be an industrial power in its own right. It is merely a "channel of poverty and inaction [through which] the continent sped its wealth and industry." In this competition from which Ireland is excluded, Joyce portrays the Irish as spectators that take no action to change things. As the Irish watch the cars from more powerful countries, they "raise[] the cheer of the gratefully oppressed," suggesting that the Irish have resigned themselves to an inferior status. The victories of the French imply that they are the global industrial leaders. With no Irish cars, the Irish spectators root for "the cars of their friends, the French" (historically, the French occasionally came to Ireland's aid). Their support of the French indicate that the Irish contribute to the country's paralysis by settling for association with a more powerful country.

Jimmy Doyle's decisions reflect the Irish's inaction and sense of inferiority, both of which further ensure Ireland's failure to achieve any significant progress.Jimmy is one of the riders in Ségouin's car and reflects the general Irish public's submissive support of the French. Even though he has money, he demonstrates the same passivity. Jimmy is excited by the fame he gets from being seen with his continental European acquaintances. To him, the Irish make up "the profane world of spectators," and his association with these more powerful Europeans sets him apart and validates him. That he needs such validation, though, is a sign of his insecurity. Jimmy's relationship with Ségouin further betrays his feelings of inadequacy and reveals how his financial decisions affect the greater fate of Ireland. Ségouin leverages Jimmy's sense of inferiority by convincing him that "by a favour of friendship the mite of Irish money was to be included" in the venture. By agreeing to invest, Jimmy shifts Irish money into a foreign country, ensuring Ireland's economic failure.

Joyce uses the card game to symbolize that Ireland, for a variety of reasons, will lose when competing with other countries. Jimmy unwisely engages in the card game while being extremely drunk. The narrator says that "it was his own fault" that he loses, which suggests that Joyce blames Jimmy (and, therefore, the Irish) for entering into a capitalist game that, given his incapacities, favors the competitors and puts Irish money into the pockets of other nations. Because he is drunk, "the other men had to calculate [Jimmy's] I.O.U.'s for him." This dubious behavior suggests that these men may be taking advantage of Jimmy's weakened state, by which Joyce illustrates the exploitation of Ireland at the hands of foreign countries. When Jimmy realizes that "the game lay between Routh and Ségouin" (who come from England and France, the apparent leaders in the capitalist competition) he musters excitement for them, though "he would lose, of course." He, like

the Irish fans lining the road at the beginning of the race, resigns himself to being a losing spectator.

Standing in contrast to Jimmy's craving to be among the continentals is Villona, the poor yet talented Hungarian. In 1904, when the story was first published, Hungary was not fully liberated from Austria, but they had secured parliamentary and financial independence in the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 (although this arrangement did not actually secure the freedom desired by many Hungarians; they would not have total independence until 1918). Through Villona, Joyce is indicating the path that the Irish should take: political and economic independence from their English rulers. Unlike Jimmy, Villona never seems concerned about the other men or their obsession with capital and industry. Significantly, he does not engage in their card game, instead playing piano before heading outside to usher in the new dawn. This dawn that Villona welcomes is, as the story puts it, the "grey light" that lifts the "dark stupor that would cover up [Jimmy's] folly." The contrast between Jimmy's and Villona's situations—Villona greeting the dawn; Jimmy wishing to hide from it—emphasize what Joyce implies are the different trajectories of their lives and countries: independence and promise for Villona and Hungary; dependence and economic ruin for Jimmy and Ireland.

WEALTH AND GREED VS. CITIZENSHIP

"After the Race" addresses the behavior and situation of the class of newly wealthy Irish during the early years of the 20th century. Although Ireland under British rule was plagued by widespread poverty, there was nonetheless an Irish business class that had arisen due to the Industrial Revolution and the globalization of trade, and which had become quite wealthy. It is this class of people that Joyce portrays and criticizes in his story. "After the Race" follows a young Irishman named Jimmy Doyle, whose rich business-owning father has provided him with economic stability and a variety of educational opportunities. But neither Jimmy nor his family use their resources to invest in Ireland or to change the Irish socioeconomic conditions of early 20th century Ireland. Instead, Jimmy sets his sights—and money—on achieving success in countries beyond Ireland; and it is much to his detriment that he does. The story takes place over the course of one day, which Jimmy spends **driving**, dining, and drinking with his foreign acquaintances: Frenchman Charles Ségouin and his Canadian cousin André Rivière; the Englishman Routh; an American man named Farley; and Hungarian pianist Villona. Rather than try to make a name for himself or for Ireland, Jimmy is content to be simply associated with these men from "great" countries, a relationship that he hopes to solidify by investing in Ségouin's soon-to-be-founded motor company. As the evening continues, it is clear that Jimmy's frivolous behavior has bleak consequences. After a night of heavy drinking and heavier **gambling**, Jimmy is left a loser at a table of European winners. Through Jimmy's failure, Joyce is clear in his verdict that the Irish class of nouveau riche are irresponsible citizens and that, by ignoring the plights of their own country in their eagerness to achieve their selfish and superficial goals, they harm not just their country, but themselves as well.

Jimmy, who sees Ireland as an inferior country, is attracted by the social and economic opportunities to be found via association with more powerful foreign countries. He represents how the upper class of Irish citizens focus on making connections with these countries for selfish reasons. Because the Irish are excluded from the international capitalistic **race**, Jimmy sees his fellow Irish as making up "the profane world of spectators." Being with Ségouin and his other European continental acquaintances grants Jimmy distinction from his local friends and a spot in a race car. His companionship with Ségouin brings more than social notoriety—Ségouin is his gateway into the motor business, where there are "pots of money" to be made. Jimmy plans to invest in Ségouin's not-yet-founded motoring establishment. Ségouin even uses Jimmy's sense of Irish inferiority to persuade him to invest by suggesting that it is only because they are friends that Jimmy's Irish money is even being allowed into the investment scheme at all. Jimmy, desperate to belong, takes the bait.

Both Jimmy and his father redirect Irish resources from Ireland in order to make more money for themselves; they greedily do what they can to amass more wealth, no matter if it comes at Ireland's expense. Jimmy's father had once been "an advanced nationalist," meaning that he had advocated for Irish Home Rule. But he "modified his views," and by doing so he abandons Ireland politically. Although Joyce doesn't explicitly explain why Jimmy's father altered his politics, he implies that he did so to make money. Jimmy's father became rich by opening a chain of butcher shops, starting in Kingstown, a town that, at the time, was heavily influenced by the English. Furthermore, he had "been fortunate enough to secure some of the police contracts." Clearly, he cares more about the money that these contracts offer him than about taking down the infrastructure that maintains British law and rule in Ireland. Through Jimmy's father, Joyce criticizes how the wealthy Irish class has sold out politically in order to make money for themselves. Jimmy, who has money because of his father's Ireland-based business, chooses to invest this Irish money in a foreign venture, Ségouin's motoring establishment. By doing so, Jimmy is redirecting Irish resources—money that is greatly needed to prompt economic development in the poverty-stricken Ireland—into wealthier foreign countries. He is convinced that, because he expects to make more money, it is a good investment. He doesn't consider how he is further dooming Ireland to economic stagnation, a greedy negligence that

extends to the Irish upper class as a whole.

