

# Eilis' attitude of Home by Eve Walsh Stoddard Essay

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Throughout our lives people share commonalities on the idea of home and what it is. Some people think of home as a house they have lived in throughout their life or a city/country they reside in. Although true for some, some people are at a loss for a distinct place to call home. People may think of home as “[feeling](#) comfortable in diverse settings and intermingling with people of different cultures” (150), which Stoddard describes as the ordinary description of cosmopolitanism. (150) In contrast, people may think of home in the sense that Stoddard mentions; Freud’s idea of the uncanny, “That species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and has long been familiar” (Stoddard 150,). What Freud means is that the feeling of uncanny in relation to home is the frightening [thought](#) of returning ‘home’ after a long time, when you have become comfortable in another setting. It is uncanny because it becomes a struggle to fit into the place one currently resides in and the place they originally resided in. In Brooklyn the idea of the uncanny is represented in relationship to Ellis’ attitude of home. Through Eilis’ internal debates with herself, the concrete personal relations she shares in both Enniscorthy and Brooklyn, and her career opportunities in both cities, one can see her sense of home is shown to be uncanny. Ultimately, Eilis’ feeling of home is not static and fixed, instead fluid, bringing into focus the uncanny sense of a cosmopolitan view of home.

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Primarily, in Brooklyn, Toibin uses the third person limited narrative to show Eilis' private debates within herself, allowing the reader to understand Eilis' stance on her idea of home. At first, Eilis agreed to venture on her journey to America with...

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...home as a concrete place of memories in her head, that she can look back on and feel the sense of home just as much as physically living somewhere. Although Eilis returns to Brooklyn, she is not making a decision of where she feels home is, more so where she needs to be at that given time. This following from the idea that to feel uncanny is to feel unsure in a place that should be familiar to you, and to feel cosmopolitan you feel that home is multiple places not just singular. Thus, in

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Brooklyn Eilis displays a woman whose attitude of home fluctuates depending on where she lives as someone who travels the world may feel or a fellow immigrant of the world.

#### Works Cited

Stoddard, Eve Walsh. "Home and Belonging among Irish Migrants: Transnational 47. 1&2 (Summer 2012): 147-171.

Toibin, Cohn. Brooklyn: A Novel. New York: Scribner, 2009.

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