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The Concept of Epiphany in James Joyce's 'Eveline' and Kate Chopin's 'The Story of an Hour': a comparative study

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DEDICATION:

To my dear mother and my father

To all my family that has supported me in this dissertation

Radja

DEDICATION:

I dedicate this work to:

My family

My close friends

And everyone who was missing by my pen but never be missed by my heart

Djema

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Abstract

The concept of epiphany has played a significant role in modern fiction. This concept is widely known as “Joycean epiphany” related to the Irish writer James Joyce. Joyce was the first one who adopted and introduced the term of epiphany in modernist literature and gave it a different meaning far from its religious meaning. This comparative study deals with the concept of Epiphany in Joyce’s ‘*Eveline*’ and Chopin’s ‘*The Story of an Hour*’. It aims mainly at finding the similarities and the differences in the use of this concept. Also, it includes a feminist reading of the use of epiphany in both works. This dissertation is divided into four chapters: the first two chapters represent the theoretical part. It introduces historical, personal, and literary backgrounds. The third and fourth chapters are the practical part which tackled a feminist reading of the concept of epiphany, and the analysis of its uses and its form of in the stories. This study shows that epiphany is a feminist-related theme and it did not lead the characters to any positive change (futile epiphany). Concerning the analysis of the form and uses, we found that Joyce and Chopin wrote epiphany in a realistic way through ordinary people and ordinary events, but they used different types of epiphany.

Keywords: Epiphany, comparative, Freedom, self-identity, futile, feminism, spiritual

ملخص البحث

يلعب مصطلح الصحوة دورا هاما في الأدب الخيالي الحديث و الذي يعرف ب "جويسين ابييفاني" نسبتا إلى الكاتب الايرلندي جيمس جويس. كان جويس هو الأول من تبنى و قدم المصطلح الصحوة في الأدب الانجليزي المعاصر و أعطاه معنى بعيد عن معناه الديني الأصلي. تعتمد دراسة المقارنة هذه على مفهوم الصحوة في قصة أفلين لجايمس جويس و قصة ساعة لكايث شوبين. تتطرق هذه الدراسة ايضا الى مفهوم الصحوة من منظور نظرية النسوية في كلا القصتين. هذه الأطروحة مقسمة إلى أربعة فصول. يمثل الفصلين الاولين الجانب النظري من الأطروحة و الذي يقدم خلفيات تاريخية و شخصية و أدبية. بينما يمثل الفصلين الثالث و الرابع الجانب التطبيقي من الأطروحة و الذي يتطرق الى بحث لمفهوم الصحوة من خلال منظور نظرية النسوية. بالإضافة إلى دراسة طرق كتابة مفهوم الصحوة في القصتين و استعمالاته. أظهرت هذه الدراسة ان موضوع الصحوة هو موضوع متعلق بالنسوية و لم تؤدي بالشخصيات الى اي تغيير ايجابي. فيما يخص دراسة طرق كتابة و استعمالات هذا المفهوم وجدنا ان الكاتبين جويس و شوبين قاما بكتابة هذا المفهوم بطريقة واقعية مستعملين شخصيات و احداث عادية. لكن انواع الصحوة التي تم استعمالها كانت مختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية . الصحوة. مقارنة. الحرية. الهوية الذاتية. عقيم. النسوية

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General INTRODUCTION

Introduction:

The short story has had a high value in both American and Irish literature, especially in the late 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. It is more accessible to more categories of readers. The writers Kate Chopin and James Joyce used this genre to portray various social, economic, and feminist issues in their societies. They used female protagonists and focused on a special moment in the life of each character called the moment of epiphany, and how it changed their thoughts and views towards life. According to Baja in his book *Epiphany in the modern novel*, epiphany is defined as “sudden spiritual manifestation, whether from object, scene, event or memorable phase of the mind — the manifestation being out of proportion to the significance or strict logical relevance of whatever produces it” (qtd. in Olsson 3). This literary concept of epiphany plays a very significant role in modernist and modern fiction.

This dissertation serves a comparative study between the short story ‘Eveline’ by the Irish writer James Joyce and ‘The Story of an Hour’ by the American writer Kate Chopin. It investigates the concept of epiphany and how it is used by each writer in each of these works, in terms of both aspects the form and the content.