The calamitous card game signifies that Jimmy's greed—and therefore the greed of the wealthy Irish class he represents—will seal his fate, as well as Ireland's. Jimmy makes the choice to join his acquaintances at the card table. This decision, likely prompted by his greed and aspirations to be connected to wealthier European countries, is a bad one. Jimmy is very drunk and ends up confusing his cards and betting away huge sums of money, which symbolizes the poor financial decisions of the wealthy Irish. His heavy losses may even foreshadow financial ruin with his other gamble, the investment in Ségouin's company. Jimmy is too drunk to keep track of his own I.O.U.'s, so the other men manage them for him, which may indicate foul play on their end. Here, Joyce is suggesting that, by trying to play the game of capitalism with these more powerful countries, the wealthy Irish class is offering themselves up for exploitation and throwing away their (and Ireland's) resources.

Jimmy's and his father's actions raise the question: had they focused their money and position to aid their home country, how would the result be different? On one hand, they would have protected themselves from the financial losses that Jimmy brings upon them. Additionally, Ireland would have the resources it needs to develop. But instead, Jimmy and his father augment the capital of other countries, an investment that, according to Joyce, is likely to leave the wealthy Irishmen themselves exploited, and to offer absolutely no return for Ireland, therefore sealing its fate of economic and political paralysis.

CAPITALISM, COMMODIFICATION, AND AMORALITY

In "After the Race," James Joyce explores the ways that capitalism affects his characters behavior and perspective. The story takes place on the day of the real-life Gordon-Bennett automobile **race** of 1903, an automobile race through Ireland whose purpose was to show off the quality of **car** manufacturing of the participating countries. Set against this backdrop of competition and consumption, "After the Race" follows protagonist Jimmy Doyle on the day of the race. After driving in his French acquaintance Charles Ségouin's car, he and his companions—Ségouin, André Rivière, Villona, Farley, and Routh—spend the evening eating, drinking, and **gambling**. But this seemingly merry revelry is far less innocent than it appears. To start, Jimmy is not really friends with most of these men; in fact, apart from Villona, they seem to merely be his acquaintances. Jimmy, who is easily swayed by the appearances of things, values these men not for their character, but for what he can gain from them. He is not alone in this approach. Rather, the story is populated by characters who view the world as a series of potential transactions. From Jimmy's father, who sells out on his Irish Nationalist politics in order become wealthy, to the shady Ségouin, who, the story implies, aims to ensnare Jimmy into investing in his not-yet-existent motor company, the characters of Joyce's "After the Race" demonstrate how capitalism prompts people to commodify everything—and everyone—around them. But Joyce goes beyond merely observing this phenomenon; he condemns it, too. After a directionless day of carousing, Jimmy ends his night with debt and regret, through which Joyce makes it quite clear that, when participating in a capitalist society, one risks spiritual, if not financial, ruin.

Joyce illustrates how capitalism generates a society in which money and industry is of utmost importance, which encourages people to value others for their monetary worth. Joyce uses cars to represent industrial and economic power. Cars, and the money and commerce that they represent, take on a god-like role in this story; passersby gather "to pay homage to the snorting motor" and Jimmy uses the word "lordly" to describe the car he is riding in. With money being of critical importance, everything becomes commodified. This is particularly true for the characters' relationships. Jimmy deems Ségouin "well worth knowing" because being seen with Ségouin gives Jimmy notoriety and provides him the opportunity to invest in the motor industry, in which he hopes to make "pots of money." Ségouin uses his acquaintanceship with Jimmy to persuade Jimmy to invest in his business. Rivière, who is to be manager of Ségouin's establishment, further encourages Jimmy to invest during dinner conversation.

In the story, Joyce insinuates several betrayals to illustrate that, not only does capitalism engender widespread commodification, but it also encourages people to sell out others and their own ideals in order to make money. Jimmy's father had once been an "advanced nationalist," which means that he advocated for the independence Ireland desperately needs to escape its poverty-stricken state. But Jimmy's father "modified his views" and abandons Ireland politically, presumably so that he can make more money. Jimmy's father became wealthy from his chain of butcher shops, which he started in Kingstown, a town with English sympathies. He also "secure[d] some of the police contracts," which reveals that he is willing to work with the governing bodies (the police) that are in charge of upholding British law and rule in Ireland. Joyce also implies that Ségouin may be betraying Jimmy with his investment scheme. Ségouin hasn't even started his company yet, but he nevertheless pressures his acquaintance to invest, going so far as to say that their "friendship" is the reason Jimmy has the opportunity to be included in the venture at all. Jimmy may also be deceived during the card game when, too drunk to even sort his cards, "the other men had to calculate his I.O.U.'s for him." This suspicious behavior suggests that Jimmy's companions may be abusing his drunkenness.

Beyond the *im*morality of capitalism, Joyce explores the *a*morality that capitalism spawns through Jimmy's actions.

Jimmy is seduced by the superficiality of capitalism, and it leaves him directionless and distracted from the real significance of things, which renders him inactive and paralyzed instead of making meaningful progress. Jimmy's experience with the superficial allure of capitalism is represented through his relationship with cars. Instead of applying himself to his studies to acquire practical skills and intellectual enrichment, Jimmy squanders his educational opportunities to socialize with "motoring circles." When he tries "to translate into days' work that lordly car on which he sat," he is distracted by the "style" and speed, and doesn't consider the time, resources, and human labor that went into the machine. Rather than using his resources to make practical change for his native Ireland, he greedily invests his money with Ségouin, solely for the purpose of making more money for himself. This suggests two endless cycles: the rich becoming ever richer; and the redirection of money away from where it is most needed (such as the impoverished Irish). What Jimmy gets out of capitalism is reflected in his three sources of excitement when riding in Ségouin's car: the feeling of "rapid motion;" "notoriety;" and "the possession of money." These things are diverting, but shallow, and leave him "too excited to be genuinely happy."

This vapid excitement carries Jimmy through the story and into the fateful card game with his companions. Drunk on both alcohol and the thrill of risk, Jimmy does not realize how much he is losing until it is too late. Only as the intoxication wears off does Jimmy realize that the game of capitalism is "a terrible game." But he only acknowledges his monetary losses and, without reflecting significantly on his choices, it is likely that Jimmy will repeat his folly time after time. Through Jimmy's failure, Joyce's judgement is clear: one risks both spiritual and financial poverty when buying into capitalist values.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

CAR

Cars in "After the Race" represent industrial and economic power, the era's obsession with achieving this power, and how industrial and economic might is possessed by several western European and North American countries, but not by the Irish. The narrator suggests this symbolism at the beginning of the story, when cars are speeding across Ireland for the real-life Gordon-Bennett automobile **race**, which the narrator summarizes as "through this channel of poverty and inaction the continent sped its wealth and industry." Only France, Germany, England, and the United States had participating cars in this actual, historic race of 1903, which shows that these countries have industrial and economic power. Ireland, notably, only participates as the setting for the race. The might of these countries is quite literally driven all over Ireland, whose people do nothing but stand on the sidelines and admire the industrial energy of these other nations and "pay homage to the snorting motor."

The Irish who do have money, represented by Jimmy Doyle, are obsessed with cars and the economic power they symbolize. Jimmy loves cars, and his actions demonstrate how his obsession with them (and therefore, his obsession with achieving industrial and economic power) contribute to the paralysis of both himself and Ireland. Jimmy neglects his studies, which could contribute to his personal and professional development, to socialize with "motoring circles." He is easily seduced by the elation that comes from "rapid motion" from driving in a car, and his thoughts never reach deeper, which speaks to Jimmy's superficiality and the role that industrial capitalism plays in it. When he tries "to translate into days' work that lordly car on which he sat," he is distracted by the "style" and speed of the car, which illustrates how far removed he is from what is required—time, resources, human lives—to actually make a car, or an economic and industrial empire. He plans on investing a large amount of money into the not-yet-existent motoring company of Charles Ségouin's, which, the story suggests, is likely a bad idea; he is, after all, putting his trust in a mere acquaintance simply because Ségouin has "the unmistakable air of wealth." Further, by deciding to invest in a French company, instead of investing in an Irish venture, Jimmy contributes to the inaction of Ireland by distributing Irish resources to foreign countries. Jimmy's actions also illustrate a belief in Irish, and therefore his own, inferiority—in his desire to achieve economic and industrial power, he looks for validation in other countries, and completely neglects the needs of his native Ireland.

