

Spiritual Paralysis and Epiphany: James Joyce’s “Eveline” and “The Boarding House”

“James Joyce’un ‘Eveline’ ve ‘The Boarding House’ adlı Hikayelerindeki Ruhsal Çöküntü ve Epifani”

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Abstract

This article intends to highlight James Joyce’s ironical outlook for the existence of epiphanies in women’s lives to be released from their spiritual paralysis and stagnation as indicated in “Eveline” (1904) and “The Boarding House” (1906) in *Dubliners*. In “Eveline” and “The Boarding House,” Joyce portrays women who are in a struggle for setting aside the inequalities and miseries of their social environment through their representative wish for emancipation in their lonely and alienated state of minds. Trapped in a web of social expectations and constraints, women intend to escape from the strict patriarchal society of Dublin in these short stories. Structured and controlled by the issue of femininity, James Joyce writes about the effects of the Irish society on female adolescents. “Eveline” and “The Boarding House” offer two portrayals of women who are enclosed by the dominance of the rigid patriarchal society which ends up the need for emancipation from social rigid rules. In these stories, however, the women characters portray a continuation of the choice of their domestic female roles, i.e., their struggle for emancipation turns out to be useless. "Eveline" is the story of a young teenager who faces a dilemma where she has to choose either she has to live with her father or escape with his boyfriend. In "The Boarding House," Mrs. Mooney, a working woman who has rooms to be rented by the young male lodgers, is also in a struggle for supporting herself and her two children. She is in search for emancipation from her drunken abusive husband having social prejudices. Hence, both of these stories highlight women’s tendency for exploring their selfhood and free will because of the inequalities and struggles of patriarchal society of the time in which they are spiritually paralyzed. Thus, James Joyce hints at women’s wish for emancipation

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from the oppressions of patriarchal social environment in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Key Words: Paralysis, Epiphany, Emancipation of Women, James Joyce, "Eveline," "The Boarding House"

Özet

Bu makale, James Joyce'un *Dubliners* adlı eserinde bulunan "Eveline" (1904) ve "The Boarding House" (1906) adlı hikayelerinde görülen kadın karakterlerin içine düştükleri ruhsal çöküntüden, hayatlarında değişikliğe sebep olan anlık olayların (epiphany) etkisiyle kurtulduklarını ironik olarak göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Joyce, "Eveline" ve "The Boarding House" adlı hikayelerinde, kadının sosyal çevresindeki eşitsizlikten ve acıya sebep olan durumlardan kurtulamadıklarından dolayı yalnızlaşmış ve toplumdaki uzaklaşmış zihneyetleri ile başbaşa kaldıklarını vurgulamaktadır. Bu hikayelerde, sosyal sınırlamalara maruz kalan kadınların büyük çoğunluğunun, o dönemde İrlanda'nın Dublin şehrinde hakim olan ataeril yapıdaki yalnızlaşmayı ve uzaklaşmayı yansıttığı görülmektedir. Dolayısıyla, Joyce bu hikayelerde sosyal toplumun kadınlar ve genç kızlar üzerindeki etkilerine değinmekte olup erkeklerin hakim olduğu katı sosyal toplumdaki kadınların kaçış çabalarını belirtmektedir. Gözlenen odur ki, aile içi rollerinden kaçmaya çalışan kadınlar aslında bu rollerine devam etmekten başka bir çıkar yol göremezler; yani, özgürleşme çabaları sadece düşüncede kalmaktadır. "Eveline" adlı hikayede, Eveline babasıyla birlikte yaşamayı tercih etme ya da Frank ile Bounes Aires'te yeni bir geleceğe devam etme ikilemine düşer. "The Boarding House" adlı hikayede, alkolik kocasından ve toplumun önyargılarından kurtulmaya çalışan bir kadın olan Mrs. Mooney erkek müşterilere kiraya verdiği pansiyonu yoluyla çocuklarını ve kendini geçindirmeye uğraşan bir kişidir. Bu iki hikayedeki kadınlar, kendi benliklerini ve bağımsızlıklarını bulma eğilimindedirler. Psikolojik bunalım içerisinde düşen bu kişilerin kurtulabilmeleri için ancak çözüm getirebilecek ani olayların/ilham anlarının oluşmasına ihtiyaçları vardır. Kendilerini ataeril düzendeki eşitsizliklerden ve uğraşlardan kurtarmaya çalışmaktan başka planları yoktur. Sonuç olarak, bu hikayelerde James Joyce, yirminci yüzyılın ilk çөгüğünde ataeril düzenin baskılarından dolayı özgürleşme çabası içerisinde olan kadınları esas konu edinmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ruhsal Çöküntü, Epifani, Kadınların Özgürleşmesi, James Joyce, "Eveline," "The Boarding House"

By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments.