1-Aim of study:

The need for comparing different literary texts is increasing in the field of literature. It helps researchers and students to trace the transformations of literary texts across time and space, and to analyze the different writing styles of the authors. The main aim of this dissertation is to find the similarities and differences in the use of the concept of epiphany in James Joyce’s “Eveline” and Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour”. The analysis in this dissertation will focus on comparing the concept of epiphany at the levels of content and form.

2-Problematic:

The two short stories we are dealing with in this dissertation are considered as feminist works, where James Joyce and Kate Chopin used the concept of epiphany in order to reveal some of the main issues that faced American and Irish women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus, we investigate the extent to which a feminist reading of the use of epiphany in ‘Eveline’ and ‘The Story of an Hour’ leads to paralysis in both stories.

3-Hypothesis:

In this research paper we hypothesize that:

A-James Joyce and Kate Chopin used epiphany to serve the same feminist goal that is to liberate American and Irish women and make them aware about their situation.

B- Also, we hypothesize that there are similarities in the way James Joyce and Kate Chopin wrote epiphany since they both use epiphany in a realistic way.

4-Research questions:

In this comparative study we intended to answer the following questions

1. What is the concept of epiphany, its types, and characteristics in literature?
2. How is epiphany used in modern narrative (modern short story)?
3. How do James Joyce and Kate Chopin use this concept in their works in terms of content? And then in terms of the form?
4. In comparing the two works, what are the similarities and differences found in both works in terms of the epiphanic moment of the two protagonists?
5. How is epiphany related to feminism?

5- Objectives:

The main objectives of this comparative study between the two stories are:

1. To introduce the concept of epiphany as a literary device and its uses in modern short stories.
2. To compare and contrast the epiphanies of the protagonists in the stories.
3. To conduct a feminist investigation of the term of epiphany in the stories.
4. To analyze the way epiphany is used by the two authors in terms of form and content.

6- Methodology:

In this dissertation we aimed to use a comparative approach. We use this approach in order to compare the concept of epiphany and its formal aspects in the two short stories as well as the characters (protagonists). Also, in our comparison and analysis of the two short stories we are going to use the literary theory of feminism, in which through the views of the this theory we are going to conduct a feminist reading of the use of the concept of epiphany in both stories.

7- Dissertation plan:

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first and second chapters represent the theoretical part. It deals with historical, personal, and literary backgrounds. The first chapter includes historical backgrounds about

the American society in the late 19th century as well as the Irish society in the early 20th century. Also, we presented some biographical notes about the writers Kate Chopin and James Joyce. The second chapter introduces literary backgrounds. It tackles the American literature and short story in the late 19th century and the Irish literature and short story in the early 20th century. In addition to the concept of Epiphany in literature, its characteristics, types, and how it is used in modern narrative.

The third and fourth chapters represent the practical part. In the third chapter, we introduce a feminist reading of the use of epiphany in the two works. This chapter also includes an analysis of the Protagonists' freedom and self-identity, and the futile epiphanies in both stories. Finally, the fourth chapter tackles the formal aspects of epiphany in the two stories. It discusses how and why James Joyce and Kate Chopin used epiphany in these works. In addition to the types of epiphany that has been used.

This thesis will help students and researchers with a detailed study about the literary concept of epiphany, and to provide them with a new knowledge about this concept and how it is used by writers. It also aims to bring out new discussions and further research about this term and its significant use in the field of literature

Chapter One :Historical and Personal backgrounds

Chapter One: Historical and Personal backgrounds

1. Introduction

The history of society informs people about the real situation of a society at a certain period of time, and how its inhabitants were living. It reveals aspects like the economic situation, education and work, social classes, the situation of women, and so forth. This chapter will introduce the historical and personal backgrounds of the two short stories. It will tackle the historical background of American society in the late 19th century and the Irish society in the early 20th century. Since this dissertation is dealing with two works written by the American writer Kate Chopin and the Irish writer James Joyce, this chapter will also include some biographical notes about these two authors.