THE RACE

The automobile race that occurs just before the events of the story symbolizes the international capitalistic competition for industrial and economic power in which Ireland is used by other countries but does not actually compete. The race that Joyce chooses to symbolize in "After the Race" was a real-life competition, the Gordon-Bennett **car** race of 1903 that took place in Ireland. Notably, Ireland is not a participant in the race. But the race *does* take place all across Ireland and uses its roads and resources to execute such an event, which is symbolic of the more general exploitation of the Irish people, particularly at the hands of the British, who ruled Ireland at the beginning of the 20th century. Aside from their role as being resources that were leveraged by other powers to strengthen these foreign nation's economies, the Irish are only spectators in this European competition for economic and industrial power.

In the absence of Irish cars, the Irish spectators cheer for "the blue cars—the cars of their friends, the French." The French had a history of coming to Ireland's aid, such as during the Irish Rebellion of 1798, although these efforts were not always successful and were also at least partially motivated by a desire to undermine the English, who were a historic enemy for the French. This contributes to the general feeling of exploitation that the Irish endured; the Irish may view the French as their friends, but the actual value of France's contributions to Ireland may be limited, and France may in fact be exploiting that friendship for its own ends. Joyce reflects this in Jimmy Doyle's acquaintanceship with Charles Ségouin. Ségouin is using Jimmy for his wealth, going so far as "to give the impression that it was by a favour of friendship the mite of Irish money was to be included" in this continental investment. The implication is that Ségouin is leveraging Jimmy's feeling of Irish inferiority to persuade Jimmy that he should consider himself lucky to have the chance to be involved in an industrial venture that, as an Irishman, he would normally be excluded from. There is some suggestion in the story that Ségouin's entire proposed company is illegitimate and just a ruse to part Jimmy from his money. But even if it is real, Jimmy's investment with Ségouin is still damaging: it limits Ireland's chances of becoming a part of the international competition of industry, since it involves relocating Irish money into the hands of foreign countries.

The race is also significant in that the narrator declares the French the "virtual victors." This demonstrates Joyce's speculation that the French would become global leaders of industry and wealth. Later, the evening **card game** complicates this prediction, as it is the Englishman Routh who wins that game. As the victors of the two competitions portrayed in the story, Joyce is suggesting that, in international competitions for power, England and France will lead, often at the expense of the Irish. The story foreshadows what will happen to the Irish "after the race" in which they do not even get to compete—they will be just as impoverished and inert as before.

THE CARD GAME

The card game's symbolism is two-fold. On one hand, it represents that, in international competition, Ireland will lose. The game also represents the recklessness of the Irish upper-class, as well as this class's selfish and self-destructive desire to compete with and gain validation from larger, richer, and more powerful countries. The card game is similar to the **race** in that it symbolizes competition between nations, with each character in the card game representing their country: Jimmy Doyle for Ireland; Charles Ségouin for France; André Rivière for Canada; Routh for England; and Farley for the United States. Unlike the **car** race, Ireland *does* enter into the card game, which suggests that the game represents a more general capitalistic competition between nations, as opposed to the specific struggle for global economic and industrial dominance that is symbolized by the race.

The card game is a gambling game, and Jimmy enters it willingly. By engaging, Jimmy is quite literally playing with Irish money, which symbolizes Irish upper-class's bad management of what Irish resources they control. He makes the poor decision to get excessively drunk, so by the time he starts playing, he ends up confusing his cards and needing the other men to sort out his I.O.U.'s. This latter action may suggest foul play on the behalf of the other players; after all, these men are mere acquaintances. As each character represents their home country in this international competition, the other men's possibly dubious management of Jimmy's I.O.U.'s while he is drunk may signify that other countries are taking advantage of Ireland's incapacities.

Jimmy's frivolity and desire to be among these men are also to blame for his losses. He makes the decision to play and, when things start going poorly and "he wishe[s] they would stop," he doesn't take any action to end the game or to quit. Compared to Villona's decision to not play, Jimmy's participation suggests that the wealthy Irish are relying on the affirmation and validation from other countries. Joyce uses Villona as a guide for how the Irish should behave – Ireland needs to be more independent (socially, economically, and politically) and should stop getting caught up in a game that favors more economically powerful countries. When trying to compete, Jimmy can't keep up. He is outmaneuvered by the British and French, who are represented by Routh and Ségouin, respectively. Routh wins, which represents England's dominance on an international level. Jimmy's loss and heavy debts therefore signify a larger loss for Ireland in this international competition. Joyce doesn't just have Jimmy lose, however. The American Farley is also a heavy loser in this card game. Yet Farley's losses are different in an important way: Farley is *much* richer than Jimmy—he owns the yacht them men are playing in. Given this, Joyce may be suggesting that Farley's failure represents the wastefulness and carelessness of Americans, but also the wealth and power that allows America to absorb such lack of wisdom in a way that the Irish can't.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Penguin Classics edition of *Dubliners* published in 1993.

After the Race Quotes

❝ At the crest of the hill at Inchicore sightseers had gathered in clumps to watch the cars careering homeward and through this channel of poverty and inaction the Continent sped its wealth and industry. Now and again the clumps of people raised the cheer of the gratefully oppressed.

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

This passage occurs at the beginning of "After the Race," while the race itself is taking place. The race in question is the real-life Gordon-Bennett automobile race of 1903, which served as a way for the participating countries—France, Great Britain, United States, and Germany—to show off their manufacturing mastery. In 1903, the race took place in Ireland. At this time, Ireland was under the rule of England as part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The historical exploitation that the Irish endured in this political situation at the hands of the English left it impoverished, so much so that parts of Dublin, the capital of Ireland, experienced some of the deepest poverty in the English empire.

By using the Gordon-Bennett race as his story's setting, Joyce calls out the bitter irony of an extremely poor country hosting an event where several rich countries (grouped together as "the Continent," or continental Europe) get to display their "wealth and industry," which is represented by their cars. The race also has symbolic meaning. As a contest where the wealthier countries get to flaunt and compare their wealth and capital, the race symbolizes an international competition for economic and industrial dominance. Meanwhile, Ireland, the host, has no cars in the race, which suggests that it doesn't possess the manufacturing might or wealth needed to be a participant in the capitalistic race for industrial control. Ireland only serves as the "channel of poverty and inaction" for the other countries to exploit.

At the same time, Joyce holds the Irish themselves as being at least partly to blame for their situation by calling out their "inaction." He describes them as having resigned themselves to English subjugation and the resulting inferior status when compared to other countries. Instead of trying to change their situation, or even showing anger or rebellious energy, Joyce describes the Irish as passive spectators who, when witnessing the other countries parading their power, "raise[] the cheer of the gratefully oppressed."

❝ Rapid motion through space elates one; so does notoriety; so does the possession of money. These were three good reasons for Jimmy's excitement.

Related Characters: Jimmy Doyle

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 37

Explanation and Analysis

At this moment in "After the Race," Jimmy is riding in Charles Ségouin's car. Earlier in the story, he had been described as "too excited to be genuinely happy." Here, the narrator lists the reasons for Jimmy's excitement: "rapid motion," "notoriety," and "possession of money." The first reason speaks to the speed at which he is traveling in Ségouin's car, but it also has a deeper significance. Because cars represent the money and industrial power of non-Irish countries, Jimmy's excitement over the speed symbolizes the capitalist thrill he feels while experiencing the rapid pace that wealth and industrial growth brings, even though, as an Irishman, his only chance at experiencing this is when in the companionship of continentals such as the French Ségouin.

