

Futile Epiphany: James Joyce's *Dubliners* Trapped in Routine

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This paper is dedicated to

S.M. Mohiuddin

And

Feroza Begum

I would have never come this far without your support

Thank you for taking care of me and blessing me with your love

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Abstract

While observing the trapped routine life of James Joyce's Dubliners, this paper aims to explore why the characters were unable more challenging life. Their obedience towards Irish social and religious values always restrained them from following their own intuition. Also, their habit of following the repetitive activities and conventions made them paralyzed and unable to accept any changes in their life. Although they realized they were unhappy with their lives, at the end they still returned to the same pathetic life. Some of the characters did try to come out from their paralytic life, but after thinking about the unknown future and challenges they too fall back to usual routine.

The short stories which I have chosen to support the thesis from *Dubliners* are: "The Sisters," "An Encounter," "Eveline," "A Painful Case" and "The Dead".

The paper will begin with an introduction and then three chapters. Finally, there will be a conclusion in which the findings will be discussed. This paper also aims to explore the psychology of the characters and their inability to accept change.

Introduction

James Joyce as a Modernist writer of twentieth century introduces us with urban life and its difficulties through his famous short story collection *Dubliners* published in 1914. Through the stories Joyce showed the readers the condition of Dublin during the early twentieth century. The city was supposed to be the place where people would have everything they want and live the way they wanted to live. Unfortunately, like any other urban beings the Dubliners also have to suffer from the paralytic life style and domination of social restrictions of modern times. The Dubliners are shown as the prisoners of the restrictive and repetitive routine of their daily lives which often leads them to frustration and disappointments. These repetitive daily routine of frustrating life often leads to loneliness, disgust towards life and raises the desire to escape from the familiar life, place and routine to something or somewhere unique and sometimes somewhere totally unknown from their knowledge. The Dubliners sought happiness from the unknown which they failed to achieve from their usual life.

Although the Dubliners longed for difference in their mundane routine of everyday life, they did not easily accept things or people unique from their familiar tradition and culture. Their desire to escape towards something unknown turns into fear for the unknown because they do not know what the unknown holds for them. Joyce actually represents the universal human nature and urban citizens' life through the characters of *Dubliners*.

In this paper, I will like to talk about how the Dubliners are trapped in their daily routines, why they desired to escape from their life and finally what they did when they actually meet with something they did not have in their daily routine. Did they accept it or did they refuse the change and returned to their former life style. Moreover, what they realized from their attempt to change life will also be discussed. The stories which I have selected for my thesis

from *Dubliners* are, “The Sisters,” “An Encounter,” “Eveline,” “A Painful Case” and “The Dead”. Each of the stories represents different aspects of *Dubliners*. The first two stories represent the stage of childhood in which the children were also trapped in routine and their desire to escape. The third story represents the life of young woman in Dublin who was trapped with the sense of responsibility towards family. Finally, the last two stories represent how the adults are trapped in paralytic situation which they hardly notice before. However, even after realizing the truth about themselves they were unable to take steps against it.

In the first chapter of my thesis paper I will discuss how the characters were trapped in the circle of their daily routine. They were paralyzed by social norms, tradition, responsibility, duty towards family and religion. For example, the boy from “The Sisters” was bound to visit a priest and take lessons to become a priest. Eveline from “Eveline” cannot wish for her own happiness as she had promised her dead mother that she would look after her family. Later we meet Mr. Duffy from “A Painful Case” who was so much habituated with his lonely colorless life that he refused any kind of changes in his life.

In the second chapter of my thesis I will discuss why the characters desire to escape to from their usual routine and what they thought the unknown had been offering them. For example, the boy from “An Encounter” desired to have real life adventure and decided to go on an adventure with his friends to see what the adventure can offer him. He tried to turn his imaginations into reality and skipped the school one day. Then, Eveline from the story “Eveline” also wished for her own happiness and decided to run away with her lover Frank. These characters get a sense of alienation from everyone else and thought that they deserved more from life. They took crucial initiatives to change their lives and get what they believe they deserved but later they failed to accept the change.

After discussing about what they desired and expected from life, I will discuss about what they face while looking for change in their daily routine and how they reacted when they encountered something or someone different from their habituated life in the final chapter of the thesis. I will also talk about the term epiphany in this chapter to understand what the characters realized about themselves and finally what they decided to do with the new knowledge about their life. The paper will also explore why the characters could not accept the change they always desired for. For example, the narrator from “An Encounter” did have his adventure which he wished to have but became desperate to come back to his normal school life after meeting an old man. In the final chapter I will also try to give a Freudian explanation of some characters psychology to understand why the characters refused the change.

Chapter One

Dubliners: Trapped in Daily Routine

In Joyce's *Dubliners* we meet characters who were trapped in their Modern urban life and trying to break through the routine bound existence of everyday life. In the first chapter of my thesis I would like to discuss how these characters from the selective stories are trapped in daily routine and became prisoners of urban society. In all of the stories we will meet with characters that are knowingly or unknowingly trapped in their life because of social, political and religious reasons.

The first story "The Sisters" unravels a boy's perception of Father Flynn's death and how other peoples' lives are tangled with the priest's life. We come to know much about the priest's life through the memories of the boy and two nuns. The Father and the boy had a strong bonding which we get to know from the conversations between Mr. Cotter and the boy's uncle. We also learn that Father Flynn had high hopes for the boy to follow his footsteps and become a priest as well. Although Flynn is dead from the beginning of the story, he is the center of the story that is controlling other people like the boy and the sisters' lives. The word "paralysis" is the very first word which comes up while we get introduced with the dead priest. This word is not just a physical condition of the priest but also the mental condition of all the characters from *Dubliners*. Father Flynn was not only physically paralyzed but also mentally. His inability to control his life leads him to disappointment and frustration. The boy who used to be one of the very few friends of the priest tells us that "He had studied in the Irish college in Rome and had taught me to pronounce Latin properly" (Joyce 11). These lines provide the information that Father Flynn had studied in "the Irish college in Rome" which is known to be highly prestigious and expensive and this also means that Flynn was talented enough to study there to become a

priest. As he studied from an expensive and prestigious institute, it was normal for the people to have high hopes from him. He might have also been in the mental pressure that he must perform his duties as a prestigious priest properly and had to be concerned about not to show any mistakes. However, he fails to be a proper priest not just in front of others but also to himself. When he realized that he was failing to perform his duties holistically, he became disappointed in himself for not being able to fulfill the society's expectations. From the sisters we learn that "It was the chalice he broke... That was the beginning of it" (Joyce 17). The "chalice" he broke can be symbolically seen as the burden of social expectations and his failure to perform duties towards religion. When he broke the holy cup, his self-esteem and ability was questioned by him. He was not supposed to be careless with the chalice but he failed to hold it. He gradually realizes that he never respected the life of a priest and the duties he performed towards his religion were never from heart but from the sense of duty and social pressure. He was not respectfully holding the cup from the sense of devotion towards Christ but was more nervous about performing the duty properly in front of others and his own reputation. Friedrich Nietzsche, in his essay "The Genealogy of Morals" has described his ideas about priests:

As is well known, priests are the most evil of enemies—but why? Because they are the most powerless. From their powerlessness, their hate grows into something immense and terrifying, to the most spiritual and most poisonous manifestations. Those who have been the greatest haters in world history and the most spiritually rich haters have always been the priests... (Nietzsche 11)

According to Nietzsche the priests are "powerless" because they cannot do anything according to their free will. They have vowed to perform religious duties toward God and they have to hold an image which is supposed to be superior to others. They always have to maintain the image and in

order to do that they cannot live an ordinary life. The priests have to follow the religious regulations without any question and cannot disrespect the Catholic faith with doubt. Father Flynn was also one of the powerless priests who cannot but follow the rules and perform the duties even if he had many unanswered question and doubt in his heart. He was frustrated for not having the answers of his questions. He was trapped in his life and his everyday life of a priest made him a very “disappointed” man. Although he was paralyzed before his death, it can be said that he had been paralyzed and been powerless all his life as a priest as he seemed not to be dedicated enough to his duties towards God. From the boy we get to know that, “Sometimes he had amused himself by putting difficult questions to me, asking me what one should do in certain circumstances or whether such and such sins were mortal or venial or only imperfections” (Joyce 11). From his questions towards the boy it is clear that he was questioning religious values and often tried to justify sins which mean he was questioning the rules of religion. His being a priest in Dublin and moreover an unsuccessful one can be the reason why he had very few close companions. The priest himself was not only trapped with his life but he also trapped the people who were close to him. The boy and the sisters were the ones who used to take care of the priest. They were bound to take care of the priest and their daily life routine was always related with the priest. The boy used to meet Father Flynn so often that it became daily routine of his life. Most of the time he went there with things his aunt used to send for Flynn:

Had he not been dead I would have gone into the little dark room behind the shop to find him sitting in his arm-chair by the fire, nearly smothered in his great-coat. Perhaps my aunt would have given me a packet of High Toast for him and this present would have roused him from his stupefied doze. (Joyce 10)

The boy used to help the priest to perform even the simplest acts like opening a snuff box for him. It proves how much dependent the priest was on the boy. Through old Cotter we learn that the priest had “high hopes” for the boy which can mean he wanted the boy to become a priest like him. The priest even started to teach the boy proper Latin and talk about priesthood. This can be the reason why the boy had to visit the priest. The priest might have been asking the boy to visit every day so that he can teach him (the boy) about priesthood. In later stories of *Dubliners* we can also see that priests are symbolized as figures of restriction and authority who keep other characters obedient to the rules. Although the boy does not want to be a priest from the very beginning, he still had to visit the priest only to fulfill the priest’s wishes. As the boy used to meet the priest every day, he was unable to have his own adventure which he unconsciously desired for. The boy’s desire to escape from his daily routine will be discussed in the second chapter.

After the boy we can also see the two sisters who are also trapped in their lives because of looking after and taking care of the paralyzed priest. The sisters were also burdened with social and religious responsibilities. They could have a life; a happy marriage and family of their own but they were not allowed to have such happiness because they devoted themselves to the Church and Father Flynn. One of the sisters Eliza once mentions, “God knows we done all we could, as poor as we are...” (Joyce 14). This line tells that the economic condition of their family was not good and Flynn who was supposed to be a prestigious priest not only failed to take care of himself but also burdened the sisters with taking care of him. However, being concerned with Irish religious values, the sisters did not complain against anything and performed their duties as much as possible. As the sisters were not able to live their lives with their own free choice and maintained the same daily routine for so long, the sisters become unable to think or do anything

that would not involve the priest who was also unable to live according to his own free will.

What possibilities these characters have after the death of Father Flynn and what they decided to choose will be discussed in the later chapters.

The second story “An Encounter” is about some school going boys and their daily life related with school and adventure. We can also see that priesthood or religious figures like a Father or priest are a symbol of routine bound and strict life in this story similar to “The Sister”. One of the friends of the narrator, Joe Dillon was the one who was most enthusiastic about the Wild West adventures was once sent to vacation for priesthood. This was something for the boys to be shocked because a boy like Joe Dillon was not imagined to lead a routine bound life of priests. The narrator points out this unusual fact about Joe Dillon, “Everyone was incredulous when it was reported that he had a vacation for the priesthood. Nevertheless it was true” (Joyce 18). Also, Father Butler who teaches the boys Roman history is totally against the literature which the boys find most entertaining. The Father can be seen the one who tries to keep the boys in traditional ways and restricts them from doing anything different than Irish values. The priest may fear these magazines because they are from different culture and this type of subject may contaminate the tradition and culture of traditional Ireland. Therefore, doing things or reading literature out of the ordinary is not accepted by the Father. Also, he may hate these subjects because these are something the Father is never allowed to do and like the previous priest we met in the first story he also had to maintain an image of a religious figure. This way the boys were trapped in their daily routine and desired to escape from it. The only thing out of the ordinary they can do is to play and act out “Wild West” adventures every evening at Joe Dillon’s place. The narrator says, “Every evening after school we met in his back garden and arranged Indian battles” (Joyce 18). They choose acts and stories remote from their own culture because they are

tired of following the same routine of everyday school life. Their lives were restricted with rules and regulations and they are not allowed to read or do anything which may seem inappropriate in front of the society and the authority of the school like the Father. Therefore, they try to pretend to be someone out of the Irish reserved culture for a brief moment and try to be free like the Indian's in the Wild West novels. As they are not allowed to have real life adventures, one day the narrator decides to have a small adventure with his friends. He says, "I made up my mind to break out of the weariness of school life for one day at least." (Joyce 20). From this line it is clear that the narrator was also afraid to break the rules and do anything unusual from his daily life. That is why he decides only to "break out" of normal routine for just only "one day at least". He was not courageous enough to live his life according to his free will more than one day.

Similar to the characters from the first story, even in this story the routine bound life and restrictions paralyzes the characters to go beyond their usual life. They fear that going outside their boundary will bring difficulties in their lives. For example, Leo Dillon, who was supposed to join the little adventure with the narrator feared that they might get caught by Father Butler, "Leo Dillon was afraid we might meet Father Butler or some one out of the college" (Joyce 20). He feared that getting caught while doing something which was not appropriate according to school rules would bring him severe punishment from people like Father Butler that was why he was afraid before going to the journey. When they were ready to start the journey to the Pigeon house, the narrator and Mahony showed up but Leo Dillon did not feel courageous enough to overlook school for this little adventure. This is what happens to all the characters from *Dubliners*; the characters seem to be too much obedient to their rules and fear the challenges of new adventure. It was not just Joe Dillon who was afraid of challenges and the unknown possibilities, the narrator and his other friend Mahony who went for the journey also encounters

fear and was helpless against it. What they encountered and how the narrator's perception about adventure and his own life changes will be discussed in later chapters.

There are also other characters in *Dubliners* who were afraid to go beyond their routine bound trapped life like the boys in "An Encounter." Through the story "Eveline" Joyce introduces his readers with women in Dublin who are trapped with the burden of responsibilities of family and social norms. The nineteen years old Eveline was trapped and paralyzed socially, sexually and spiritually because of living within the restrictive life style imposed on her by her father and dead mother.

Eveline as the daughter and only female member of the family had to look after her family consisting of her brothers and an abusive father. She had to take care of the house and "business" which are supposed to be taken care by her mother and father. Her mother is dead and her father was always drunk and irresponsible. In the story it said, "Of course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business" (Joyce 38). Her brothers who were capable of looking after the business were also away from home. Unfortunately, it became her responsibility to keep things together as she had promised her mother. Furthermore, her abusive father never appreciated her hard work and he did not allow Eveline to have a lover. He hated Frank because he knew Frank could take away Eveline from him and did not allow Eveline to meet him. Eveline's father can be symbolized as the restrictive feature of Irish society which does not let its people have a life according to their free will. Also, even in this story we can see a portrait of a priest is hanging in the walls of Eveline's room. This portrait is the symbol of restricted life and reminder of social norms. This portrait reminds her of not abandoning her image of an Irish woman who is known for being always dedicated to family.

Unfortunately, Eveline was unable to have a life of her own with Frank because of the social restrictions and her duty towards family. Her father clearly forbids her to meet Frank which was applicable for any man who wanted to have relationships with Eveline. On the other hand, her mother made her promise not to leave her family ever. Even though decisions were made, they were not easy to fulfill. Eveline became habituated with her miserable life just like the other characters of *Dubliners*. That is why even when she had the chance to escape from her daily routine life she could not leave her duties of a daughter and a home maker. She thought, “It was hard work- a hard life- but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life” (Joyce 39). She suddenly realizes that Frank would not create happiness for her. He was going to take her away from the place where she had been more comfortable and belonged to, even if the place and the people tortured her. In the paper “Crosslocation in "Dubliners" Wilhelm Fuger also describes how Eveline was unable to leave her place at the end, “Though Eveline’s “passage had been booked” and Frank is telling her “something about the passage over and over”, she is unable to pass the barrier of the North Wall station, cannot resist her instinctive urge to “draw back”” (Fuger 90). Eveline was also spiritually paralyzed by the restrictions and rules pushed upon by her father and society. She was unable to take decisions for her own happiness which could have been achieved if she follows Frank. However, she could not leave with Frank because she feared that the new life might not only bring new possibilities of hope but also unknown difficulties. At the end Eveline was not courageous enough to live her known tormenting life for the sake of a life which is not similar with her regular life style.

