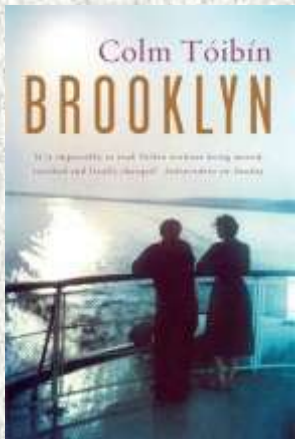


# Brooklyn

Film réalisé en 2015 par John Crowley  
Avec Saoirse Ronan, Emory Cohen, Jim Broadbent



Il y a quelques années, l'épreuve écrite du bac ES a proposé un texte extrait du roman de l'auteur irlandais Colm Tóibín, *Brooklyn*, publié en 2009.

Ce fut alors l'occasion de découvrir cet auteur par le biais de ce roman narrant l'histoire d'Eilis Lacey, jeune fille irlandaise vivant à Enniscorthy (ville natale de l'auteur) dans les années 50 et qui rêve d'une vie meilleure de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique. Comme de nombreux Irlandais avant elle, elle se résout à prendre le chemin de New York...

Sur nos écrans actuellement sort l'adaptation filmée réalisée par l'Irlandais John Crowley, adaptation réussie qui est fidèle à l'esprit du roman en dépit de quelques petites différences.

Le rôle principal est tenu par l'actrice irlandaise Saoirse Ronan : elle illumine le film par la finesse de son jeu et les émotions qui se lisent sur son visage. Elle fit ses débuts à l'écran à seulement treize ans dans le film de Joe Wright, **Atonement (Reviens-moi)**, dans lequel elle jouait cette adolescente qui découvre le monde des adultes avec ses grands yeux bleus étonnés.

Elle a mûri et incarne une Eilis Lacey convaincante, tour à tour tourmentée et joyeuse, triste et enjouée. Son cœur balance entre Irlande et Amérique, mais elle finit par prendre son destin en main dans une société rigide qui laisse peu de liberté aux femmes.

Un conseil : allez voir ce film en version originale de façon à profiter de l'anglais d'Irlande dont la musicalité enchante l'oreille ! Et profitez-en pour lire le roman fin et délicat de Colm Tóibín !

Le trailer du film : [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PYJO\\_jCht8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PYJO_jCht8)

# Quelques critiques parues dans la presse

« *Brooklyn* emerges as a triumphant blend of social history and reined-in melodrama. It is meant entirely as a compliment to say that Maeve Binchy would have got on well with it.”

**The Irish Times**

“*Brooklyn* is both sharply observed and gently nostalgic.”

**The New York Times**

“A tremendous lead performance lifts Nick Hornby’s screen translation of Colm Tóibín’s novel out of a sentimental period nostalgia into an intelligent drama.”

**The Guardian**

“Saoirse Ronan, Emory Cohen and the film director John Crowley, achieve something close to a miracle – the kind of old-fashioned, shivers-down-the-spine serendipity that’s hushed and special, and can’t be taught.”

**The Telegraph**

“*Brooklyn* is a refined period romance, free from schmaltz, sentimentality and pandering. It deserves a warm embrace not just because Ronan’s first adult role is so polished. It should be cheered as a modern classic of the highest order.”

**The Star Tribune**

“Soaring, swooning and gently nostalgic, *Brooklyn* takes melodrama to a new level of reassuring simplicity and emotional transparency.”

**The Washington Post**



Saoirse Ronan,  
dans le rôle d'Eilis



Eilis est employée dans un grand magasin  
à son arrivée à Brooklyn



Rencontre avec Tony, plombier d'origine  
italienne (Emory Cohen)



De retour à Enniscorthy, la ville où elle a grandi



Retrouvailles avec Jim Farrell (Domhnall Gleeson)

**Annexe 1** : l'extrait du roman de Colm Tóibín, proposé dans l'épreuve du bac ES en 2011.



Father Flood was tall; his accent was a mixture of Irish and American. Nothing he said could convince Eilis's mother that she had known him or his family. His mother, he said, had been a Rochford.

"I don't think I knew her," her mother said. "The only Rochford we knew was old Hatchethead."

Father Flood looked at her solemnly. "Hatchethead was my uncle," he said.

"Was he?" her mother asked. Eilis saw how close she was to nervous laughter.

"But of course we didn't call him that," Father Flood said. "His real name was Seamus."

"Well, he was very nice," her mother said. "Weren't we awful to call him that?"

Rose poured more tea as Eilis quietly left the room, afraid that if she stayed she would be unable to disguise an urge to begin laughing.

When she returned she realized that Father Flood had heard about her job at Miss Kelly's, had found out about her pay and had expressed shock at how low it was. He inquired about her qualifications.

"In the United States," he said, "there would be plenty of work for someone like you and with good pay." "She thought of going to England," her mother said, "but the boys said to wait, that it wasn't the best time there, and she might only get factory work."

"In Brooklyn, where my parish is, there would be office work for someone who was hard-working and educated and honest."

"It's very far away, though," her mother said. "That's the only thing."

"Parts of Brooklyn," Father Flood replied, "are just like Ireland. They're full of Irish."

He crossed his legs and sipped his tea from the china cup and said nothing for a while. The silence that descended made it clear to Eilis what the others were thinking. She looked across at her mother, who deliberately, it seemed to her, did not return her glance, but kept her gaze fixed on the floor. Rose, normally so good at moving the conversation along if they had a visitor, also said nothing. She twisted her ring and then her bracelet.

"It would be a great opportunity, especially if you were young," Father Flood said finally.