The notoriety he feels also stems from this association with Ségouin. Jimmy, like the general Irish population as illustrated in this story, has internalized a sense of Irish inferiority. Instead of trying to distinguish himself by his own talents of qualities, Jimmy feels validated simply from being connected with a wealthy continental. Jimmy's feelings are echoed by the other Irish in the story; they appear impressed that Jimmy has managed to secure such associations, which gains him some local fame. This external validation is part of the passivity that the Irish in the story demonstrate and that Joyce condemns as being a cause of Irish inaction. Instead of working toward achieving prosperity and progress for Ireland, Jimmy focuses on trying to gain foreign validation, which conversely ends up benefiting those foreign countries while neglecting the core needs of Ireland itself.

The third reason for Jimmy's excitement is the amount of money that he possesses. But none of these

things—capitalist thrill, associated fame, money—actually make Jimmy "genuinely happy." As the story puts it earlier, he's "too excited," a word that suggests a superficial agitation and energy, to feel true contentment. By connecting all of Jimmy's sources of excitement to capitalism, Joyce demonstrates how capitalism doesn't cause happiness. It may distract and electrify, but there is no peaceful joy in Jimmy's story.

Jimmy set out to translate into days' work that lordly car on which he sat. How smoothly it ran. In what style they had come careering along the country roads! The journey laid a magical finger on the genuine pulse of life and gallantly the machinery of human nerves strove to answer the bounding courses of the swift blue animal.

Related Characters: Jimmy Doyle

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 38

Explanation and Analysis

Jimmy is riding in the Frenchman Charles Ségouin's car and, having just internally congratulated himself on what he believes to be his awareness of "the labour latent in money" and "what difficulty it [is gotten] together," tries to figure out how much work went into the car he is riding in. But he is too distracted by the speed and style of the car to really consider what goes into making it. Because the car symbolizes the economic and industrial power that is key to capitalist success, this scene suggests that Jimmy is so seduced by the thrill of capitalism that he doesn't think about all that is required and sacrificed—time, resources, human lives—in order to reap its benefits. Instead, his thoughts stay surface level and, in the face of these delights, he, a wealthy man, doesn't spare a thought for the laboring class. If he did, perhaps he could effectuate some kind of change for Ireland, but as things stand, he is too enamored with what is to be gained than to realize what (such as Irish independence and prosperity) is being lost.

The language that the narrator uses to describe the car is also illustrative of how money has obtained a god-like role in the society portrayed in this story. Jimmy calls the car "lordly," a word that indicates its lofty status. Additionally, the narrator flips the vitality of the cars and humans. While the car comes to life as a "swift blue animal," people are reduced to the "machinery of human nerves" that struggles to keep up with the car. The narrator even describes the exhilarating car ride as being the source of "the genuine pulse of life." By reversing who and what possesses life, Joyce reveals how the society in which Jimmy lives has rendered human lives secondary to achieving economic and industrial dominance.

Near the bank Ségouin drew up and Jimmy and his friend alighted. A little knot of people collected on the footpath to pay homage to the snorting motor.

Related Characters: Villona, Jimmy Doyle, Charles Ségouin

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 38

Explanation and Analysis

This passage once again shows the centrality of money in the lives and consciousnesses of the characters portrayed in "After the Race." Out of all the places that Ségouin could stop the car, he chooses the bank, an action that calls attention to money's omnipresence in the story. Meanwhile, the crowding Irish who "pay homage to the snorting motor" demonstrate how wealth and industry—which are both symbolized by the car—are so highly revered. Through the use of the phrase "pay homage," the narrator paints a picture of worship, once again indicating that cars, and the money and production that they represent, have acquired a god-like significance in the capitalist society portrayed in the story.

The car in question belongs to Ségouin's, a Frenchman. The Irish passersby that ogle Ségouin's car in this passage mirror the Irish onlookers of the story's opening scene who admire the racing cars of foreign countries. Joyce once again depicts the Irish as passive spectators who, without power or wealth of their own, stand on the sidelines to admire those of richer countries. Their passivity is one of the things that Joyce blames for Ireland's stagnation that kept it politically and economically behind so many other countries.

In Jimmy's house this dinner had been pronounced an occasion. A certain pride mingled with his parents' trepidation, a certain eagerness, also, to play fast and loose for the names of great foreign cities have at least this virtue.

Related Characters: Jimmy Doyle's father, Jimmy Doyle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 38

Explanation and Analysis

At this moment, Jimmy and Villona have arrived back at Jimmy's parents' house to get ready for their dinner that night with Ségouin. The structuring of the second sentence is a bit complex, but it can be broken down as follows. In the Doyle household, there is an atmosphere of pride, nervousness, and eagerness to recklessly compete for clout and recognition in foreign cities. These feelings—pride, nervousness, and eagerness—are what make the dinner worthy of being called an "occasion," which suggests that these feelings are otherwise absent. The fact that it requires a dinner with continental Europeans to incite these emotions points to the sense of Irish inferiority that pervades this story, particularly among the Irish upper class.

Jimmy's parents' apprehension is rooted in their belief that continental Europeans from rich countries are inherently more important than Irish people such as themselves. To them, Jimmy's connection to an apparently wealthy European like Ségouin means that he has "made it." He is no longer just in Irish social and economic circles—he has now "leveled up" to associating with wealthier and more powerful Europeans. Jimmy's parents' beliefs are representative of how Joyce saw the wealthy Irish as behaving. Instead of looking toward righting the wrongs in their home country—to investing their own own wealth in Ireland—they eagerly look toward connecting themselves with richer countries for their own social and economic benefit.

❝ Jimmy, whose imagination was kindling, conceived the lively youth of the Frenchmen twined elegantly upon the firm framework of the Englishman's manner. A graceful image of his, he thought, and a just one.

Related Characters: Routh, André Rivière, Charles Ségouin, Jimmy Doyle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 39

Explanation and Analysis

While at dinner, Jimmy, who is beginning to feel the effects of alcohol, starts to admire the interactions between Charles Ségouin, André Rivière, and Routh, whom he sees as a cohesive trio. Because the men represent France and England, respectively (symbolism that is reinforced by using the nominations of "Frenchmen" and "Englishman," as opposed to their names), the impression that they leave on Jimmy is symbolic of his thoughts on the relationship between these two countries. According to Jimmy, France provides a youthful energy and sophistication that combine well with the industrial foundation of the English. In his eyes, the blending of these cultures is "a graceful image," and also "a just one," an opinion that suggests he holds a resigned acceptance of what he sees as England and France's dominance as being deserved, and, therefore, of accepting Irish inferiority as similarly deserved.

Because the narrator uses the plural for "Frenchmen," it is inferred that he also includes Rivière is included in this grouping. Rivière was born in Canada, but he is frequently also associated with the French: he is Ségouin's cousin; he is proud of the French team's success in the race; and he is supposed to become manager of Ségouin's to-be-founded company in Paris. These associations, made more apparent through this passage's labeling of Rivière as French, shed light on another aspect of colonialism. Because of Rivière's associations with France, Joyce implies that Rivière, as someone who is French by heritage, is more closely linked to the colonizer (France) than the colonized (the land now known as Canada). Although Rivière takes an anterior position behind Ségouin throughout the story (as seen in Ségouin's ownership of the car and Ségouin and Routh being the leading winners of the card game), he still has a leg up in the global economy because of the wealth and power he inherited from the colonizers that he is descended from. In contrast to Rivière is Jimmy, whose native Ireland was colonized by England. Ireland suffers the brutal effects of colonization and Jimmy, as a native Irishman, does not experience the same advantages from the English the way that Rivière does with the French. Therefore, while Rivière is grouped with Ségouin, Jimmy sees himself as definitely distinct from Routh.