After “Eveline” we can see the life of a lonely adult man in “A Painful Case” who represents the paralytic mentality of the Dublin adults. Like Eveline, he had also become socially, sexually and spiritually paralyzed because of being trapped in a colorless and spiritless

everyday routine life. The other characters which had been discussed were trapped in their situation because of their responsibilities towards others and society, but in “A Painful Case” Mr. Duffy choose to live a routine bound life by his own choice. Mr. Duffy lived in Chapelized because he wished to live as far as possible from the city of which he was a citizen and because, “He found all the other suburbs of Dublin mean, modern and pretentious” (Joyce 119). These are the first lines of the story which clearly indicates that Mr. Duffy tries to avoid social life as much as possible. He was working as a bank cashier of a bank for many years in Baggot Street. His routine was simple and problem free. He would use the same tram every day to go to the office and dine in the same eating house in George’s Street. The only entertainment he had was playing the piano or listening to Mozart’s music in concerts. He would not allow any hindrance which might interrupt his daily routine. He even avoided people to maintain his regular routine in order to avoid chaos. He was not a social person and lacked emotion, “He had neither companions nor friends, church nor creed” (Joyce 121). He even avoided “church” because people would gather there for prayers and he would not like to meet them. Mr. Duffy feels insecure to meet people or places which are not part of his daily routine because of living in a life doing same things and meeting same places repeatedly. His daily routine trapped him in his life and made him socially paralyzed. Moreover, for not communicating with many people for a long time he became afraid that he might not be able to interact with people properly.

However, one day Mr. Duffy meets Mrs. Sinico in a tram while going back home and eventually they begin walking together in the evenings. Their meetings gradually brought them closer and they develop a friendship, “With almost maternal solicitude she urged him to let his nature open to the full: she became his confessor” (Joyce 123). She was the only person he could call his soul companion and he would freely confess to her. She became the substitute of

“church” and “priest” to him. Again, it shows how the Irish life is attached with Catholic Faith and religion. The Irish people are so much devoted to the Church that they cannot live a single day without Catholic rules and rituals. He might have avoided church in the fear of meeting people, but he also wanted to have something similar to church and priest. Mr. Duffy came out from his old routine, but again created a new routine of his life in which he would meet Mrs. Sinico in evenings and talk freely with each other. He idealized his relationship with Mrs. Sinico but when she catches his hand passionately and presses it to her cheek; he became greatly disappointed with her. This act of Mrs. Sinico created a fear inside Mr. Duffy of responsibility and chaos in their lives. He feared a discontinuity and change in his peaceful life. Therefore, he breaks off his relation with Mrs. Sinico and decided to return to his routine bound solitary daily life where he faced less complication even though he had no companion like Mr. Sinico. In the thesis by Roger T. Briggs, we see that:

After pursuing an intellectual friendship with Mrs. Emily Sinico, Duffy breaks it off abruptly when she makes a physical advance. Following this episode, Duffy returns to his previous way of life which led him down the same streets and into the same restaurants that become his habit. (24)

Even though Mr. Duffy was an adult man he did not show any sexual attraction towards Mrs. Sinico. He wanted an intellectual and platonic friendship with her but through Mrs. Sinico’s acts it is clear that she wanted more than an “intellectual friendship.” She was a house wife and her husband was always away from home. She was trapped in a married life where she could not have any love or affection from her husband. When she saw that Mr. Duffy was very friendly and open to her she also wanted to share her emotions with him. Mr. Duffy on the other hand refuses her approach and proves that he was incapable of approving sexual relationships. He

feared that if he continued relationship with Mrs. Sinico the way she wanted he might not be able to fulfill her expectations. He feared that sooner or later she would leave him for being incapable of fulfilling her desires. After breaking off his relationship with Mrs. Sinico, he came to a conclusion that, "Love between man and man is impossible because there must not be sexual intercourse, and friendship between man and woman is impossible because there must be sexual intercourse"(Joyce 125). He only wanted a friend who would listen to him and would not interrupt his life, but friendship with Mrs. Sinico was no longer possible because she showed emotional and sexual interest towards him which he was not capable to return. However, after Mrs. Sinico's death Duffy realizes that he was lonely and spiritually paralyzed all his life and let her die lonely and helpless. How he realized his mistake and what he realizes will be elaborately explained in next chapters of the paper. Mr. Duffy was unable to accept change in his life because he was incapable of doing anything out of his habituated acts. He was obedient not to people but to his monotonous life style. Mr. Duffy is one of the representatives of Dublin who shows that adults are more incapable of accepting the change than the younger Dubliners who at least tried to change their life even just for a brief moment.

Finally, the last story of *Dubliners*, "The Dead" embodies many themes which are introduced and explored in earlier stories such as paralysis of human mind, frustration and anger towards society and religion. In this story we are introduced with new themes like public life and social expectations. The protagonist Gabriel was a teacher in a university and works as a reviewer of literature for some newspapers. In the story he and his wife Gretta came to visit hisaunts, Miss Kate Morkan, Julia Morkan and cousin Mary Jane in the Charismas party which was held every year. They were not the only guests in Miss Kate and Julia's house. There are many other guests and students of these three women. All of these characters have a past story

and attachment with the old which they connected with the new. They were bound to come in the Christmas parties arranged by these elderly women every year. In Gabriel's speech in the dinner table he says:

Ladies and Gentleman, it is not the first time that we have gathered together under this hospitable roof, around this hospitable board. It is not the first time that we have been the recipients- or perhaps, I had better say, the victims – of the hospitality of certain good ladies. (Joyce 231)

From the last line of the speech by Gabriel it seems that the guests were bound to come in this party every year. Gabriel also regarded himself as the "victim" of his aunts' hospitality because in this party he always had to maintain his reputation of taking care of things on behalf of his aunts. No matter how much he praised the Irish hospitality in his speeches he was actually tired of Irish behavior. Later in a conversation with Miss Ivors he admits that he is tired of his own country. He says, "I am sick of my own country, sick of it" (Joyce 216). In an article "Analysis of 'The Dead', James Joyce's Symbolic Use of Snow", by Dian Heath, the symbolic meaning of snow in the story is described as:

When Gabriel first arrives it began to snow on his clothing in a gradually oppressive manner "*a light fringe of snow lay like a cap on the shoulder of his overcoat*". Similarly his role in life and identity as an Irish man is restrictive, cold and oppressing routine to him. In fact his personality is restrictive and controlling to others. He even feels trapped by his own cautious and inhibited personality.

(n page)

The snow indicates that the lives of the Dubliners were in a frozen state and we know only the dead are preserved in a frozen state which means Gabriel and the other characters in the story

were spiritually dead as they were following the same routine and remained as if motionless like a dead. Gabriel might seem to be important to his aunts but in some encounters with other characters of in the story his reputation was at question. His very first encounter with the caretaker's daughter Lily was not in his favor at all. His joke about marrying off Lily was not taken lightly by Lily. The rude answer given by Lily hunted him even afterwards. After Lily, his conversation with Miss Ivors made him even more frustrated. She accuses him as a traitor who did not have respect for his own country just because he wrote for "*The Daily Express*" which is published under Britain. She says to him, "Well, I am Ashamed of you," (Joyce 214). According to Esmael Najjar Daronkolaee:

In "The Dead" Miss Ivors who is "involved in the Irish Revival and stands as a symbol of Irish nationalism" (Gleed 119) calls Gabriel a 'West Briton'. She uses this derogative phrase in order to show how far he is away from his homeland, both physically and emotionally. (173)

Miss Ivors can be considered has the restrictive rule of Irish culture which does not allow the people to go beyond their own culture and tradition. She did not approve Gabriel's writing in the newspaper because she was ashamed thinking that someone from Ireland wrote for the Europeans and called him a "West Briton." On the other hand Gabriel who did not understand how to react against such accusations continued to say that he did not actually like Irish. Miss Ivors turns out to be more offensive towards Gabriel after his answers and insists him on visiting his own country and culture. Gabriel can be an example of someone who tries to go beyond his regular Irish culture, but always criticized because of trying to something beyond Irish culture. That is why he was always uncomfortable with others about how they would take his opinions

and values. Therefore, he tried to show that he was very helpful and kind so that people would not criticize him for what he wanted to do.

Gabriel seems to betray his own words in many situations in the party. For example, when he started his speech about the hospitality of the three hosts of the party, he praises the past and the people who were dead for their virtue of hospitability and fears that his generation did not have the pure sense of hospitability. On the other hand he also said, "I will not linger on the past. I will not let any gloomy moralizing intrude upon us here to-night" (Joyce 233). He was the one who praised the past and its glory, but again he was also the one who called the past "gloomy". Like any other characters he is also tangled with the past even though he did not appreciate it but pretended to praise it as well. Furthermore, Gabriel shares a story about his late grandfather Patrick Morkan who had a horse named Johnny which he used for driving his starch mill. The horse used to walk round and round in order to work the mill. One day Patrick went out with the horse and the horse suddenly started to walk round and round a statue on the way. Gabriel and other characters laughed at this story, but it is actually an ironic symbol of the past and present. The horse symbolizes the Dubliners who are used to attending parties often and could not come out of the same habit. The guests were dancing with the same old music and on the same old steps practiced from the past. They repeat the same thing over and over just like the horse which was unable to stop its urge of walking around a statue believing it to be the mill. This means that no matter what opportunity they get, the characters of *Dubliners* cannot stop themselves from doing the same things over and over again.