James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*

This article highlights an ironical outlook for the case of the occurrences of epiphanies in women's state of being spiritually paralyzed and oppressed under strict social norms as depicted in James Joyce's short stories "Eveline" (1904) and "The Boarding House" (1905)¹. This emphasizes that although women are struggling for their emancipation, their attempt for freedom becomes futile because of some emerging problems in their social circumstances. The prejudices and the biases of their social environment prevent them from making logical assessments. Although they are in search for emancipation, they are oppressed under the dominant rules of the patriarchal society.

Famous with the story of wars, famines, emigrations and rebellions, James Joyce reflects how women are eager to rebel against the patriarchal dominance in Ireland². In his well-known short stories, "Eveline" and "The Boarding House," James Joyce manifests these stories as the ones that revolve around loss and absence. Terry Eagleton underlines that although the characters are from the lower middle class in the tales of *Dubliners*, they have enough awareness and education to improve in their lives but have no means to realize their wishes. However, beneath the surfaces of social life, there lies shame, guilt, violence and humiliation (2005: 298). This is a reference for a clash between personal aspirations and social prejudices. Such a case encourages women's necessity of emancipation from their stigma of femininity and thus to exceed their marginalized social states. The awakening women are preoccupied with setting aside the inequalities and miseries of their domestic world full of their representative wish for emancipation in the stories. Trapped in a web of social expectations and constraints, women try to escape from the strict patriarchal society of Dublin in these short literary works. Joyce reflects how women are enclosed by the norms of patriarchal society in which strict rules enforce them to be in a desire for freedom. This indicates that Joyce displays women's tendency for being in a search for selfhood and free will behind their endeavors for emancipation.

"Eveline" is the story of a young teenager who faces a dilemma where she has to choose either to stay at home by living with her father or to escape with his boyfriend. While facing the future, Eveline's story depicts the pitfalls of holding to the past, i.e., she is obsessed with a dilemma either to continue her domestic life

¹ Terry Eagleton explains that epiphany, James Joyce coins it as sudden moments of revelation, is "a religious term which he hijacked for secular purposes" (2005: 298). The aim of the usage of this word would be to imply that people are inspired from sudden different incidents in their lives and would find chances thereby for their social mobility in life.

² James Joyce's stories are rather realistic stories about life in Dublin at the beginning of the twentieth century. Joyce portrays what her characters think and feel by focusing on a narrow layer of Dublin's society.

rooted in the past or to possess a new married life. At first, Eveline feels happy to leave her hard life, but then, she worries about unfulfilling the promises of her dead mother. She is an indecisive character who evaluates Frank as a means of rescue saving her from her rigid domestic world. This indicates that she is lost in between her past experiences at home and her future expectations. Being paralyzed within her repetitive domestic responsibilities, she feels desperate of being successful in the outside world. She reflects her complex mind at the moment of her departure at the docks while eloping with Frank to Argentina for marriage. Torn between her indecisiveness whether to remain in her unhappy domestic world or to accept dramatic escape to Argentina, Eveline revises her view of life and seems to be certain of her decision by returning back to her domestic world at the end. Her sudden emotional change implies how she is spiritually paralyzed under the expectations of her environment.

In "The Boarding House," similarly, Mrs. Mooney is again in search for emancipation from a different perspective. Her drunken abusive husband and social prejudices enforce her for supporting herself and her two children, Polly and Jack, in her boarding house which is filled with clerks, tourists, and musicians. Mrs. Mooney opens a boarding house in order to make a living after a difficult marriage with a drunken husband that ends up separation. Known as "The Madam" by the lodgers, Mrs. Mooney seems to be a strict woman of matriarchal authority who permits her daughter, Polly, stay at home and deal with the lodgers as well as help with the cleanings.³ Surrounded by many lodgers, Polly develops a relationship with Mr. Doran that caused Mrs. Mooney consider such a relationship as an obligation for marriage.⁴ Mrs. Mooney challenges social standards thereby, i.e., as a tactical game Mrs. Mooney convinces a wealthy man to get married to a working girl. Thus, "The Boarding House" portrays the emancipation of a woman who experiences a difficult marriage and separation and who is in search for finding a partner for her daughter. Only some cases of epiphanies would be a means of relief for emancipation for Polly, Mrs. Mooney, and Eveline.