❝ Jimmy, under generous influences, felt the buried zeal of his father wake to life within him: he aroused the torpid Routh at last. The room grew doubly hot and Ségouin's task grew harder each moment: there was even danger of personal spite. The alert host at an opportunity lifted his glass to Humanity and, when the toast had been drunk, he threw open a window significantly.

Related Characters: Charles Ségouin, Routh, Jimmy Doyle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 39

Explanation and Analysis

At dinner, while the men drink, Ségouin brings up the topic of politics. For the first time in the story, Jimmy intervenes in favor of Ireland and his fellow Irish citizens by, presumably, arguing in favor for Irish Home Rule against the English Routh. It takes Jimmy being "under generous influence," that is to say, very drunk, to get to this point, which indicates just how deeply repressed Jimmy's feelings of Irish pride and his awareness of Ireland's needs—such as independence from the English—are. He is not, however, the only person whose more significant thoughts are dormant. "[T]he torpid" Routh, too, only becomes "aroused . . . at last" during this political discussion. The fact that it takes alcohol and a hotly debated topic to bring these two men to life is suggestive of the group's shallowness which, throughout the story, is implied to be a side effect of capitalism.

Yet Jimmy's moment of advocating for the Irish is short-lived. Ségouin, hoping to avoid disrupting his dinner party, ends the argument by giving a toast to Humanity, an ironic choice given England's inhumane treatment of the Irish. Jimmy allows Ségouin to dismiss the topic, presumably because he, too, doesn't wish to endanger his chance at engaging with and investing in his continental companions. A shallow toast to the general good of all men allows Jimmy to ignore the specific poor situation of his own countrymen under the guise of acknowledging a broader moral stance. Jimmy's return to passivity demonstrates how, according to Joyce, the wealthy Irish prioritized their own selfish goals over the needs of their fellow Irish citizens.

❝ Play ran very high and paper began to pass. Jimmy did not know exactly who was winning but he knew that he was losing. But it was his own fault for he frequently mistook his cards and the other men had to calculate his I.O.U.'s for him. They were devils of fellows but he wished they would stop: it was getting late.

Related Characters: Farley, Routh, André Rivière, Charles Ségouin, Jimmy Doyle

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 41

Explanation and Analysis

This passage takes place during the card game that Jimmy, Ségouin, Rivière, Routh, and Farley play while on Farley's yacht. The card game, played by characters who each represent a different country, symbolizes an international capitalistic competition. In this game, as in capitalism, each player bets their resources higher and higher in the hopes of profiting off the losses of their fellow participants. Jimmy, who has chosen to play, has a big problem; he is drunk and can't keep his cards straight. His incapacity is symbolic of how the Irish, impoverished from being under exploitative English rule, are at a significant economic and political disadvantage when trying to compete with other, wealthier countries. In fact, he is so out of it (and thus very far from being an actually competitive participant in the game) that he has no idea who is winning—he just knows that his losses place him last, which is representative of, according to Joyce, just how far behind Ireland is in comparison with other European countries.

Through the narrator's verdict that Jimmy's losses are "his own fault," Joyce is suggesting that the Irish, while certainly a victim, are also to blame for their losses. After all, Jimmy did make the choice to play in the game, which is representative of the Irish upper class's eagerness to play at the same metaphorical table as more powerful countries. (And stands in contrast to the Hungarian Villona, who chose not to join the card game.) Consumed by greed and hoping to make his own gains in the "game" of capitalism, Jimmy—and the wealthy Irish class that he represents—plays even though he is at a noticeable disadvantage. By joining in the game, Jimmy is literally playing with Irish money that, because of his losses, will just end up in the pockets of wealthier foreign countries. And as the game takes a terrible turn, Jimmy wishes that the others would end the game, but makes no effort to leave the table or end the game himself. His passivity is what keeps him in a quickly worsening situation.

On top of his losses, Joyce suggests that the other men may be abusing Jimmy's drunkenness. Because he is too drunk to keep track of his cards or I.O.U.'s, the other men manage his debts for him, an extremely dubious action, particularly considering that they could simply kindly remove him from play. Instead, they continue to destroy him in the card game, leaving him thinking them "devils of fellows," a play on words that at the same time captures Jimmy's simultaneous (and paralyzed) sense of them being good friends for helping him

manage his I.O.U's and also wicked for taking advantage of him.

It was a terrible game. They stopped just before the end of it to drink for luck. Jimmy understood that the game lay between Routh and Ségouin. What excitement! Jimmy was excited too; he would lose, of course. How much had he written away?

Related Characters: Charles Ségouin, Routh, Jimmy Doyle

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 41

Explanation and Analysis

The card game is on its last play and Jimmy, losing terribly, is now watching Routh and Ségouin play for first place. In a show of emotion that reflects the cheering Irish spectators on the sidelines of the car race, Jimmy musters up excitement for Routh and Ségouin, whose neck-to-neck winnings symbolize England and France's comparable success when competing for international economic dominance. Jimmy, who represents the Irish, is resigned to losing. The "of course" that is added at the end of the phrase only emphasizes that Ireland is doomed to lose in these kinds of competitions, ones in which they are so severely disadvantaged after years of English exploitation.

Jimmy, now certainly defeated, begins to wonder at how much he has lost, a question that can have both an economic and spiritual slant. In terms of money, Jimmy's unknown losses have a two-fold significance: one, he isn't sure how much of his money he has gambled away; and two, he will never know what good he could have accomplished with the money that he has now lost—in other words, had he invested his Irish money back into Ireland, what positive change could he have had, how could Ireland have benefited? As for Jimmy's moral development, his participation in the "game" of capitalism has had a disastrous effect: throughout the story, his shallowness and greedy focus to make more money for himself has cost him many things, from the true value of friendship, to a sense of self-worth independent from the validation of others, to the chance to support Ireland. Through Jimmy's losses, Joyce makes it clear that the "game" of capitalism is "a terrible game."

He knew that he would regret in the morning but at present he was glad of the rest, glad of the dark stupor that would cover up his folly. He leaned his elbows on the table and rested his head between his hands, counting the beats of his temples. The cabin door opened and he saw the Hungarian standing in a shaft of grey light:

—Daybreak, gentlemen!

Related Characters: Villona (speaker), Villona, Jimmy Doyle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 41-42

Explanation and Analysis

The card game is now over, and Jimmy's intoxication, from both drinking and from the thrill of risk, is now fading. Although he is beginning to feel regret for his actions, he—consistent with the superficiality that he has demonstrated throughout the story—doesn't try to reflect on what just happened. Iinstead, he tries to hide from and repress his regret, and is therefore looking forward to nighttime and sleep, "the dark stupor that would cover up his folly." But this hope is dashed when Villona opens the door and announces daybreak—it already *is* tomorrow. Jimmy's desire to lean into forgetfulness suggests that, even when sober, it is unlikely that he'll think critically about his actions. But the fact that it's already day implies that hiding from his actions won't be able to keep reality at bay for long, and that he is doomed to repeat his foolishness in chasing his capitalist goals to the detriment of himself and his country.