2. American society in the late 19th century

The late 19th century was an era of huge developments and changes in The United States. After the American civil war (1861-1865), The United States witnessed an industrial revolution that effected most fields and changed American society. There were quick developments in manufacturing industries, the use of technology, and the means of production. The arrival of millions of immigrants from other countries and even migrants from the countryside towards the cities helped in fostering industrialization, and making the American society a varied and multicultural society. This industrial revolution played an important role in shaping and changing the construction of society. It led to the appearance of new social classes such as the rich industrialists, prosperous middle class, and blue-collar working class (American Life).

At that epoch, cities and towns in The United States grew larger and faster. The population was also growing rapidly, both in rural and urbanized areas. It grew by about 15 million inhabitants in the last two decades before 1900. The immigrants contributed to this growth of population in cities because of their search for job opportunities. The homestead act of 1862 encouraged many immigrants to move to the rural areas because it allowed them to have lands for free if they accept to cultivate it. This fast growth in population led to some negative results such as housing problems, more diseases, traffic jams, and the spreading of slums in cities that became very crowded, noisy, and polluted (American Life)

Chapter One: Historical and Personal backgrounds

Regardless of this economic prosperity, many people were still unemployed or working in bad conditions with low salaries. This lack of opportunities and work problems encouraged many workers to join labor unions to find solutions for their problems and to defend their rights. The technological developments and inventions especially in the agricultural field, created a crisis for some people like farmers because of the increasing production that led to the falling of farm products' prices and to more competition. This problem forced many of them to move to the cities searching for alternative job opportunities. Beside the new agricultural machines, new means of transportation and communication appeared such as trolleys, cable cars, subways, the expansion of railroad networks, telephone, transcontinental telegraph, public parks, and skyscrapers (Daily life).

The late 19th century saw some positive changes in the situation of women in society, even though they were slow reforms especially for married women. A few years before, women were considered only as homemakers and had limited freedom and access to education and work comparing to men. The industrial revolution increased the need for more workers especially in factories and the various industries, which created more chances for women to join the field of work. It changed their traditional roles as wives and mothers, and made them working outside their houses as nurses or in factories. It also encouraged them to be involved in politics which enforce their right to vote, and they got more rights in education and employment to improve their living conditions (Curtis).

3. Irish society in the early 20th century

In the early 20th century, Ireland was still a part of the United Kingdom and under the rule of the British Parliament. The Irish party in the British Parliament was against the British rule. They wanted home rule for Ireland because they believed that the United Kingdom's rule was the main reason that is preventing the development of Ireland. This situation had huge negative impacts on the Irish society that was stuck in a state of paralysis at all levels (economically, socially, spiritually, and so forth).

At the beginning of the century, the majority of Irish inhabitants were living in the countryside, and only a minority of the population was living in towns and cities (about 30%). The living conditions in the countryside

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were very miserable and poor. There was a lack of electricity, running water, and many other necessities. The conditions in cities like the capital Dublin was not good as well. It had miserable housing conditions that were the worst in Europe with the spreading of dirty slums and overcrowded houses (History-Revision 1). These bad circumstances led to many social problems such as unemployment, diseases, alcohol, and drug consumption. The inhabitants were also suffering from the strict social and religious rules that restricted them and prevented them from achieving any positive developments.

Emigration was another major issue in the country, because of the misery and unemployment that forced people to immigrate to other countries like the United States or Europe looking for new opportunities and better conditions. Concerning the construction of Irish society, it was composed of different social classes like the landlords, the prosperous farmers, the smaller farmers, and the farm labourers. People in the urbanized areas were also classified into a working, middle, and upper classes. The rich people were mostly living in suburbs, whereas the poor lived in the city centre. The working class's people were living in tenement houses of single room with no running water or toilets, while the middle and upper class's people were living in big houses with gardens and servants. (History Revision 1-2).

In the 1930s, the Irish government tried to find solutions for the miserable houses and started a building programme to construct better houses for the inhabitants. In the 1920s, people began using electricity and farm machinery like the tractor instead of horses. In the rural areas, the majority of them worked as farmers using traditional means, while in the urbanized areas; they were working in trade and commerce. They were divided into unskilled labour like dockers and general labourers who worked daily with low salaries, and skilled labour like plumbers, carpenters, etc. They got better salaries and were involved in unions to defend their rights (History-Revision 2). Until 1911, Dublin's economy was extremely paralyzed and even the existing industries were unable to employ a large number of workers.