Signifying a sudden revelation, the idea of epiphany emerges from the coexistence of paralysis and stagnation in James Joyce's short stories as in "Eveline" and "The Boarding House." From *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce carries out his creative task by means of a series of epiphanies related to the moments of insight and understanding in a certain order. His short stories in *Dubliners* reflect characters' paralysis of the existential condition of living in hopelessness and such inner states can be exceeded only by a sudden self-recognition of truth. As indicated in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, these

³ Polly used to work in an office before starting to deal with the lodgers in addition to helping with the clearing in the boarding house.

⁴ An obscure title "The Madam" is a term suggesting Mrs. Mooney's management and control in the boarding house

moments when "the soul is born" (Joyce, 1969: 203). This revelation manifests the whole process of truth about the nature of events or particular characters (Valente, 1995: 1). While analyzing these short stories in respect to the idea of spiritual paralysis and stagnation, it is also significant to emphasize what encouraged James Joyce to focus on these central themes.⁵ James Joyce begins to work on his fifteen short stories at this time and, thus, reflects the idea of the central theme of paralysis in his literary works.⁶ Joyce breaks into four categories in his short stories each of which focuses on a particular stage of life including childhood, adolescence, mature life, and public life. In his analysis, Joyce demonstrates the ways in which each phase of life was affected by the paralysis that he felt was the main tenet of Dublin and Irish society in the early twentieth century (Firman, 2007: 1).

In "Eveline" and "The Boarding House," James Joyce uses a physical and symbolic setting to demonstrate the living circumstances in Ireland. In these short stories, Joyce incorporates the idea of spiritual paralysis and epiphany throughout the settings and the main characters. As quoted in the beginning of this article, Joyce formulated a theory of epiphany in *Stephen Hero*, partly expressed through Stephen's voice. By an epiphany, Joyce meant sudden spiritual manifestation in different forms of speech, of gesture, that is in a memorable phase of the mind (Sramkova, 1998: online).⁷ Through his use of literary language involving epiphanies and effective writing style in his literary works, Joyce also conveys a specific ethical or moral message in order to describe the society he lives in. Joyce puts forward the reason for writing his short stories as:

My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country,
and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the

⁵ "Eveline" and "The Boarding House" are James Joyce's adolescent stories in *Dubliners* in which Polly Mooney and Eveline Hill are of 19 years old.

⁶ Ireland passed through the period of stagnation and paralysis in the early periods of twentieth century. The idea of stagnation and spiritual paralysis started with the death of Charles Parnell which ended the movement in Parliament for home rule in Ireland. Charles Parnell, a Protestant Irish Member of Parliament, wanted Irish people to have fuller rights, especially the right to self-government. When most Irish people voted for the first time in 1885, Parnell's Irish party was elected to Parliament. Although most Liberals supported Parnell, the Tories did not. Thus, Ireland did not gain the right for self-government, i.e., "home rule" until thirty years later (McDowall, 1991: 150). Parnell became the leader of Home Rule Party in 1877 and held till his ruin in a divorce scandal in 1890. Although prepared to exploit every political situation, he was to some extent despised by the Land League that had the ownership of the land for peasantry (Morgan, 1993: 555-556).

⁷ Sramkova also refers to three types of epiphanies in Joyce's short stories: verbal, sensual, and visionary epiphanies. Eveline would have her sensual epiphany by thinking of going to Australia with her friend, but at the end she changes her mind in "Eveline". On the other hand, Polly has a visionary epiphany by choosing a man to deal with in "The Boarding House."

centre of paralysis. I have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspect; childhood, adolescence, maturity, and public life. The stories are arranged in this order. I have written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction that he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard. . . . (qtd. in Kenner, 1962: 48-49).