Gabriel was blinded by maintaining his own reputation of responsible and kind man that he could not see beyond his ideas. Until the very end of the story he did not realize how futile his existence to others actually had been. When he learned about Michael Furey and his love towards

Gretta, he finally realized his position and of other livings as well. Gretta on the other hand was blinded with her past and love for Michael Furey that she was unable to see Gabriel's passionate love and desire for her. She used to know Michael while she was living in Galway with her grandmother and Michael Furey died because of waiting for her in the rain. Gretta was haunted by the idea so much that she could not forget about him. She wanted to visit Galway again only to recall the past she had with Furey and insisted Gabriel to visit Galway. She said, "I would like to visit Galway again" (Joyce 218). She continued to be drowning to anything that was related with Michael Furey in the party. For example, when she listens to song which Michael Furey used to sing, she became still and motionless as if she became a symbol or a picture. According to Gabriel, "He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to a distant music a symbol of" (Joyce 240). Gretta becomes a symbol of woman who wants to go back to her "distant" lover in the past who used to sing the "distant song" to which she is so drown to even in her present life. She could only attach herself with her past love and could not see how Gabriel felt after learning about her past. Moreover, she used Gabriel as her confessor like the way Mr. Duffy used Mrs. Sinico as his. She did not care for Gabriel's opinion or feelings at that moment and confessed her love for Michael Furey. Gabriel, who always compromised with his own feelings and adjusted with others even if they behave inappropriately with him, silently listens to her story. He could not act or behave beyond his characteristic known to people and became powerless. Even at the end of the story, he wanted to hold his wife Gretta but could not as he listens to her past story. Again he had to act supportive and kind towards his wife even though he was agitated with the thought of her being in love with someone else.

All these characters discussed in this chapter are trapped in their own daily routine. Their responsibilities toward their family and society, restrictions from religion and the fear of meeting

the unknown always lead them to fall back in the same routine. On the later chapters, I will discuss about these characters realization and epiphany of truth about their lives and later how they reacts to their situation.

Chapter Two

Desire to Escape

In chapter one, we have seen the characters trapped in their daily routine with the burden of rules and regulations which prevent them to live their lives in their own terms. In this chapter, why the characters desire to escape their lives and what they did in order to have something different than their usual life will be discussed. Although the characters were trapped in their restricted life and hardly understood that they were spiritually paralyzed, they did feel alienated from everyone else. They had the sense that they deserve more than what they had but they were still not fully aware of their mental paralysis.

The desire to escape from the trapped routine life begins from the first story with the boy from “The Sisters” who was hoping the death of Father Flynn who had “plans” to make him a priest like him. His desire to escape from his repetitive life can be seen in various parts of the story. The boy was always interested in stories which were related with adventure and conquering a new world. While remembering a dream the boy said, “I felt that I had been very far away, in some land where the customs were strange- Persia, I thought... but I could not remember the end of the dream” (Joyce 12). The boy unconsciously desires to go “far away” and get to know “strange customs” which were different than Irish culture. He wanted adventure. It was natural for a boy of his age to dream about or wish for an adventurous life but the plans which the priest had for him was a threat for his dreams. He also might have been scared of becoming a priest and have life like Flynn which is always attached to religion and Church. Father Flynn’s intension of making the boy a priest is gone with his death which might have relieved the boy. From the beginning of the story we can see the boy hoping death of the priest:

Night after night I had passed the house (it was vacation time) and studied the lighted square of window; and night after night I had found it lighted in the same way, faintly and evenly. If he was dead, I thought, I would see the reflection of candles on the darkened blind, for I knew that two candles must be set at the head of the corpse. (Joyce 7)

From these lines we can be sure that for some reasons the boy was hoping or wishing for the priest's death. He passed "night after night" to see if there was candle lighted which might indicate that the priest was dead. The reason for his wish as we have discussed before might be the fact that Father Flynn wanted to make the boy an ideal priest. Now, it is easy to understand why the boy was not feeling sad or mournful after the priest's death. He realized or had the sudden realization that he is free and need not to be a priest anymore.

It is not only the boy who desired and escape from his life but also Father Flynn. Flynn was a disappointed priest because he failed to perform his duties properly. As he failed to be a good priest he feels guilty and so tries to make up for his mistakes by helping the boy to become a priest. Flynn did not have any family or a child of his own who could fulfill or make up for his mistakes. The only option he had was his young friend who used to visit him every day. The priest was trying to project his own dreams and unfulfilled duties on the boy by making him an ideal priest which he could not be. The boy might not have been agreeing with the idea but could not protest against the plan. As, he could not prevent the priest on his own accord, he hoped the priest would be prevented from making his plans successful in some other acceptable way. The boy hoped for natural death of Father Flynn as we have seen from the paragraph of the story. Father Flynn, on the other hand, had been longing for death as we can see the boy remembering him saying, "I am not long for this world" (Joyce 7). He might have set up his

mind for death from when he realized that he was not capable of being a devoted priest. The information which the readers have from different characters such as the two sisters, the boy and Mr. Cotter gives enough evidences that Father Flynn was disappointed as a priest. One of the sisters Eliza said, “The duties of the priesthood were too much for him. And then his life was, you might say, crossed” (Joyce 16). Later she also adds that, “He was a disappointed man” (Joyce 16). These lines clearly indicate that he hated his life and duty from which he could not escape as long as he was alive. Therefore, he searched for a way he could escape. Like the boy the priest also looked for a socially acceptable path to get rid of his unwanted duty of priesthood. To him death was the only route to pass in the other world rather than staying in Dublin and live a paralytic life. He also might have realized that after his death, he could achieve respect and sympathy which he failed to have while he was alive. That is why he eagerly longed for his own death as soon as possible. He did not feel attached to anything or anyone in his life and felt that no one respects him. He already felt alienated from others and chooses death instead of life of disrespect. Even in later stories of *Dubliners* death is seen as an easy passage to escape from the trapped and chaotic life of Dublin.

Like the boy in the story “The Sisters” The narrator from “An Encounter” also desired to escape from his daily routine of life, decided by others such as schools and priests. The boy in the first story did not take any actions to change his fate nor had any active stand on bringing change in his routine bound life. On the other hand, the narrator from the second story who was also a young boy took initiatives to bring change in his life even though it was just for a brief moment. In this story we also see that the narrator always observed unusual facts or facts which are different than normal Irish culture. He searches for things and subjects different than his tradition so that he can find relief from seeing something unique from his repetitive school life.

He says, “The adventures related in the literature of the Wild West were remote from my nature but, at, least, they opened doors for escape” (Joyce 19). The “Wild West” novels were only things for the boys which gave them a taste of something different. The “adventures” which the magazines offered to the narrator and the other boys were not similar with their life in Dublin. The boys become more interested on something “remote” because of their curiosity for adventure. These magazines were considered as “doors for escape” for the narrator because even for a brief moment he could do something different than his usual life. According to Briggs:

The narrator of “An Encounter” yawns for more for more than his routine in a Catholic school offers, and is enthralled with other boys Joe Dillon’s magazines of the West. The magazines “opened a door of escape” for the boys yet left them unsatisfied because “real adventures...do not happen to people who remain at home: they must be sought abroad.” (30-31)

The narrator believed that the only way he could escape his boring routine life is turning his imaginations of adventure into reality. Like to the boy in “The Sisters” he did not wait to see how the fate works for him. He decided to have his own way of adventure with his friends even though it was a simple adventure and not something extremely adventurous like the true Wild West adventures. He understood that staying at home and playing out “Wild West” adventures like the other boys would not give him the actual taste of adventure. The adventure he had might be very simple and childish for others but for the boy it was very important because later this little journey made him realize the truth about reality and the truth about himself.