In 1900, the situation of women was not good as well and they were considered as second-class citizens. They didn't have the right to vote, their access to education was very limited, and they were expected only to marry and to keep dependent on their families. Later, there were few changes for their benefit. They got more

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opportunities to work in factories and nursing because of the conditions of World War I, Secondary Schools start offering them the opportunity to continue their education at universities. Regardless of these changes, they were still facing so many limitations and restrictions in society. For instance, working women were suffering from discrimination at work. They were paid less than men, and they were not allowed to work certain jobs if they are married (History-Revision 3).

4. Biographical backgrounds:

4.1 Kate Chopin

Katherine O’Flaherty was born on February 8, 1851, in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S. She was an American novelist and short-story writer, and one of the major feminist Authors in the twentieth century. Katherine was born to Thomas O’Flaherty, a successful Irish businessman, and his wife Eliza Faris, a woman of French-Canadian descent. She was raised as Roman Catholic, and from an early age she joined an institution run by nuns called Sacred Heart Academy. In 1855, she stopped going to school and stayed at home for two years, because of the death of her father (Prah).

In June 1870 she married Oscar Chopin, and moved to live with him in New Orleans, Louisiana, until his death in 1882. She began her writing career after the death of her husband and then the sudden death of her mother. Her family’s friend Dr. Frederick Kolbenheyer advised her to start writing as a form of therapy, and a source of income. In 1889, she decided to start her writing career. The female environment she had grown up was reflected through the themes of her works (Prah). Her writing style has been categorized within the “local colour” genre. This genre is a style of writing derived from the presentation of the features and peculiarities of a particular locality and its inhabitants.

Chopin wrote her first novel *At Fault* (1890), and a series of more than 100 short stories. She wrote non-fiction articles for local and national publications, and tackles with themes like the complexities of the Civil War, the stirrings of feminism, and women’s struggles for freedom and self-realization .Her stories were collected in *Bayou Folk* (1894) and *A Night in Acadie* (1897). Some of her notable works are *The Story of an Hour* (1894), *The Storm* (1969), and *The Awakening* (1899). On August 20, 1904, Chopin suffered a brain

Chapter One: Historical and Personal backgrounds

hemorrhage and collapsed during a trip to the St. Louis World's Fair. She died two days later on August 22, at the age of 54 (Prahl).

4.2. James Joyce

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce was one of the most prolific writers in the twentieth century. He was born on February 2, 1882 in Dublin, Ireland. He was an Irish modernist novelist, poet, and short story writer. At the age of six, he joined Clongowes Wood College. After that, he spent two years at home trying to educate himself with the help of his mother. In April 1893, Joyce and his brother joined a Jesuit grammar school in Dublin called Belvedere College. Then, he entered University College, Dublin, where he studied languages, and did a lot of effort to improve his capacities in writing and language (James Joyce).

Joyce was interested in both the Symbolism and the realism movements of the second half of the 19th century. He had begun writing a long naturalistic novel, *Stephen Hero*, which was based on his own life's events. In 1904, George Russell offered £1 each for some simple short stories with an Irish background to be published in a magazine named *The Irish Homestead*. As a response to this offer, Joyce started writing the stories published as *Dubliners* (1914). In October 1904, he left Dublin with his wife Nora Barnacle to live in Europe. Five years later, he visited Ireland twice in order to publish *Dubliners* and to set up a chain of Irish cinemas, but he failed (James Joyce).

James Joyce was one of the major figures of literary Modernism in the twentieth century. He created new literary forms and a special portrayal of human nature. He mastered the stream-of-consciousness style, and had a special writing style that was known for its complexity and explicitness. Some of his notable works are *Ulysses* (1922), *Finnegans Wake* (1939), *A portrait of the artist as a young man* (1916), and *Dubliners* (1914). Joyce died on January 13, 1941 in Zurich, Switzerland

5. Conclusion

Chapter One: Historical and Personal backgrounds

This chapter discussed the main changes in American and Irish societies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They were periods of deep changes and revolutions in all the domains. In the United States, the industrial revolution changed American society from an agricultural to an industrialized and urbanized society. It made the lives of people easier through the use of technology and machines. These changes brought people from all over the world to settle in the United States, which added more diversity to society. This issue of emigration was an influencing social phenomenon in both countries, but it differs in that it had positive effects in the United States, while it was considered as a social problem in Ireland. Irish society in the early 20th century was still an agricultural society where most people were living in the countryside, even though the living conditions were miserable in both. The situation of American and Irish women was not at its best levels. Both of them were considered inferior and were deprived of so many rights and advantages.