Contrasted to Jimmy is Villona, the talented Hungarian pianist. Throughout the story, Villona is the odd one out. He isn't interested in talking about cars or capital like the other men of the group. He doesn't play in the capitalistic card game that his companions participate in. His independence from the social and financial competitions of the other men is representative of Hungary's situation at this time. In 1867, Hungary acquired some political and economic freedom from Austria, although full independence would not happen until 1918. (Joyce appears to idealize the Compromise of 1867, as many Hungarians actually resented it.) Nonetheless, Joyce views Hungary's arrangement as a hopeful one, and, with Villona announcing the new day, he appears to perceive them as a rising influence in Europe.

By contrasting Jimmy's failures to Villona's heralding of the dawn, Joyce illustrates that Ireland would do well to imitate Hungary's situation and work to gain their own political and

economic independence from their foreign rulers. If they do not bring about this change, Joyce's warning is clear; Ireland will be doomed to a fate of political dependence and poverty.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

AFTER THE RACE

Cars are speeding towards Dublin and people have gathered to watch the race. While the cars are from the continent—that is, continental Europe—the **race** is taking place in Ireland. As the cars race down a street called Naas Road, the narrator describes it as a "channel of poverty and inaction." The spectators occasionally cheer for the cars, especially the French cars, which are blue. The French are doing relatively well in the race: they won second and third place. The first-place car, although a part of the German team, was driven by a Belgian. The drivers and passengers within the French cars nod and smile politely as the locals cheer them on.

Joyce captures Ireland's predicament at the beginning of the 20th century with the symbolism of a car race taking place in Ireland. Cars represent the "wealth and industry" of the countries of continental Europe, who are competing in this race for economic and industrial power. Ireland is the setting for the race, but has no participating cars, which suggests that Ireland, while still under exploitative English rule, is too impoverished to compete. In a cruel twist, Ireland, as the host for the event, will nonetheless bear the burden of providing the resources to accommodate and execute the race, symbolizing one way in which Ireland is used by other countries in their capitalist pursuits. But Joyce doesn't just call attention to the irony of a poor country hosting an event for richer countries to show off their industrial power—he criticizes the Irish too. The narrator calls Ireland a "channel of poverty and inaction." As larger, wealthier nations compete, the Irish submissively watch from the sidelines and "raise[] the cheer of the gratefully oppressed," phrasing that implies that the Irish have resigned themselves to this state of things, solidifying their national paralysis. Furthermore, without any cars representing them, the Irish root for "their friends, the French," which Joyce uses to show how the Irish, instead of trying to achieve their own industrial success, are settling for mere association with a wealthier and more powerful country.

Within one of the French **cars** are four men who are each very excited for different reasons. The French owner of the car, Charles Ségouin, is pleased with the good prospects for the motor company he is going to start. His Canadian cousin André Rivière is in high spirits because he is going to be the manager of Ségouin's company. The third man is an optimistic Hungarian man named Villona who is still feeling content from his delicious lunch. The final man is named Doyle, and he is "too excited to be genuinely happy."

Here Joyce introduces four of the main characters, each of whom represents their home country: Ségouin for France, Rivière for Canada, Villona for Hungary, and Doyle for Ireland. Politics of power are also laid out. Ségouin owns the car, which signifies that the French wield the most capital compared to the other countries represented in the car. Rivière, whose family ties to Ségouin reflect France's colonization of Canada, is planning on receiving a position of power in his cousin's motor company (which, importantly, does not actually exist yet). Rivière and Ségouin's relationship raises the question whether Rivière would have had this influential position had he not been related to the man in power, which speaks to how colonial wealth is kept in the hands of the ruling group. Additionally, Rivière's proposed appointment suggests that he may be capitalizing on his and Ségouin's relationship. Villona's happiness, on the other hand, springs from a much simpler source: he had a pleasant lunch. Villona, then, appears to be more focused on meeting basic needs, very different from Ségouin and Rivière's capitalistic goals. The last man in the car, Doyle, doesn't have this happiness—he is more agitated than truly content (but at this point, the reason is unknown).

Doyle, whose first name is Jimmy, is an innocent-eyed twenty-six year old who comes from a well-to-do Irish family. His father was once an Irish nationalist, but he "modified his views early" and became wealthy by establishing a thriving chain of butcher shops starting in Kingstown before spreading across Dublin. His success was furthered by contracts with the police and he has since gained local renown as a rich man. With his father's money, Jimmy attended a college in England and Dublin University for law. He was never a very good student, instead spending his time socializing with people in the music and motoring scenes. Jimmy's father, although seemingly upset with his son's spendthrift behavior, is secretly proud of his extravagance.

Jimmy's father's backstory paints him as a man wrapped up in the capitalist economy and society of the time. Although he had once been a part of the political party that was fighting for Irish Home Rule, the narrator implies that he exchanged the hope of Irish sovereignty for money. Not only did he start his butcher business in Kingstown, a part of Dublin known for its English sympathies, but he also worked with the police who, as upholders of English law in Ireland, are fundamentally tied to England's imperialist rule. By working with them, Jimmy's father sells out Ireland in order to make a profit for himself. He then puts this Irish money (which is desperately needed to combat the poverty that plagues Ireland) back in the pockets of the British by sending Jimmy to an English college and to Dublin University, which was known for its English and Protestant influences. On top of this, Jimmy doesn't even make the most of his father's investment—instead of studying, Jimmy spends his University days being social. Jimmy's interest in motoring also implies how he is attracted to the allure of industry and money, both of which are symbolized by cars in this story. But Jimmy's father isn't bothered by Jimmy's frivolous behavior. He is actually proud of his son's extravagance, illustrating how he is more interested in appearing wealthy (and thus a participant in the capitalist competition from which the Irish are usually excluded) than investing his money in Ireland, where it could do practical good.

Jimmy also spent one term in Cambridge to "see a little life," and it is there that he met Ségouin. Jimmy and Ségouin are just acquaintances, but Jimmy enjoys spending time with the charismatic and worldly Frenchman; that Ségouin also apparently owns several big hotels in France is meaningful to Jimmy, too. Both Jimmy and his father agree that Ségouin is a person "worth knowing." Villona, on the other hand, is poor, but he is a talented piano player and is very entertaining.

Jimmy's relationship with Ségouin reveals that Jimmy values this connection because he can gain something from it: proximity to money and prestige. The narrator's use of the phrase "worth knowing" is particularly telling, as it captures Jimmy's commodification of the relationship. He is attracted to Ségouin because of Ségouin's apparent wealth and his worldliness. Jimmy's belief in Ségouin's wealth also shows his gullibility, or his belief that when things appear to be a certain way they must be true. But he has no proof of Ségouin's wealth, just word that it is supposed to exist. In fact, Jimmy doesn't even know Ségouin well—they're just acquaintances—but he isn't being as skeptical as he should be. As for Jimmy's being impressed by Ségouin's worldliness, he clearly finds it appealing to be closely connected with someone who has seen more than just Ireland, which implies that Jimmy views his home country as second-rate. In contrast to Ségouin is Villona, who is described as being "unfortunately[] very poor," a description that emphasizes that, to Jimmy, not having money is a significant misfortune. But Villona is not written off; he has earned his association with Jimmy by being an extremely talented pianist, which may suggest the undeniable value of the arts, even in a social circle as consumed by capitalism as Jimmy's. On the other hand, Jimmy's companionship with Villona may just be another example of how Jimmy seeks to surround himself with people who he finds interesting, which indicates insecurity.

The **car** drives along. Ségouin and Rivière, who are in the front seat, are speaking in French and laughing to each other. Jimmy, who is in the backseat with Villona, has a hard time understanding what they are saying and has to lean forward to get the gist of the conversation before crafting a reasonable reply that he has to shout to get heard over the noise of the wind. Villona's humming, plus the noise of the car, make it even harder for Jimmy to understand the two cousins.