After the narrator of “An Encounter,” the protagonist Eveline from the story “Eveline” was also seen to desire to escape her daily routine and the responsibilities she had towards her family. Actually, she desired for two things; escape from her responsibilities and to have a better

life than her dead mother. From her memories and thoughts as it has been discussed in the first chapter, it is clear that she always had an unhappy life where she had to look after a family after her mother's death. When she remembers about the promise she made to her mother at the moment of her death she suddenly thought, "Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her" (Joyce 41). To her Frank was the only one who could free her from all the burdens of her daily life. As a daughter Eveline had the responsibility of looking after her family, working hard for money and abusive behavior of her father. As a result Eveline became tired and frustrated. She dreamed to find happiness with Frank away from her abusive father in a far away land. She knew that in Dublin she can never be happy but in her new home which could be "in a distant unknown country" (Joyce 38), her life could be different and she would be happy. She expected that Frank would take her way from Dublin to an unknown place where she will have respect from other people instead of pain and abuse from her father and people like Miss Gaven. Her mother who was dead lived a very unhappy life and to Eveline it was unacceptable to have such a life. She did not find any justified reason for her torment and unhappiness and asks, "Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness" (Joyce 42). She knew she had done nothing wrong in her life and she had always been the ideal Irish daughter in her family. She believed her life was supposed to be more respectful and peaceful. Similar to the boy from "The Sisters" and "An Encounter," she also believed that there were hopes in unknown places far from Dublin. One of the reasons she was attracted to Frank was that "He had tales of distant countries" (Joyce 40). These "distant tales" and countries created a sense of hope for a future in Eveline's mind and from then she decides she will leave Dublin with Frank to have a life she actually deserves. However, she had to think all over again before living her family with Frank. What he decided and why she decided will be discussed in the final chapter.

The narrator from “An Encounter” and Eveline had plans and hopes for a new or better life beyond their daily routine. Even the boy from “The Sisters” hoped to have some adventure. The boys were young and Eveline was a young adult which might be the reason that they at least tried for a life of their choice. On the other hand, Mr. Duffy who was a full grown adult in “A Painful Case” chooses never to change his life. He preferred to be alone and avoided Dublin, “The city of which he was a citizen and because he found all the other suburbs of Dublin mean, modern and pretentious” (Joyce 119). He was an emotionless lonely man who avoided anything or anyone who would break the flow of his daily routine bound life of bank cashier. He is one of the characters in *Dubliners* who preferred to have a life unchanged. However, unconsciously he might have also desired an escape from his monotonous life. He allowed little changes in his life when he started meeting with Mrs. Sinico and he also became interested to have her as a companion. According to Kuip’s “Duffy, Death and Dublin: A Translation of ‘A Painful Case’”:

The two become friends, but while Mr. Duffy sees their relationship as merely an intellectual relationship, Mrs. Sinico thinks they are at the start of a romantic affair. When Mr. Duffy discovers this, he immediately ends the friendship and returns to his structured life. (6)

He was so happy and comfortable with her because he could finally share his thought with someone. Also, her friendly nature and attention made him more open to her, “With almost maternal solicitude she urged him to let his nature open to the full: she became her confessor” (Joyce 123). If he did not want any changes in his life he would not talk with Mrs. Sinico or he would avoid her next time they met by accident, but he decided to talk with her and share his thoughts with her. This proves that he also wanted someone in his life. Although Mrs. Sinico was someone unknown to him, he might have thought he can be introduced to someone unknown to

have a little difference in his life. He was happy with her as long as things were running according to his favor. Unfortunately, one day Mr. Sinico presses his hand on her cheek which again revived his theory of “every bond” is a “bond to sorrow.” From that moment he decides to break off their relationship and escaped back to his previous life which he had before meeting Mrs. Sinico. He believed further continuation of their relationship may bring chaos and sorrow in their lives as we have already discussed in the first chapter. He returned to his former life of loneliness with an idea that man and women cannot be friends. On the contrary, Mrs. Sinico who was trapped and unhappy in her married life was happy to have a companion like Mr. Duffy and she expected a romantic relationship rather than an intellectual one like Mr. Duffy. She desired to escape her married life where her husband was always away from home and had no time to love her. After being rejected by Mr. Duffy she might have been struggling with herself to forget her relationship with Mr. Duffy and grew “the habit of crossing the lines late at night from platform to platform...” (Joyce 127). Her relationship with Mr. Duffy was her only inspiration to live because she thought she finally had someone who admired her. However, the break off of the relationship severely affected her and she continued to look for a route to escape her lonely life. Her attempt to cross the rail lines repeatedly was the proof of her desire to escape from the sorrow. She was finally able to escape from her miserable life through death as we have seen death as a passage to escape in “The Sisters”. Like Father Flynn she also might have come to the conclusion that she can escape from her lonely disrespected life through only death.

The final story “The Dead” is also about adult social life where people were not aware that they were trapped in their routine bound life and society. In *Dubliners* it seems that the more the characters get older the more they lack the desire to escape from their routine bound paralytic life style. The characters in this story lack the desire to escape and treasures the past more than

their present. They praise the dead more and the livings seem to have less significance than the dead. Although Gabriel Conroy traveled outside Dublin and Ireland, he still straggles for his desired escape from Irish culture. He wanted to escape, because he felt that he was different than other Dubliners and believed that the Europeans are more superior to the Irish. For example when he thinks about his speech which he would give in the dinner table he thinks that, “He was undecided about the lines from Robert Browning, for he fears they would be above the heads of his hearers” (Joyce 203). He was familiar with English literature and he thought that there were very few people among the guests who might understand what he wanted to say. He was sure that most of the guests might not know Robert Browning and would not understand what he wanted to say. He also thought, “The indelicate clacking of the men’s heels and the shuffling of their soles reminded him that their grade of culture differed from his” (Joyce 203). It proves that he was a very class conscious man. As he was educated in a British manner, he considered himself to be different than the others. He was the favorite nephew of Julia and Kate Morkan and to keep up his reputation in front of them he always attended their Charismas parties and performs his duties assigned to him. Although he praised Irish hospitality and culture in the dinner table, he actually desired to escape from the traditional Ireland. During his dance with Miss Ivors his true thoughts comes to light. Miss Ivors asks if he would visit different parts of Ireland but Gabriel answers that, “Well, we usually go to France or Belgium or perhaps Germany” (Joyce 215). After pretending to be attached with the Irish culture which he did not appreciate much, he needed a break from everything and goes for a tour in European countries. When Miss Ivors asks why he wanted to visit different countries he answers, “It’s partly to keep in touch with the languages and partly for a change.” (Joyce 215). He clearly states that he needed a “change” of language and tradition every year. Although the characters in other stories

unconsciously admit that they were tired of their life and culture but Gabriel clearly admitted that, “I am sick of my own country, sick of it” (Joyce 216). Gabriel was tired of performing the same duty and holding up his reputation in front of everyone so, he always tried to escape from his Irish life and pretends to be one of the colonizers who dominated the Irish people. He even tried to control his wife Gretta and wanted her to appreciate what he appreciates but Gretta did not take him seriously and Gabriel was not comfortable with the thought of people rejecting him. He wanted her to wear “Goloshes” which is a part of continental clothing but “Gretta thinks it very funny” (Joyce 206). Although he loved to follow continental traditions but others did not appreciate it. He becomes little uncomfortable with the idea that he is not being much appreciated in various situations in the story but he always considered his ideas were superior to the others. In the dinner table he says, “Therefore, I will not linger on the past. I will not let any gloomy moralizing intrude upon us here to-night” (Joyce 233). Before these lines he praised the past glory of Irish music and the dead but like the others he does not want to “linger in the past” because people can only praise the past but cannot go back to it. The memories of the past is only a “gloomy moralizing intrude” for Gabriel which traps the people in the past and hinders the present. He too similar to the young boys in the first two stories desires to have adventure away from his familiar people and place:

Under cover of her silence he pressed her arm closely to his side, and, as they had escaped from their lives and duties, escaped from home and friends and run away together with wild and radiant hearts to a new adventure (Joyce 246).

Gabriel truly loved Gretta and after a day full of duties and responsibilities as a dependable person, he wished to spend time with Gretta away from everyone familiar to him. In the party the whole time he had to act civilized and acted as a very responsible man for his aunts. He had to

think repeatedly about his speech and did not want to make any mistakes but when he was alone with Gretta he did not think about being civilized. He feels “wild and radiant” with Gretta and fantasized to have new adventures with her. He often had the urge to become different than what he was, but no matter how different he considered himself to be than the others, he later realizes that he or the other people who were alive, were not as important as they think they were. It was the dead who were the most significant ones and their glory which was still remembered by the livings. His realization of truth and what possibilities he had after this realization will be discussed in the final chapter.

All these characters in the stories desired to have a better life, free from Irish rules and regulations and religious restrictions. They feel that they are different than the others and were capable of doing something more than their usual self. However, in order to escape from their life they first had to learn to accept the changes in their lives and disregard what the controlling society might think about them. In this chapter we have seen characters desiring for difference in their repetitive dull life but did they finally accepted the change and if not why they refused to accept the change will be discussed in the final chapter.