Chapter Two: Literary Backgrounds

1. Introduction

The literary production in any nation is mainly shaped and developed by its literary figures and the literary movements it witnesses over history. This chapter is going to be divided into two parts. In the first part, we are going to present the main literary movements in American and Irish Literature in the late 19th century (in The United States) and early 20th century (in Ireland). Also, we will include brief notes about the American short story in the late 19th century and Irish short story in the early 20th century. In the second part, we are going to spot the light on the literary concept of epiphany, its various characteristics, types, functions in literature, and its importance in modern narrative.

Part I: American and Irish Literature and Short Stories

1. American Literature in the late 19th century

American literature is the collection of literary works produced in The United States throughout history. It was mainly influenced by the country's historical events and literary movements. The history of American literature goes back to more than 400 years. It can be categorized into five major periods: The Colonial and Early National Period (17th century to 1830), The Romantic Period (1830 to 1870), Realism and Naturalism (1870 to 1910), The Modernist Period (1910 to 1945), and The Contemporary Period (1945 to present). The late 19th century saw The American civil war (1861-1865) that was the main historical event in America at that time. It had a deep influence on the American people and their literature, by making their writings and perception of life more realistic. Walt Whitman said that “a great literature will...arise out of the era of those four years.” (Luebering). He meant that the impact of the four years of the civil war will be reflected in the literature, and lead to its development.

In American literature, the late nineteenth century was a period of Realism and Naturalism (1870-1910). American Realism can be defined as “the faithful representation of reality”. It came as a rejection to Romanticism, and aimed mainly to reflect the reality of American life at those years. The realistic works were characterized by a natural and vernacular diction, a non-poetic language, and it focuses on the characters more

Chapter Two: Literary Backgrounds

than the actions and the plot. The authors of these works gave much importance to social classes especially the middle and working classes (American Realism). In this period, most writers were realists such as Mark Twain (1835-1910), Kate Chopin (1850-1904), Henry James (1843-1916), William Dean Howells (1837–1920), and others. They enriched the American through many works such as the two novels *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (1873) by Mark Twain, *A modern instance* (1882) by William Dean Howells, and so forth.

On the other hand, Naturalism is a branch of extreme realism. According to Webster dictionary Naturalism is: A made of thought (religious, moral or philosophical) glorifying nature and excluding supernatural and spiritual elements close adherence to nature in art or literature, esp. (in literature) the technique, chiefly associated with Zola, used to present a naturalistic philosophy, esp. by emphasizing the effect of heredity and environment on human nature and action (The Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, 1989, p. 667). This literary movement was first introduced by the French writer and theorist Émile Zola (1840-1902), who is considered as the founder and leading figure of this movement. Then, it was suggested to America through the American novelist Frank Norris. It is a literary theory that focuses on the scientific observation of life to depict the reality of things without any idealism (Zhang 195). The Naturalists believed that the social environment determines and influences people's identities and actions, and they tried to use their works to expose the difficulties of life like poverty, injustice, racism, discrimination, and so forth (Naturalism). *The awakening* (1899) by Kate Chopin, *The open boat* (1897), and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) by Stephen Crane are some good examples of American Naturalistic works.

In addition to Realism and Naturalism, Local color or Regional Literature was another dominant mode of writing in the late nineteenth century. It focused on the characters, dialects, traditions, and all features that are related to a specific region. According to the *Oxford Companion to American Literature*, "In local-color literature one finds the dual influence of romanticism and realism, since the author frequently looks away from ordinary life to distant lands, strange customs, or exotic scenes, but retains through minute detail a sense of fidelity and accuracy of description" (439). It is found mostly in the Sketch and the short story. They were

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characterized by the use of dialects to make the works more realistic and authentic, the use of frame story in which the narrator hears a story about a specific region, and a refusal to change with a certain degree of nostalgia to the past (Regionalism and Local Color).