"It might be very dangerous," her mother said, her eyes still fixed on the floor.

"Not in my parish," Father Flood said. "It's full of lovely people. A lot of life centres round the parish, even more than in Ireland. And there's work for anyone who's willing to work."

Eilis felt like a child when the doctor would come to the house, her mother listening with cowed respect. It was Rose's silence that was new to her; she looked at her now, wanting her sister to ask a question or make a comment, but Rose appeared to be in a sort of dream. As Eilis watched her, it struck her that she had never seen Rose look so beautiful. And then it occurred to her that she was already feeling that she would need to remember this room, her sister, this scene, as though from a distance. In the silence that had lingered, she realized it had somehow been tacitly arranged that Eilis would go to America. Father Flood, she believed, had been invited to the house because Rose knew that he could arrange it.

Her mother had been so opposed to her going to England that this new realization came to Eilis as a shock. She wondered if she had not taken the job in the shop and had not told them about her weekly humiliation at Miss Kelly's hands, might they have been so ready to let this conversation happen. She regretted having told them so much; she had done so mostly because it had made Rose and her mother laugh, brightened a number of meals that they had had with each other, made eating together nicer and easier than anytime since her father had died and the boys had left. [ . . . ]

In the days that followed no mention was made of Father Flood's visit or his raising the possibility of her going to Brooklyn, and it was the silence itself that led Eilis to believe that Rose and her mother had discussed it and were in favour of it. She had never considered going to America. Many she knew had gone to England and often came back at Christmas or in the summer. It was part of the life of the town. Although she knew friends who regularly received presents of dollars or clothes from America, it was always from their aunts and uncles, people who had emigrated long before the war. She could not remember any of these people ever appearing in the town on holidays. It was a long journey across the Atlantic, she knew, at least a week on a ship, and it must be expensive. She had a sense too, she did not know from where, that, while the boys and girls from the town who had gone to England did ordinary work for ordinary money, people who went to America could become rich. She tried to work out how she had come to believe also that, while people from the town who lived in England missed Enniscorthy, no one who went to America missed home. Instead, they were happy there and proud. She wondered if that could be true.

## Annexe 2 : *Brooklyn* and the True History of Irish Immigrants in 1950s New York City

Sarah Begley – Time Magazine – November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015

As the star of the new movie *Brooklyn*, Saoirse Ronan is tasked with portraying an Irish immigrant in 1950s New York City as a singular woman in a unique situation. But transatlantic love triangles aside, the experiences of the fictional Eilis Lacey would have been as common as Irish pubs are in today's Midtown Manhattan.

In the novel on which the movie is based, a best-seller by Colm Tóibín, Eilis moves from small-town Ireland, where she struggles to find work, to Brooklyn. A priest facilitates the move, finds her a job at an Italian-run department store and lodging in an Irish women's boarding house, and sets her up to take night classes in bookkeeping. Such a trajectory would have been typical for an Irish woman moving to New York at the time—but to fully understand Eilis's '50s experience, it's necessary to back up to the first boom of Irish immigration to America, in the 1840s.

When the potato famine sent droves of immigrants to America, New York City saw the beginning of a new immigrant infrastructure in which the Irish would eventually dominate powerful unions, civil service jobs and Catholic institutions in the city. Given their firm hold on construction work during a critical period of growth in Manhattan, “Bono of U2 exaggerated only slightly when he said the Irish built New York,” says Stephen Petrus, the Andrew W. Mellon Fellow at the New York Historical Society. While the Great Depression and World War II had decreased the rate of Irish immigration, newcomers to the city in 1950 would still find vibrant Irish enclaves with steady jobs available, an Irish mayor in William O'Dwyer and an Irish-American Cardinal in Francis Spellman, who was “highly influential, not just in religion, but in politics,” Petrus says.

Meanwhile, economic conditions in Ireland were a different situation. As Irish-American historian and novelist Peter Quinn explains, “The country wasn't in the Second World War, it had been kind of cut off from the rest of the world, and it wasn't part of the Marshall Plan. So it was still a very rural country.” The economy was at a standstill, while the U.S. was booming. Some 50,000 immigrants left Ireland for America in the '50s, about a quarter of them settling in New York.

And, within that community, women played an important role. During the 19th century, the wave of Irish was “the only immigration where there were a majority of women,” Quinn says. And, thanks to a culture that supported nuns and teachers, those women were often able to delay marriage and look for jobs. By the mid 20th century, many Irish women—who also benefited from the ability to speak English—were working in supermarkets, utility companies, restaurants and, like Eilis, department stores. The fact that Eilis finds her job through her priest is also typical. “[The Catholic Church] was an employment agency. It was the great transatlantic organization,” Quinn says. “If you came from Ireland, everything seemed different, but the church didn't. It was a comfort that way, and it was a connection.”

It's fitting, then, that Eilis meets her love interest, the Italian-American Tony, at a parish dance. These were tremendously popular social events where women could meet men while under the protective supervision of their priest. No alcohol would have been on offer, which added another layer of safety. And it's not at all strange that Eilis would strike up with an Italian-American man rather than a fellow Celt. “When people talked about intermarriage in the '50s, they weren't talking about black-white, they were talking about Irish-Italian,” Quinn says.

But there is one place where Eilis' story departs from the historic norm, and it's the crux of the plot: her trip home to Ireland and the possibility that the homesick protagonist might move back permanently. Though many immigrants would send money home to relatives who had stayed Ireland, Quinn says, “it was rare for Irish immigrants to go back to live.” Even so, though Tóibín's protagonist is fictional, the heartache and growing pains experienced by so many women with stories like hers would have been unmistakably real.