Portrayal of moral history emphasizes how characters are enclosed by the norms of their environments. The central theme of paralysis indicates the existence of character's hopelessness of facing the restraints and the obstacles to maintain happy endings in life, i.e., they are in a dilemma of transformation. Only by the revelation of epiphanies, these characters evaluate their particular social circumstances better than before. Joyce deals with this central theme of paralysis in his other stories such as "Araby" in which the first paragraph begins by describing "North Richmond Street, an uninhabited house of two stories stood at the blind end detached from its neighbors in a square" (1993: 17). Such a beginning of the case of blindness in a dark street in social life informs the readers about the existence of paralysis. A literal use of "blindness" and "darkness" is intentionally used to emphasize the coexistence of overwhelming the state of paralysis in this short story. The main characters display their self-awareness or their awareness of the true nature of their living environment. Anne Michels defines James Joyce's statement of the reason for paralysis as: "the people of Ireland had the capacity, but lacked the true desire, to come to a realization about their situation. He thought that their refusal to open their eyes to their situation (and also to accept some responsibility for it) was the reason they were trapped in a state of paralysis" (2007: 1). Joyce's short stories such as "Araby," "Eveline," and "A Little Cloud" all reflect the central theme of paralysis.⁸ This moment of revelation can clearly be observed when Eveline reflects her salvation from her dilemma of either to stay in her past living circumstances in Dublin or to choose a new life with her boyfriend in Argentina. Such an attitude also reflects how Eveline is in a sense of isolation and alienation in her domestic world.⁹ This distancing is just the sort of reasons enforcing individuals to fall into paralysis. Eveline displays psychoanalytical attitude of servitude, passivity and the sense of being overwhelmed by masculine oppression (Ingersoll, 1993: 1). Thus, her mind is entrapped by her social environment and her domestic world, no matter how powerful her personal attitude toward the idea of emancipation is.

⁸ Anne Michels points out that James Joyce was ignored by the Irish people of the early twentieth century because he rejected the ideals of the other writers such as the idea of nationalism in the Irish literary revival (2007: 1).

⁹ James Joyce's stories such as "A Little Cloud," "Eveline," "The Boarding House," "Counterparts," "Clay," and "A Painful Case" reflect the significance of the theme of isolation and alienation in their lives.

Focusing on the moral and social history of his country, Joyce hints at the oppression of the environment and puts forward that this ends up women's wish for emancipation in Dublin's patriarchal society (Hart, 1969: 48). Caught in between her desire for acquiring a better life and her paralysis in her domestic life, Eveline is unable to leave those she feels a duty towards behind.¹⁰ Becoming desperate of transformation in her social world, Eveline finds the remedy of escape from her social responsibilities and considers the means of salvation for free association by continuing her relationship with Frank¹¹. Especially Eveline's mother's death enforces Eveline to struggle for freedom, because her mother's death stands for the condemnation of Eveline to care for her depressing home. When Eveline meets Frank, she is offered a choice to make between her Dublin house and the life in Buenos Aires where there is Frank's lodgings.¹² However despite her wish for emancipation, she accepts living by her family problems and all her domestic roles in the family prison. Such a problematic life signifies the parallel form of female bonding between Eveline and her mother (Ehrlich, 1997: 90). This signifies that Eveline attributes the role of her mother as an alienated young girl. After her mother's death, Eveline undertakes her mother's role and experiences the oppressive miserable way of living to keep the family together. Such a repetition emphasizes the case of women's social and domestic role in Ireland at that time.

Being educated to obey and to serve, similar to the proud adolescent in James Joyce's "An Encounter", Eveline is overwhelmed by the danger of removing herself from the shelter of household pieties and, therefore, feels to be in the prison of her motherly self. Moreover, like the questing hero in "Araby," she performs inherently domestic tasks which also make her plight concrete and universal (Juan, 1972: 71). Eveline seems to be a typical failed hero for rejecting to be "saved" by Frank at the end of the story, i.e., she rejects the occurrence of epiphanies in her life because of her family preoccupations. Oppressed by the expectations of the patriarchal society, rather than going beyond her domestic roles, Eveline struggles hard to "keep the house together" and to take care of her father. This indicates that Eveline attributes a matriarchal identity as a teenager and has the fear of the oppressive rules of the patriarchal society and this feeling becomes an obstacle for her to deal completely with Frank. Such an attitude signifies that she is in a dilemma between perpetuating past experiences and maintaining her future expectations. As depicted in the very beginning of "Eveline," such a rejection signifies her passive and immobile position: "She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired" (Joyce, 1993: 23). Here, James Joyce used the "window" as a symbol to evoke the anticipation of an

¹⁰ Eveline suggests much being written in a style of an interior monologue in which inner thoughts of the main character is depicted.

¹¹ Eveline is unable to decide between her gloomy present and unknown future.