1.2 American short story in the late 19th century

The short story is one of the oldest literary genres in history. It is hard to give an exact date for when it emerged for the first time because it started as oral fairytales, legends, and narratives between people. These brief narratives serve not only to amuse people but also to preserve their moral and cultural heritage. The American short story had an important role in developing American literature. Many scholars consider it as an American literary invention. According to professor Alfred Bendixon: “: “The short story is an American invention, and arguably the most important literary genre to have emerged in the United States” (qtd. in Parnam 1). Kate Chopin, Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, William Dean Howells, and Henry James are some of the best known American short story writers in the late 19th century.

Kate Chopin (1850-1904) was one of the first feminist short story writers in The United States. She produced a large number of stories in the late 19th century. She was inspired by the 19th century’s literary movements such as realism, and local-color. Her writing style was mainly influenced by the French writers Émile Zola and by the ironic and economic style of Guy de Maupassant (Bernard Koloski). She wrote feminist and ironic stories such as *Desiree’s Baby* (1893), *The Story of an Hour* (1894), *Her letters* (1895), *The Storm* (1898), and many others. Most of her stories were published in national and regional magazines and newspapers, and many of them were collected in two collections entitled: *Bayou Folk* (1894) and *A Night in Acadie* (1897).

The realistic writer Stephen Crane wrote stories about the battlefield of the American Civil War where he could successfully portray the battle as it was, and the real feelings of the battlers. His short stories were not as famous as his novels, but he produced valuable works in the late years of the century such as *The Open Boat* (1897), and *The Little Regiment and Other Episodes of the American Civil War* (1897) (Stephen Crane).

Chapter Two: Literary Backgrounds

William Dean Howells (1837-1920) was another leading figure in American realism. He wrote short stories such as *Christmas Everyday* (1892). The stories were more interested in the philological aspects of the characters. They do not follow a certain pattern, and the theme discussed in every story varies greatly. They also allow the readers to see how the author developed from a literary perspective over time (Micola Magdalena).

The father of American literature Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain) has enriched the American literature with the best works in the genre of Realism and many humorous and satiric short stories to show issues such as people's failings in life, ridiculousness, hypocrisy, and so on. In addition to other nonfiction stories narrating his travels abroad. Some of his best-known works in the late 19th century included *Edward Mills And George Benton: A Tale* (1880), *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* (1865), *luck* (1891), and one of his best works *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) that was closest to the works of older humorists and local colorists(American literature).

2. Irish literature in the early 20th century

Irish literature is considered as one of the oldest literature in Europe. It is represented in the collection of literary works written in Irish, Latin, and English languages in Ireland. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Irish literature witnessed a nationalist cultural revival known as the Irish literary renaissance or the Celtic renaissance. This cultural revival was also related to a political movement that was calling for Ireland's independence from the British rule. It aimed at renewing old Irish folklore, legends, and traditions in literary works. It succeeded at producing some of the best plays and literary works in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This Irish revival was inspired by many things like the nationalistic pride of the Gaelic revival, the ancient heroic legends in books such as the *History of Ireland* (1880) by Standish O'Grady and *A Literary History of Ireland* (1899) by Douglas Hyde, and even the Gaelic League (Irish literature).

The Gaelic league was founded by the Irish linguist and politician Douglas Hyde (1860-1949) in 1893. It aimed at fostering and encouraging the Irish language and culture. Hyde became a central figure in this movement, and his translations of poetry from the Irish language inflected new poetry written in English at the

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turn of the 20th century (Irish literature). The period of the literary renaissance saw development in Irish drama in general and poetry in particular. Poetry was characterized by the conventional romanticism of some poets like John Masefield, Alfred Noyes, Walter de la Mare, and by the experiments of the imagist Hilda Doolittle (H. D.), Richard Aldington, Herbert Read, and D. H. Lawrence. William Yeats Butler was one of the most recognized poets at that time. He had a special style in poetry, where he fused romantic vision with contemporary political and aesthetic concerns (English literature: The Early Twentieth Century).