The fact that Jimmy can't keep up with Ségouin and Rivière is symbolic for how Ireland can't keep up with wealthier nations. Even upper-class Irish like Jimmy are stuck in the metaphorical back seat when they try to be a part of the capitalistic competition symbolized by the automobile race. So even though Jimmy is technically included in the race, he's not a full participant. He's in a Frenchman's car (as opposed to independently having one of his own) and he is left out of the conversation that his companions are having. This suggests that the wealthy Irish class's attempts to socially and economically engage with continental Europeans are unsuccessful.

Jimmy's excitement comes from three sources: the speed from driving, the notoriety he has gained from having European friends, and having money. Jimmy delights in knowing that his local friends have seen him with these three men from the European continent. Earlier that day, Ségouin had introduced him to one of the other French drivers, which had earned Jimmy plenty of attention from the Irish onlookers, whom Jimmy sees as making up "the profane world of spectators." As for money, he knows he has quite a lot, even if the amount wouldn't impress Ségouin. Jimmy takes comfort in knowing that his awareness of "the labour latent in money" has kept him from making very large financial mistakes, even if he has made small ones. Now that he is on the verge of a big investment, he is especially conscious of how hard-earned money is.

While analyzing Jimmy's three reasons for his excitement, it is important to remember that he is agitated, but not actually happy. Each of these three sources of excitement represent what Jimmy gets from participating in capitalism: the sense of speed (the symbolism of the car connects this speed to the thrilling pace of industrial and economic advancement), fame and seemingly impressive connections, and money. These three sources of excitement, however, betray their superficiality in Jimmy's lack of genuine joy. Jimmy's fixation on having European acquaintances illustrates both his sense of validation from being associated with continental Europe and his desire to separate himself from Ireland. Jimmy likes knowing that his local Irish friends have seen him with Ségouin and other foreign men. It gets him attention and it distinguishes him in both the eyes of his fellow Irishmen and in his own eyes. Their shared reaction captures the shame felt regarding Irish identity. The narrative's focus then skips back to Jimmy's thoughts on money, demonstrating its dominant presence in his consciousness. His assumption that his "great sum" of money wouldn't impress Ségouin once again reveals Jimmy's sense of inherent inferiority, a feeling Joyce suggests is pervasive for the Irish at this time in history.

Jimmy is confident in the large investment he is about to make in Ségouin's company. Ségouin has implied that it is thanks to their friendship that Jimmy even has the lucky chance to invest "the mite of Irish money" into such an important venture. Jimmy is comforted knowing that it was his business-savvy father who first suggested this investment; his father is confident that there's a lot of money to be made in the **car** industry. Jimmy's confidence is also bolstered by the fact that Ségouin appears to be very rich. As they drive, Jimmy tries to figure how much work was spent to make the car that he is riding in, but instead he marvels at how smoothly it drives and how stylish he feels being in it.

Here is where Jimmy's confidence in Ségouin seems most suspect. Not only does his company not exist yet, but Ségouin reveals himself to be especially shady when he manipulates Jimmy by leveraging his sense of Irish inferiority against him. He does this in two ways: he dismisses Irish money as being just an insignificant "mite" and he implies that Jimmy is the lucky one because he, an Irishman, actually "gets" to invest and be included in the venture. Jimmy doesn't seem aware of the possibility of foul play and instead takes the bait. By investing with Ségouin, Jimmy, like his father, would be reallocating Irish money to fuel a foreign country, even though Ireland urgently needs the economic boost that Jimmy's money could provide. Through this investment, Jimmy represents the greed of the Irish upper class that Joyce criticizes in the story. Jimmy, like the wealthy Irish, is more focused on making money for himself than on helping bring progress to his home country. Jimmy's unwillingness or inability to think deeper about his actions is reflected in his failed attempt at estimating how much work went into making the car he's riding in. He is too distracted by the "style" and speed of the car—representative of the glamour and thrill of capitalism—to think of the time, resources, and human lives that contributed toward making the machine. Clearly, as a rich man and a capitalist, he is actually very far removed from the real "labour latent in money."

When they arrive in Dublin, Ségouin drops Jimmy and Villona off at the bank. The **car** draws lots of attention from passersby, who gather "to pay homage to the snorting motor." The group of men will be having dinner together at Ségouin's hotel, but first Jimmy and Villona must go to Jimmy's parents' house, where the two men are staying, to get dressed. While they walk to the northern part of the city, Jimmy and Villona are strangely disappointed at needing to walk after the thrilling drive.

Joyce misses no opportunity to call attention to the characters' obsession with money, even having Ségouin drop the two men off at a bank. Meanwhile, for the nearby Irish onlookers, the car has a god-like allure. They pay it "homage," a word that elevates it to a lordly status. In a story otherwise lacking religious figures, the devotional attention that the car receives shows how, in a capitalist society, industrial and economic power (as represented by cars) have a god-like importance. The Irish, without cars of their own, passively admire the mighty car of a different country, thereby demonstrating the resignation and inactivity that Joyce saw as instrumental in producing Ireland's nation-wide paralysis that kept it politically and economically behind other European countries. Jimmy, a wealthy Irishman with foreign connections, does have the chance to experience the capitalist power of other countries and is enchanted by it. After the thrill of the car ride, which is symbolic of him enjoying (even if second-hand) the profits of capitalism, he finds walking underwhelming. Joyce concisely captures the wealthy Irish class being captivated by the thrill of capitalistic wealth and industry.

At the Doyle household, Jimmy's dinner with Ségouin is viewed as a special occasion. While his parents are a bit nervous, the family is both proud and eager at his opportunity to engage with these continentals. When dressed, Jimmy looks very handsome, and his father is proud that he has given his son such "qualities often unpurchaseable." Jimmy's father is in such good spirits that he is "unusually friendly" with Villona and speaks of his admiration for "foreign accomplishments." Villona, however, isn't listening; he is hungry and is looking forward to having dinner.

The wealthy Doyle family's excitement at Jimmy's dinner with continental Europeans is representative of how, according to Joyce, the upper-class Irish of the early 20th century were focused on connecting themselves with people from more "powerful" European countries. Their apprehension and pride hints at their insecurity surrounding their Irish identity: they see these continentals as being out of their league and are therefore proud that their son has "made it" this far. Jimmy's father is also "commercially satisfied" with his son's handsome appearance, whose good looks he commodifies by calling them "often unpurchaseable." Joyce's word choice communicates how capitalism has a knack for prompting people to place monetary value on everything and everyone around them. Jimmy's father's good spirits result in him being "unusually friendly" with Villona, which suggests that he typically isn't very nice to him. While Joyce doesn't explicitly provide a reason why, it is likely because Villona is poor, which means, according to Jimmy's father, that he has nothing to offer and therefore is not worth friendly attention.

The dinner with Ségouin is delicious and confirms Jimmy's confidence in the Frenchman's sophistication. At dinner, the four men are joined by an Englishman named Routh, who was a friend of Ségouin's at Cambridge. Jimmy notes how Routh, Ségouin, and Rivière make an elegant and powerful group—a "graceful image . . .and a just one." The five men talk loudly and with increasingly less reserve. While Villona discusses the value of old instruments with the unenthused Routh, Rivière begins to speak to Jimmy in a way that seems calculated about the genius of French mechanics. Ségouin then switches the topic to politics, which leads to a heated argument between Routh and Jimmy, who feels his father's old nationalist views stirring within him. Ségouin carefully averts disaster by proposing a toast to humanity and then opening the window.