¹² Frank, a sailor, is a gentle lover who promises Eveline to build a home in Buenos Aires.

event or an encounter that is about to happen in Eveline's life. The window also represents the will of escape to leave behind her life in between the walls. An escape with Frank to Argentina is an expectation for Eveline to happen. This is the reason why she is looking out of the window signifying an escape from her domestic world, i.e. the window is the outside world for Eveline. A clash between her domestic space and the outside world occurs when she begins to observe the environment surrounding her through the window. Eveline turns to the window especially when she thinks of her own living circumstances. This implies that revolt seems unlikely for a girl of nineteen who struggles hard to fill up her mother's place at home. Joyce expresses Eveline's desperate feelings as follows:

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided. [. . .] She sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. (Joyce, 1993: 23)¹³

Being exhausted both morally and physically, she experienced a hard life in her domestic world. Such a difficulty enforces her to explore another life with Frank whom she thinks to be very kind. Especially being wholly in charge of the household labour drives Eveline into the idea of an escape from her family ties and responsibilities. Her inner thoughts of emancipation from her domestic duties reflect her farewell to her maternal roles or her recognition of a hopeful future to acquire a free personality:

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would have her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a night to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her. (Joyce, 1993: 26)

Such a reflection of emancipation from the domestic world directly signifies a sudden revelation towards a new life in Argentina for Eveline by means of Frank. However, after their passage is booked at the docks, Eveline becomes hesitant about Frank because of her indecisiveness. She seems to be in a moment of epiphany. James Joyce expresses that "Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer" (Joyce, 1993; 26). The moment of transformation in mind or in the soul of Eveline manifests the moment of epiphany or the moment of her rejection of emancipation from her domestic roles. This is reflected through Joyce's explanation of her emotions as "A bell clanged upon her

¹³ Eveline's father who has ruined his wife's life is set to ruin Eveline's in this short story. Eveline's mother also symbolizes pathetic long-dead stereotype of the oppressed wife.

heart. . . . She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition” (Joyce, 1993: 26). Although being in a desire for emancipation from all her domestic responsibilities, at the end of the story, Eveline changes her mind not to leave for Frank. This means that the occurrence of epiphanies turn out to be an anti-epiphany for Eveline. Her transformation also indicates her fear of encountering the same difficulties in Frank’s lodgings. Especially displaying a cry of anguish at the end of the story depicts Eveline’s sudden memory of her fear from male domination and potency in marriage. This emphasizes that she seems to be in a fear to lose her self-identity when she elopes with Frank. In a sense, she considers that marriage with Frank will either bring separation or divorce in later years. Thus, the moment of epiphany becomes a call for her authority of rejecting being enclosed by patriarchal authority in marriage. This emphasizes that most women characters in Joyce’s short stories intend to keep their matriarchal power when their wish for emancipation becomes futile as in “The Boarding House.”

“The Boarding House” is the third of the three stories of adolescence in which characters are mainly full of stress and anxiety that signify the existence of paralysis and stagnation in their social lives. Mrs. Mooney, who has separated from her abusive alcoholic husband, runs a boarding house occupied by music-hall performers, tourists, and a number of young Dublin clerks in this story.¹⁴ Her daughter, Polly, labors as a housekeeper who becomes interested in one of the boarders, a Mr. Doran.¹⁵ Mrs. Mooney does not interfere; instead, she allows the affair to continue until other lodgers at the house have observed it.¹⁶ Polly collaborates with her mother in the strategy to ensnare Mr. Doran. Then, Mrs. Mooney insists that Mr. Doran marry her daughter. Mr. Doran feels guilty and is worried that his employer will be informed about the affair. In this short story, as a domineering mother, Mrs. Mooney’s coercive attitude reflects how she helps her daughter to flirt with a young man and get married. Hence, by plotting their future, Mrs. Mooney is in a struggle for emancipation from being trapped at home preoccupied only with her domestic responsibilities. (Ehrlich, 1997: 98). Although Mrs. Mooney has an amoral attitude while helping her daughter to find a partner, this, on the other side, reflects her wish for empowering her matriarchal authority. Mrs. Mooney behaves according to social norms and expectations which can be observed through her attempts of letting other people consider how Mr. Doran is guilty of being occupied with Polly. She seems to prepare their own epiphany of an

¹⁴ Her unhappy past has made Mrs. Money a self-determined woman to establish her boarding house.