Chapter Three

Epiphany

In this Chapter of the thesis I will discuss about the truth of life and epiphanies which the characters encounter in the stories of *Dubliners*. Through the characters of the stories Joyce tried to represent Irish people who were trapped in their lives with the influence of religion and sense of duty. In the early twentieth century the Roman Catholic Church had a great impact on the life of Irish people. Their social as well as personal lives were constructed upon Catholic faith and rules. James Joyce was also an Irish Catholic and he was familiar with Catholic faith and its doctrines. He used the Christian doctrine “epiphany” but gave it all most a different meaning. It was really bold of him to use a Christian doctrine in a secular way and doubting or criticizing Catholic faith in his works, because no one is allowed to question the religion or say something against the rules. In Christianity, epiphany is a fest day. In this day Christians celebrate the revelation of God the Son as a human being in Jesus Christ. According to Fagnoli and Gillespi, “In the context of the Roman Catholic Church, the epiphany refers to the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6, which commemorates the manifestation of Christ’s divinity. The word literary means ‘apparition’” (Quoted in Briggs 3). It can also refer to the realization and recognition that Christ is the son of God. Epiphany is always related with supernatural or sudden incidents which enlighten a person to think differently. It is said that James Joyce refused the faith of Catholic Church when he was sixteen years old. However, his upbringing in a society which was highly devoted to the Roman Catholic Church and how he grew up in Ireland habituated him to write with the elements of Catholic religion and Irish society. In many stories of *Dubliners*, the characters doubt the religion or abound the faith and becomes frustrated or depressed under the Catholic Church. Joyce’s works can be reflection of his opinion about religion. He wanted to

write and work freely and he also believed that artists should be allowed to work freely which he believed the Catholic Church does not allow. In Stephen Hero, the protagonist Stephen is a catholic and he longed for a life of an artist. He was afraid that the church will crush his dreams of becoming an artist. However, Joyce did not abandon his teachings and educations from the religion. The church and Catholic faith has always shaped his work and characters.

With regard to his background in catholic faith it is not a surprise that he picked up the term “epiphany” from Christian doctrine to serve his artistic purpose. James Joyce adapted the term to secular experience, to signify the experience of a sudden radiance and revelation that occurs in the act of perceiving a common object. He explained epiphany through his characters, for example Stephen Hero. By an epiphany [Stephen] meant a sudden spiritual manifestation: “It’s soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object...seems to us radiant. The object achieves epiphany” (Abrams 85).

According to Stephen epiphany is spiritual manifestation which means after going through a situation things become clearer and obvious about the idea and the truth comes out to light.

Morris Beja briefly defined epiphany as a “sudden spiritual manifestation” saying that this manifestation is “out of proportion to the significance or strictly logical relevance of whatever produces it” (Quoted in Briggs 4). This spiritual manifestation can occur in an individual which leads him or her to a spiritual understanding of themselves or enlightens the whole situation in a different way. After introduced by James Joyce, epiphany has become an important concept of modern poetry and prose fiction. It is also said that Joyce merely renamed what other writers called “moments” as epiphany. Novelist Joseph Conrad described epiphany as "one of those rare moments of awakening" in which "everything [occurs] in a flash." Poet Shelly described it as “best and happiest moments....arising unforeseen and departing unbidden,” and “visitations of

the divinity,” which poetry redeems from decay.” In Wordsworth’s “the two April Mornings” and “The Solitary Reaper” we see representation of moments of revelation. His *Prelude* has some similarities such as having sequences of visionary encounters like Joyce’s works (Abrams 86). However, epiphany has reached a level of great place of admiration by other writers and critics and now it is known as “Joycen Epiphany” in modern literature. His concept of epiphany developed in his works such as *Stephen hero*, *Ulysses*, and the *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. After these works he used the epiphany concept in his short story collection *Dubliners*. The stories may reflect his experience or the individuals he was familiar with in Dublin, the city where he spent his childhood. In *Dubliners* he used the concept of epiphany to show the characters spiritual manifestation or self enlightenment. Each of the main character is given insights to their own follies and ludicrousness. Each of them encounters moments when he or she reevaluates past events and finally realizes a sudden truth which puts a new insight or light in his or her existence. In this chapter we will see how the characters gain their epiphany or self realization and how through their spiritual manifestation sees life in a new light.

In the first story “The Sisters” story both the boy and Father Flynn had their own self enlightenment and epiphany. From the first chapter of the thesis we know how the boy and the sisters were trapped in their daily routine and had to lead their lives taking care of the paralyzed priest. The next day after the death of the priest the boy he to visit the shop in which Father Flynn used to be and suddenly realize that he is not sad:

I walked away slowly along the sunny side of the street, reading all the theatrical advertisements in the shop-windows as I went. I found it strange that neither I nor the day seemed in a mourning mood and I felt even annoyed at discovering in

myself a sensation of freedom as if I had been freed from something by his death.

(Joyce 11)

The death of Father Flynn might have opened something more for the boy. He did not need to spend his time visiting Father Flynn anymore and now his life may change a little bit. He was free from his duties and also there was no fear of becoming a priest anymore. Perhaps he might have been thinking to prepare to go for some adventure after his old friend's death. The final epiphany for the boy was realizing that he wished for the death of the priest and the realization of not mourning or feeling sad for his friend's death.

The other characters such as Flynn and the sisters also had their realization of truth and realization. The process of achieving the truth was unique from each others. In the paper "Joyce and the Epiphany Concept: A New Approach" Bowen discusses about the characters realization of truth in different ways:

The answer is that they depend upon the beholder: the sisters' perception is different from Father Flynn's, the boy's, or the readers', who may in themselves differ. Each of us fashions his own truth and sees it as the unalterable law of God.

(Bowen 107)

After the death of Father Flynn the sisters had to face their own truth and got introduced to freedom, the boy had it in his own way and Father Flynn had it in another way. The sisters finally realized that they are free from their duty and also admitted that they would miss him. On the other hand, Father Flynn who was disappointed as a priest had his realization that this world is not a place where he could be and confessed to the boy: "I am not long for this world." He knew that the only way he can escape from being a priest is through death and he longed for it. However, the question is after the priest's death, were the other characters become really free

from the trapped life? The boy already knew that the priest was dead; there was no need for him to go to the shop and be confirmed about it but he still went to the shop out of his old habit. The truth is that he is still habituated of going to the shop even after the death of the priest. The death of the priest not just brings hope but also a sense of hopelessness to the characters. The sisters who devoted their whole life for Flynn, were not sure about what would they do next. They were full of Flynn's memory and could not think differently. When Eliza continuously talks about Father Flynn, the boys aunt says, "It's when it's all over that you'll miss him,"(Joyce 15). There is a possibility that the sisters were trapped mentally with the memory of the dead priest. They were not hopeful but more terrified thinking about the future without the priest.

In the second story "An Encounter," the narrator and his friend Mahony finally had a journey started to the Pigeon house to have a taste of something different from their daily life of going to school and studying under priests. On the way to their little adventure both of the boys observed the life of common people of Dublin. These people did not belong to the same economic or social status of the boys. Takashi Suzuki in his paper "Epiphanies of Dubliners" says:

His adventure to the Irish "Wild West" (18) is a short journey across Dublin in the opposite direction from the west to the east, and it represents a downward movement of cultural and economic conditions as well. As the boy and his friend Mahony travel from the city centre to the seaside Rings end, they move from the area of the Catholic middle class to that of the Catholic working class, and then to the "squalid streets where the families of fishermen live (23). (Suzuki 76)

The boys were encountering something different than their own style and they were amused by what they were observing. The "Catholic working class" like the fisher men and the sailors were

something to watch over. The boys thought that these working classes were different than them, because their profession was somehow unique and adventurous to the boys. It seemed that the narrator and his friend were trying to be in a place, where they can be different than the others. As if they were trying to deny their own culture and traditional life of Dublin to become unique and fearless. Whatever they saw during their journey was also important in the case of the narrator's epiphany and self enlightenment. He was the one who always observed and picked up unusual things from his surroundings. He always sought for something different which was out of his comfort zone, his school and his culture. For example, when he saw a ship and its sailors he looked for a sailor who had green eyes, "I came back and examined the foreign sailors to see had any of them green eyes, for I had some confused notion..." (Joyce 23). Green eyes were rare to find in Dublin. To the boy green eyes means something unique or someone outside their familiar surroundings. However, later he found an old man who had green eyes which he was eagerly looking for, but meeting the man and the other things he encountered altogether changed his whole views about adventure. The boys had to stop their journey for the Pigeon house as it was getting late. They decided to rest in a field for a while and there they meet this odd old man who at first impressed them by his knowledge about poetry, but later terrified them with his odd behavior. Both of them were comfortable with the man as long as he spoke about poems and magazines. However, the topic changes into having "sweet hearts" and the narrator felt uncomfortable about it. When the man said every boy "has a sweetheart", the boy found it fairly odd because he could not think that a man of his (the old man) age should talk about such topic. This was the moment when the boy realized how things or people unknown to him can be abnormally different. According to Briggs:

On a day adventure of the narrator and Mahony, the epiphany, brought on by the word of the old perverted man, alerts the perception of the narrator in an instant of which he is not fully certain. (Briggs 11)

At that moment, the boy becomes uncertain about his ideas about adventure and escaping from his daily routine. When the man tells them that he would take a break, the narrator instantly decided to use fake names for both him and Mahony to avoid any kind of trouble or threats they might have from the old man. Mahony as well observes the abnormality of the man and decides to follow the narrator's plan. When the man comes back Mahoney escapes from further interaction with him by faking to chase a cat. The narrator who was terrified remains with the man and listens to the man's continuously repeating the idea about whipping boys. The man says, "When a boy was rough and unruly there was nothing would do him any good but a good sound whipping" (Joyce 27). This statement strikes the narrator as he himself missed school to have an adventure and now he was afraid thinking he might become a victim of the unknown man. The man peered with his bottle green eyes at the narrator and the narrator who was seeking those eyes turns away from them as he no longer desires for it. The adventure and green eyes he looked for turns out to be something terrifying and undesirable for him. When the boy is finally sure that the man was not a normal person he decides to return home as soon as possible. He becomes terrified because the only one he knows from his daily life was not beside him and the unknown man whom he could not trust was with him. He seeks help from his friend calling him by the fake name and feels relieved when Mahony responds:

My voice had an accent of forced bravery in it and I was ashamed of my paltry stratagem. I had to call the name again before Mahony saw me and halloood in answer. How my heart beat as he came running across the field to me! He ran as if

to bring me aid. And I was penitent; for in my heart I had always despised him a little. (Joyce 28)

It is revealed that the narrator always despised his friend but still seeks for help from him. It proves that no matter how much he was dissatisfied with his daily routine life, he could not trust the unknown. Therefore, he rejects the unknown and returns to his known people and regular school life. He realizes that true adventure was not for him, as it was not like the magazines he used to read with his friends. The real world was something more and terrifying than his habituated life and he failed to handle the truth. Even in this story the unknown future or life is not just full of new possibilities but also full of the possibilities of unknown threat which the characters did not have the courage to face or accept.

The fear of the unknown also prevents Eveline from going somewhere unfamiliar to her. Everything was ready for Eveline. She just needed to hold Frank's hand and escape from her trapped life but when the final moment came she stayed back in Dublin and watched Frank go. She was determined not to leave and showed no emotion like a dead person while letting go of her only ticket of happiness, "She sat her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal". (Joyce 43). She was helpless because she was burdened with responsibilities. Why did Eveline choose not to leave Dublin and decide to stay with her family? To get a better answer we can look back to her thoughts and life events which she was thinking after making the decision to run away with Frank. According to Freud, people are eternally driven by inner conflicts (conscious vs. unconscious, free association vs. resistance, life vs. death)—and that compromise is a necessary solution. In case of Eveline the same thing might have occurred. Freud believed that there are three different parts of human personality. If we analyze her thoughts and actions from the start of the story, we can find the different human personality visible in Eveline as well.

The id is the most primitive one among the parts of human personality. The id is based on pleasure principle. It seeks immediate and complete fulfillment of our inner desire like sex, food, water, air, etc. We feel an inner unrest until our desires are fulfilled and we sought for possible ways to fulfill our desires. In the case of Eveline, her most inner desire was to become happy and escape from her unhappy life in Dublin, “She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy?” (Joyce 42). These are the thoughts which derive her to leave Dublin and have a happy life. Her id was seeking for love and happiness which could have been fulfilled by Frank. Unfortunately, she had duties toward her family and her father which she could not abandon as easily as she thought she could.

Eveline's superego forbids her to leave her responsibility. According to Freud the superego is a prude, a moralist, a part of us that shuns sex and other innate sources of pleasure. Eveline's moral judgment and sense of responsibility towards her family was in conflict with the desires of her id. She also has her epiphany from someone else's dialogue like the narrator from “An Encounter” has his epiphany from the old man's lines. According to Robert M. Adams:

The dying words of Eveline's mother, “Derevaun Seranun”, look very much as if they ought to have a symbolic meaning, but they don't, or at least it has so far proved undiscoverable. They make no sense in any known language or dialects, and are in no sense useful to the story in any corruption of any language known to man. They are a perfect dead end. (Quoted in Briggs 15)

The meaningless words of her mother when she was dying evoked a sense of duty of her towards her family. The words which are “perfect dead end” make her realize that there is no safe passage for her to happiness and her life is never to be changed. She must remain with her family

and fulfill her promises she made to her dead mother to keep the family together. The words may seem to have no meaning for the readers or any other person but it was a clear order to Eveline for not to leave her family.

Finally her other part of personality starts to act from the moment when she was about to leave Dublin. Freud believes the third aspect of personality is the ego, which mediates the conflict between the “wants” of the id and the “shoulds” of the superego. Eveline also comes to a compromise with her id and superego. She could leave with Frank but she did not know how she could be happy in an unknown place leaving her responsibilities which her mother gave her in Dublin. This was the start of Eveline’s realization which completes when Frank asks her to come with him and she realizes, “All the sea of the world tumbled about her heart, he was drawing her into them: he would drown her” (Joyce 42). She would have to leave what she knew to somewhere unknown for the happiness she expects. This thought was as fearful as the mysterious sea of which she knew nothing and Frank was the one who was forcing her to “drown” into the unknown. This thought made her change the decision and she decided to remain trapped in her cruel life for the rest of her life. She is similar to the narrator from “An Encounter” as she too returns to her usual life, although she had a chance to live a different life. However, like the first two stories again it is seen that the unknown not just had hopes and possibilities of better life but also holds a terrifying future with unknown mysteries. Eveline like the other characters was also not courageous enough to face the difficulties and fails to accept a change.

On the other hand, Mr. Duffy from the story “A Painful Case” is seen terrified with change and unknown future problems from the start of the story. He maintains a restricted life apart from society to avoid any problems which might change his life style. Mr. Duffy did not

realize how lonely his life was and how lonely Mr. Sinico might have feeling after their break up until he heard the news of Mrs. Sinico's painful death while crossing the rail line after three years of their break up. At first he was ashamed of having any kind of contact with her who not only degraded herself by choosing this kind of death but also degraded him. He remembered the day when they were breaking off the relationship and how vulnerable she looked even back then. According to Nouri Gana:

The end of the story seems to me, however, to stress with remarkable clarity an empiphanic moment in which the empathy with Emily's loneliness brings Duffy's gaze to center on his own loneliness. This empiphanic structure begins when he "understood how lonely her life must have been" (*D*, p. 116), and comes full circle at the very end of the story when he "felt that he was alone" (*D*, p. 117). This last sentence which certainly ushers Duffy into mourning was prepared for by another sentence: "His life would be lonely until, he, too, died, ceased to exist, became a memory— if anyone remembered him" (*D*, p. 116). (Gana 32)

What we can see from these lines that Mr. Duffy's epiphany occurs when he realized that Mrs. Sinico was dead and he was alone. At first he did not realize how lonely his life had been before he met Mrs. Sinico and how much lonely he had become after breaking off with her. As soon as he realized the truth his disgust and anger towards Mrs. Sinico turns into sympathy and he becomes melancholic. According to Freud:

"In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; and in melancholia it is the ego itself. The patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any achievements and morally dispicable; he reproches himself, vilifies himself and expect to be cust out and punished" (246).