Jimmy's consideration of Ségouin, Rivière, and Routh's chemistry signifies an Irish admiration for the cultural and economic power of France and England. He even calls this "graceful image" a "just one," which suggests his own resignation to (what he sees as) their superiority. The men become quite drunk, as is suggested by their "loosened" tongues. While Routh is clearly uninterested in talking about music with Villona, Rivière seizes the opportunity to convince Jimmy to invest in Ségouin's supposed company. Rivière's behavior exposes him to be yet another man in the story who is using his connections with people to increase his own wealth; he is, after all, to become manager of Ségouin's business. When Ségouin brings up politics, Jimmy at last shows signs of Irish pride. Notably, it takes him being drunk before the "buried zeal of his father wake[s] to life." This language is indicative of how deeply suppressed Jimmy's sense of Ireland's needs is. Until now, Jimmy hasn't shown any signs that he ever reflects on the obstacles that Ireland faces, nor the factors (namely, English rule) that are dooming it to poverty. In fact, just moments before, Jimmy had been admiring Routh, who is now arguing with him, doubtlessly in favor of England's continued control of Ireland. But Jimmy's Irish nationalism is easily dissipated by Ségouin's toast, which suggests that, although Jimmy harbors Irish nationalist sentiments, they aren't strong enough for him to actually do anything about it. He isn't even willing to make his dinner companions uncomfortable. Because these companions include Ségouin, with whom he hopes to align himself in hopes of making money, it is clear that accomplishing his own financial goals is more important to him than fighting for Ireland's independence.


After the dinner, Ségouin, Jimmy, Rivière, Routh, and Villona take a walk by Stephen's Green (a public park), where they smoke and talk. It is a beautiful night and, at this moment, Dublin "[wears] the mask of a capital." Suddenly, the group crosses paths with an American named Farley, whom Rivière appears to know. The group of now six men is talking so loudly and animatedly that there is no thread of conversation and nobody really knows what anyone else is talking about. They get into a **car** before taking a train to Kingstown, where a ticket collector salutes Jimmy and comments on the pleasantness of the evening. They head for Farley's yacht and, along the way, they sing a satirical French song called "Cadet Roussel."

Dublin was and is the capital of Ireland. It was also called the "second city" of the British Empire while it was under English rule. But Joyce's saying that it "[wears] the mask of a capital" undermines the sense that Dublin is a worthy or important place. As Joyce has implied throughout the story, Ireland is paralyzed by English rule and the resulting poverty and internalized sense of inadequacy that comes with it. To Joyce, Dublin is lacking the political and economic independence to merit the designation of being a capital. Now that Jimmy is drunk, however, Dublin appears more desirable. As he and the other men go to Farley's yacht, they sing a French song that makes fun of a French cadet while calling him (the cadet) "un bon enfant," or "a good kiddo." Joyce may be using this song to suggest something sinister about that the other men's treatment of Jimmy, that they may be humoring him while they make a mockery of him.


When they get to the yacht, Villona starts playing the piano that is in the cabin. He plays waltzes and songs for square dancing while the other men dance. Jimmy merrily joins in and thinks that "this [is] seeing life, at least." Eventually, Farley gets worn out and stops the dancing. They settle down for a small supper, but they really just end up drinking more. They make toasts to each of their home countries and Jimmy makes a very long speech that results in a lot of clapping from the other men. Judging by this reaction, Jimmy assumes that his speech was a good one. Delighted, he thinks of how they are such wonderful company.

Jimmy's general sense of aimlessness is reflected in his self-consoling statement that dancing drunkenly is "seeing life, at least." By adding the "at least," Joyce suggests that Jimmy is feeling discontented beneath his reassurance to himself that he is "seeing life" with these men. The vague consolation of "seeing life" betrays his vapidity (he misjudges the profundity of simple diversions), as well as his assumption that time spent with these continental men is valuable simply because they are not Irish. Jimmy's drunkenness is highlighted by his not being sure what his speech is about. He clearly doesn't recall what he said but assumes that it was great because the other men applauded for him. Their reaction actually suggests that they are just humoring him without much concern for his well-being. He is clearly very drunk, yet they cheer him on as he makes a fool of himself.

Jimmy, Ségouin, Rivière, Farley, and Routh begin to play cards while Villona plays the piano. The **games** continue end-to-end while the players keep drinking. As they play, bets are raised higher and higher, and I.O.U.s begin to be exchanged. Jimmy, his mind increasingly foggy from all the drinking, isn't sure who is winning, but he knows that he's losing. He is so out of it that the other men are keeping track of his I.O.U.'s for him. He blames himself for not paying better attention to his cards and wishes that the game would end. Finally, one of the men declares that they will play one more game to finish the night.

The card game symbolizes a capitalistic competition between countries. The participants gamble their resources to try to profit off others, with the stakes being constantly raised. Jimmy enters this competition and represents how the upper Irish class is playing with Irish money when trying to compete with countries that possess more resources and power than the Irish do. Jimmy's drunkenness is an impediment to his success (he can't keep his cards straight) and this symbolizes the fact that Ireland is at a huge political and economic disadvantage when competing with countries like England and France. Not only is Jimmy unable to keep track of his cards, but he can't control his own I.O.U.'s. Instead, the other men take it upon themselves to manage his debts for him, suggesting foul play on their end. Instead of doing the ethical thing and kindly releasing him from the game, they let him drunkenly bet away more money that goes into their pockets. Through Jimmy's participation, Joyce criticizes how the wealthy Irish, in their eagerness to engage with foreign countries in the "game" of capitalism, end up pouring Irish money and resources into other nations, despite the fact that Ireland urgently needs these resources. When things take a turn for the worse, Jimmy doesn't try to leave or quit the game, once again showing his (and the Irish's) inaction in the face of a dire situation.

At this point, Jimmy feels terrible about the **game**. He is dimly aware that the leading winners are Routh and Ségouin and he musters some excitement for them, even in the face of his heavy losses. Worryingly, he isn't even sure of how much money he has bet away. He realizes that Villona is no longer playing the piano and is likely outside on the deck. At last, Routh wins the game, and the debts are settled: Farley and Jimmy are the biggest losers. Jimmy rests his head in his hands, beginning to feel his hangover coming in and knowing that he will regret everything in the morning. For now, though, he is glad to sink into forgetful sleep before then. Abruptly, the cabin door opens to reveal Villona, who announces the dawning day.

In a display of emotion that echoes the Irish spectators' cheering and admiration for foreign cars during the race, Jimmy, who is losing terribly, manages to be excited for the winners of the game, Ségouin and Routh. The comparable success of the two men demonstrates how France and England are leaders in the global economy. Routh's final victory symbolizes England's dominance. Meanwhile, Jimmy has no idea how much he has lost, a failure that can be seen as both an economic and a spiritual one. In regard to the former, Jimmy's heavy debts illustrate Ireland's utter failure in the economic competition between countries. As for the latter, Jimmy knows that his behavior has lost him money, but he still isn't aware of the extent to which the evening has been bad for him. By playing in the game of capitalism, he hasn't just lost money—he's lost dignity, the true sense of friendship, and the opportunity to help his home country. In contrast to Jimmy is Villona, who chose to not participate in the game. Through the Hungarian pianist, Joyce illustrates what he believes to be Ireland's way out of its dismal situation. At the time that the story had been written, Hungary had achieved some economic and political independence from Austria. (Joyce glorifies the situation at the time, although the arrangement between Austria and Hungary was actually resented by many Hungarians.) What the Irish need to accomplish, according to Joyce, is both economic and political independence from England and, preferably, an alternative to capitalism. Until then, Joyce uses Jimmy's failure to represent the fate that awaits Ireland: despair and poverty.

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