¹⁵ Contrary to the main character Eveline in James Joyce’s “Eveline” who takes all the control of household responsibilities, Polly is directed by her mother and, thus, is less matured than Eveline although both of them are 19 years of age.

¹⁶ Mr Doran is a serious, quiet man who has a steady job with a firm of wine-merchants, and a good salary.

escape from their patriarchal social system throughout Mr. Doran. However, this again becomes an anti-epiphany, because their wish for emancipation becomes futile in their patriarchal setting that has rumours about their attitude and their amoral behavior. Yet, such an attempt is to prepare marriage which also hints at a patriarchal authority. Thus, their struggles for emancipation and their living circumstances are all contradictory to each other.

The reason for the establishment of the boarding house is that her husband betrayed Mrs. Mooney's trust. She thinks that one of the boarders would reinstate success in their lives. Mrs. Mooney is decisive for social ascendancy and, thereby, Mr. Doran is chosen as a victim of her strategy leading to success. As Epifanio San Juan indicates, Mrs. Mooney is in a struggle to save her broken marriage by her strict imposition of routine and a code of manners. Conducting things logically, Mrs. Mooney's thoughts and actions yield a deterministic argument of her wish for emancipation from her domestic problematic life (Juan, 1972: 106). As an acquisitive woman, Mrs. Mooney is "quite able to keep things to herself" as expressed at the very beginning of this short story. It is not a question for Mrs. Mooney to have a meaningful relationship, but to reveal a married motherhood personality (Halper 78). After her problematic marriage, she tries to fill in the gap with her choice of letting her daughter, Polly, get married to Mr. Doran in her boarding house. Mr. Doran is a means for Mrs. Mooney to fill in the gap of finding a proper husband for her daughter that she could not afford one for herself in the past. Her struggles for protecting her married status manifest how marriage becomes a social institute of power in her social setting.

James Joyce indicates Mrs. Mooney's adequate authority in the boarding house as: "She governed the house cunningly and firmly, knew when to give credit, when to be stern, and when to let things pass. All the resident young men spoke of her as *The Madam*." (Joyce, 1993: 43). Such a respectable attitude towards Mrs. Mooney indicates her capability to direct household labour and family responsibilities. She makes real what authority she intended to hold at home through releasing from the vulgar influence of her husband. Her authority surrounds the boarding house and, thus, she has a sudden burst of enlightenment in her situation through revelation from her powerlessness, alienation and isolation in her social circumstances.¹⁷ In "The Boarding House," James Joyce reflects how Mrs. Mooney is in a struggle for overcoming her paralysis. She reflected her desire for emancipation from her domestic problems at the very beginning of this short story despite her husband's rude and vulgar behaviors.

Mrs. Mooney dreams of her daughter to possess a well-to-do husband to take care of her. Thus, Polly is under the influence of her mother in her marriage

¹⁷ Mr. Doran is a savior from stagnation and paralysis of obstacles to reach happy endings.

choices. She is in a paralysis either to leave in her memories or choose a married life in the future. James Joyce exposes her stagnation as follows:

Polly sat for a little time on the side of the bed, crying. Then she dried her eyes and went over to the looking-glass. . . . She looked at herself in profile and readjusted a hairpin above her ear. Then she went back to the bed again and sat at the foot. She regarded the pillows for a long time and the sight of them awakened in her mind secret, amiable memories. . . . She waited on patiently, almost cheerfully, without alarm. Her memories gradually giving place to hopes and visions of the future. Her hopes and visions were so intricate that she no longer saw the white pillows on which her gaze was fixed or remembered that she was waiting for anything. (Joyce, 1993: 48)

Despite Polly's hesitation and anxiety in her inner world, Mrs. Mooney is self-determined in decisions. James Joyce expresses Mrs. Mooney's determined personality as a relief from all her domestic problems at the very beginning of "The Boarding House:" "She was a woman who was quite able to keep things to herself: a determined woman. She had married her father's foreman and opened a butcher's shop near Spring Gardens. But as soon as his father-in-law was dead Mr. Mooney began to go to the devil" and her husband became a big problem in Mrs. Mooney's life (Joyce, 1993: 43). James Joyce exposes Mrs. Mooney's need of repairing her problematic marriage as follows:

There must be reparation made in such case. It is all very well for the man: he can go his ways as if nothing had happened, having had his moment of pleasure, but the girl has to bear the brunt. Some mothers would be content to patch up such an affair for a sum of money; she had known cases of it. But she would not do so. For her only one reparation could make up the loss of her daughter's honour; marriage. (Joyce, 1993: 45)