Mr. Duffy is both mourning and melancholic state in the end of the story. His world becomes empty and more colorless after Mrs. Sinico's death who was his only soul companion. His mourning state of losing Mrs. Sinico turns into melancholic when he started to think why Mrs. Sinico would choose this kind of death; he thinks about her life and her unhappy marriage. He understands how lonely she might have felt, "Now that she was gone he understood how lonely her life must have been, sitting night after night alone in that room." (Joyce 130). He understands that Mrs. Sinico was lonely before meeting him and had become more lonely and frustrated after the break off of their relation. He feels guilty and ashamed of his act towards Mrs. Sinico. When he realizes his friend was no more his world becomes empty and then he searches for the explanation of what was the reason for her death. While searching for the explanation he also searched for what he had lost because of her death. He realized he was lonely himself and he lost something which could have helped him get out of this lonely feeling. Although the obituary of Mrs. Sinico said that no blame was attached to anyone, Mr. Duffy blamed himself for her death, "Why had he withheld life from her? Why had he sentenced her to death? He felt his moral nature falling to pieces" (Joyce 130). Finally he concluded he had sentenced one human being who seemed to love him to death. Now, it was his turn to suffer what Mrs. Sinico had gone through and be punished with the truth of what he had done to her. As a melancholic person as Freud explained, Mr. Duffy sought for punishment for not able to protect or keep something very important like Mrs. Sinico's love and friendship. He was also terrified with the unknown problems or difficulties which he might have faced if he started a romantic relationship with Mrs. Sinico. If he was courageous enough to face the difficulties and the changes, he could have had a colorful life with Mrs. Sinico and they both could be happy. Unfortunately because of living a routine bound life he became paralyzed and could not think about the future he could have.

Finally, in the last story “The Dead,” Gabriel realized and understands the paralytic condition of the Irish people. He realized that only the dead were free from this situation. The snow which was shown falling always in this story, actually refers to the stillness and paralytic condition of the Dubliners. The characters such as Kate and Julia Morkan, Mary Jane and Gabriel were always busy maintaining their reputations to others, but at the end Gabriel realizes their insignificance and the importance of the dead. He thought, “One by one, they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age” (Joyce 255). He became aware of his insignificance when in the hotel Gretta did not understand his lustful and passionate love for her and mourns the death of her past lover Michael Furey. At first he feels insulted because of being compared with Furey:

Gabriel felt humiliated by the failure of his irony and by the evocation of this figure from the dead, a boy in the gas works. While he had been full of memories of their secret life together, full of tenderness and joy and desire, she had been comparing him in her mind with another. (Joyce 251)

He cannot accept that he who was a university professor was being compared with “a boy in the gas works.” Moreover, he feels even more “humiliated” as a husband when he see his wife is “comparing him in her mind” with some other man even though that person was dead. However, when he learns that Michael Furey died for Gretta and gave his life for love, he started to think about his position and ability. He thought if he could do the same as Michael Furey or not and understood he lacks the courage.

He was the puppet of the society like the other characters of *Dubliners* who are unable to face any challenge and face the fears of the unknown. Although Gabriel loves Gretta but he may not be able to sacrifice his life for her like Furey did. According to William Fuger:

Nevertheless, unlike the protagonists of the other stories, he is the first and only one to recognize with sufficient clarity what has gone wrong with him; and if he cannot profit from this insight himself, others might be able to do so.(98)

In the second chapter of the thesis we have seen that Gabriel is the only character in *Dubliners* who consciously declares that he is sick of his own country. Now we can see that he is the only one character who realized what was “wrong with him” as well as with all the Dubliners and the lacking was facing a challenge like Michael Furey.

From the discussion of the final chapter we can come to the conclusion that the Dubliners were unable to accept changes and tried to avoid challenges that hindered their routine of normal life. After attempting to bring changes in their life, most of the characters failed and returned back to their regular life, but they did not go back achieving nothing at all. They gain knowledge about their inability and consequences of challenging life which made them compromise with the life they hate. The Irish rules, religion and society changed the Dubliners from human to paralytic beings who similar to the horse in Gabriel’s story can walk round and round something they are habituated with but cannot move forward. However, If the characters could realize their inability and paralytic state, like the way Gabriel did, then there was a possibility of coming out from the trapped life of Dublin.

Conclusion

Through the characters of this short story collection, James Joyce presented the mental condition and helplessness of people who live in a repetitive without accepting any challenge. The fictional characters he used to present the paralyzed society of Ireland may not just be fictional but actual representation of Dublin and its society. The way Joyce presented the stories help us to go through the minds of the characters and see how the people were trapped in rules and regulations, social norms, responsibility and religion. Each of the stories tells us about Dubliners' sorrows, frustration and failure. Their paralytic life style which became their habit made them unable to move forward or embrace the changes. Therefore, they fall back thinking what terrible threats the unknown might bring for them. As they could not accept any challenge, they could not change their life and remains in the trap. The truth about their hopelessness has been said in the first story's first line which is "There was no hope for him this time" (Joyce 7). This first sentence clearly sets the mood of hopelessness for every story in the book and the characters had to fight against hopelessness to keep their existence. Although most of the stories discussed in this paper were a story of failure, every character found their own truth and understanding of their ability.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I explored how the characters from each story were trapped in their routine bound life and how the Irish social norms, rules and responsibility towards society and family restricted the lives of Dubliners within a boundary. Catholic religious beliefs and traditions were also one of the common forces which control the lives of the Irish people as we have seen in "The Sisters." The presence of religious figure such as a priest was present in each and every story discussed in this paper. The priest Father Flynn was not only a victim of Catholic Church restrictions but also he himself played a role of the controller who

trapping other characters like the young boy as well as the sisters with him. The boys from the second story “An Encounter” are also restricted and controlled by priests who teach them at their school. The portrait hanging in Eveline’s room and her promise towards her mother trapped her in an unhappy life with an abusive father. Mr. Duffy on the other hand uses Mrs. Sinico as his confessor but not as a priest or a person but a confession booth to which only he could speak and Mrs. Sinicoc can only listen without interrupting with her own desires. Mr. Duffy was paralyzed with his daily life and activities in such way that he intentionally confined himself from any kind of change and relationships. Then, Gabriel was another adult from “The Dead” who like the other characters was also tangled with the past and struggled to come out from it but reminded trapped by other characters such his aunts, Miss Ivors and Gretta.

In the second chapter, I have looked into the characters desires and expectations from life. From this chapter we get to know that the Dubliners were not fully unaware of their paralytic condition. The characters feel somehow alienated from the society and its tradition which always restricted them from doing something according to their free will. They felt they were different and did not belong in a restrictive society. That was why they tried to escape from their paralytic life and hoped to find happiness in somewhere beyond their familiar territory.

After the second chapter, in the third chapter I explored what the characters from the selected stories faced while experiencing something out of their familiar box. How they reacted when they had the opportunity to meet something different than their knowledge. The unknown was not only a place for their escape but also something less familiar and this thought terrified the characters. I have explained the decisions and mental condition of the characters from Freudian perspective and come to know that people cannot accept something unknown to him very easily because it not only promises to give hope of better life but also creates a fear that it

may bring something more complicated than the usual life. Also, when something or someone changes from the typical life, the characters started to have a feeling of hopelessness. For example, although the boy from “The Sisters” had some hope of having adventure of his own after Father Flynn’s death, the sister who used to look after him did not know what they should do except recalling the priest in their memories. Also, the boy who was habituated of meeting the priest everyday went to the shop even after the priest’s death. In the second story “An Encounter” the narrator realized that he could not accept the unknown because it threatens him rather than giving thrills of adventure. He decided to return to his familiar life and refused to look at the unknown. This means that he feels safe with his familiar surroundings even if he was not happy with it. Eveline from the story “Eveline” also refused to go with Frank to some where unknown because she became terrified with the unknown. Then we saw Mr. Duffy realizing his mistake of letting go Mrs. Sinico who was the only one to love him. He understood that he was alone all his life and had to be lonely even in the future just because he let go of the happiness he could have. Finally, in “The Dead” Gabriel, who was always obsessed with his fake reputation and the English culture, realized that he was not as important as he thought and the dead seemed to have more significance in everyone’s life than him. From all the characters discussed Gabriel was the only character who understood what was wrong with the Dubliners. He finally becomes conscious about the mental paralysis of the Dubliners and their failed attempt of keep on living a paralytic life. The Dubliners were always busy following the orders and living the same old traditional life. Therefore, they lacked the courage of taking challenges in their life and falls back in the same routine.

In my paper, I have observed the characters of Dubliners and found out that they were trapped in a monotonous routine where they could only dream about leaving for better

opportunities. However, when they had the opportunity to leave differently they became scared and challenged by the unknown and unpredictable future. This means they realized they were living a paralytic life, but decided to refuse the change and live their habituated life. The ways each of the character faced their truth were unique, but the end result for each of the character was futile. Their self realizations lead them to nowhere because even after realizing the truth about their paralytic life none of the characters attempted to come out of it. To live a free and happy life the characters should have been courageous and fearless. They should have accepted the challenges and only then they could achieve what they desired for.

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