Whereas reparation through marriage seems to be a bit contradictory when women are in a quest for emancipation from the oppression of their domestic roles, attributing a married identity in their free will again signifies a state of emancipation from any control or limitation because of obtaining power in social life. Joyce touches upon the difference between men and women while making a general evaluation of considering the unexpected troubles in life. Contrary to women having problems to be solved or repaired, according to Joyce, men just behave as "nothing had happened" in their environment as in Mooney's vulgar husband. The existence of indifference towards any problematic issue in men's life, for Joyce, indicates the diversity in male and female evaluations of the problems. Marriage is seen as a major issue of reparation that brings honor. Mrs. Mooney

wishes her daughter to get this honor in the world through the attempts of finding a proper husband for her daughter. Joyce infers that whereas women become distorted because of their sense of anxiety of the concurrent problems, men seem not to be affected as much as women. Here, female anxiety implies the existence of spiritual analysis and stagnation in different socio-economic circumstances.

Joyce sets the standard for the assessment of Mrs. Mooney's actions and behaviors with the establishment of sympathetic distance. It seems that Mrs. Mooney's determination to survive despite her problematic marriage is dependent on her father's will to be successful despite the strict impositions of a patriarchal society. The negative masculine principle in the short story implies how women are enclosed by paralysis and stagnation in their inner worlds. Especially when her husband breaks pledges and ruins her business, separation seems to be inevitable in their lives as a sudden revelation. Mrs. Mooney sets up a boarding house in which she establishes a semblance of matriarchy as a reflection of her revolt to the rigid vulgar actions of her husband. Thus, she reflects her struggles for the emancipation of a woman from her problematic domestic world and also decrees the laws of totem and taboo. In her boarding house, she assumes the position of household authority which she was unable to maintain when she was married. Her wish to let her daughter get married to Mr. Doran serves as an extension of her psyche, because Mrs. Mooney is ambitious and secretive and moves underground to preserve her individual rights of matriarchy (Juan, 1972: 103). Thus, "The Boarding House" forms the unity of serving as a microcosm of a society based on the contracts of marriage by reflecting women's desire for matriarchal authority. By recalling peaceful approach to all her male visitors by means of keeping all things continue in the boarding house, Mrs. Mooney announces her new emancipated identity. Although Eveline seems to be an indecisive character and, therefore, displays a weak standing in the case of emancipation, Polly is again in a weak state of embodying a powerful decisive position despite her mother's attempts to attribute her a married identity. They are both in a dilemma of choosing whether to be married or not.

As a conclusion, James Joyce depicts the effects of Irish patriarchal society on female characters in "Eveline" and "The Boarding House" at the dawn of the twentieth century. He reflects how women's struggle for emancipation becomes futile at that time. Instead, Joyce manifests the perpetuation of domestic roles for women and young girls since their lives are structured and controlled by the stigma of femininity. They are mostly in a dilemma of either performing their responsibilities of household jobs or struggling for a meaningless and futile emancipation from their domestic roles. When the stigma of femininity is evaluated in the collection of short stories in *Dubliners*, James Joyce can inevitably be considered as a social critique portraying Dublin as the center of paralysis. Longing for escape from their state of loneliness and isolation as well as their entrapment under the control of frustration, restraint, and violence, social environment enforces

these female characters to consider epiphanies as a release from their domestic world of responsibilities. That is, epiphanies turn out to be anti-epiphanies because of the awareness of the true nature of their living circumstances that lead them into hopelessness and penitence to struggle for a transformation of social ascendancy. Eveline is overwhelmed by the fear of leaving her father at home at the end. Yet, the emergence of such an epiphany implies that, in fact, Eveline is afraid of facing similar social and domestic circumstances with Frank in Australia. Mrs. Mooney is surrounded by her sense of authority in the boarding house to find a proper husband for her daughter and to personalize her with a married identity. Since she considers that she acquires her matriarchal authority in her financial independence, then, she becomes a materialist person who primarily cares for money and personal subject matters. Thus, James Joyce reflects women having a hard time to overcome loneliness, isolation, alienation, restraint, and violence in the early twentieth century. Mrs. Mooney's and Eveline's femininity perpetuates their domestic roles in a traditional context because of becoming vulnerable and helpless when they decide for a new realm of experience. This emphasizes that the occurrence of epiphanies disappears as their spiritual paralysis arises.

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