Some of the major figures of this movement are Lady Isabella Augusta Gregory (1852-1932), John Millington Synge (1871-1909), William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), and many others. Some of them helped in establishing the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899 to improve the Irish poetic drama. Later, they established the Abbey theatre in 1904, which was the first Irish national theatre and one of the most important cultural institutions in the country. “The Abbey theatre began as, and has always remained a Repertory Theatre — that is, a theatre which is, in the words of Mr. Frank Vernon, a ‘ permanent local theatre with a permanent company reviving good plays and producing good plays with a little more regard for their artistic values than for their immediate drawing power’. The Irish Theatre had also something more to accomplish; it had to create a National Drama.” (David Pierce 295).

This Theatre played an important role in developing and enriching the Irish drama. It was so popular and had a huge public attending its plays. Many famous plays written by writers of the Irish literary renaissance have been staged there. Later, the Abbey Theatre turned into Realism, mostly rural realism. Some of the early Irish Realists are Lennox Robinson (1886-1958), who is known for his political play, *The Lost Leader* (1918), and his comedy, *The Whiteheaded Boy* (1916), T.C. Murray (1873-1959), and his play *The Briary Gap* (1917). Many Irish notable writers added a lot to the Irish literature, and some of them are winners of the Nobel Prize like William Butler Yeats (1923), George Bernard Shaw (1925), Samuel Beckett (1969), and Séamus Heaney (1995) (Irish literary renaissance).

2.1 Irish short story in the early 20th century

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The Irish short story is considered as the main genre in Irish literature. The Irish writers gave it much of their attention and efforts, and tried to develop it and enrich it through their writings. It has developed mainly from the Irish ancient oral folktales and legends. “Averill 1984 argues that the Irish short story is a modern art form that derived its techniques from late-19th-century Russian and French writers. She dates its appearance in Ireland to the publication of George Moore’s *The Untilled Field* (1903) and associates it with mimetic realism” (Ingman).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, this genre became so popular between the Irish writers and readers. Some of the notable short story writers at that time were Frank O’connor (1903-1966), George Moore (1852-1933), James Joyce (1882-1941), Liam O’flaherty (1896-1984) and others. James Joyce is one of the most prolific Irish writers. He had a great influence on the form of the Irish short story and redefined it through his collection *Dubliners* (1914), where he used special styles such as the “scrupulous meanness” and the free indirect style. Commenting on his work, Joyce Carol Oates has said, "the Joycean short story is immediately recognizable as a sub-genre in which the directness of the prose and the suggestive ellipsis of poetry are blended" (Power Chris).

From September 1901, George Moore began to write a series of short stories of rural Irish life focusing on Catholicism, emigration, and other themes. He aimed to revive the Irish culture and to determine the nation’s future (Malcolm and Malcolm 54-55). He is known for his collection *The Untilled Field* (1903) that is considered as the first significant collection of Irish short fiction. This work focuses on the drudgery of Irish rural life and introduced a new tradition of realistic writings and descriptions of Ireland. It even influenced James Joyce in his writing of his collection *Dubliners* (Diniejk). Joyce and Moore’s style and the focus on the real ordinary life changed the form of the Irish short story and influenced many later Irish writers.

The writer William O’flaherty has also contributed in the Irish short fiction by writing about 183 short stories written in both Irish and English languages. His best-known stories are *The Discarded Soldier* (1925), and his first published work of fiction *The Sniper* (1923). They were mainly published in journals and magazines. The

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majority of his short stories are collected in eight original collections such as *Spring Sowing* (1924), *The Tent and other Stories* (1926), and *The Mountain Tavern and Other Stories* (1929).

Many of the Irish short fiction in the early 20th century are indebted to Russian writer Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883) who wrote about Russian serfdom with a combination of artistic distance and deep sympathy. His influence is clear in Irish stories like *The Weaver's rest* (1913) by Seamus O'Kelly, *Séadna* (1904) by Peadar Ó Laoghaire, and even his most famous work *the Untilled Field* (1903) (Malcolm and Malcolm 54-55). Other known Irish short fiction at that time included stories such as *All on the Irish Shore* (1903) and *Some Irish yesterdays* (1906) by Edith Somerville and Violet Florence Martin.

Part Two: Epiphany as a Literary Device

1.1 Conceptual development of the term epiphany:

Epiphany is a holy term related originally to the Christian Feast that is held at the beginning of each New Year and it is known as a charismas day. Fargnoli and Gillespi stated that “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.”(Sharif 31) .The concept is derived from the Greek word “Epiphainesthai” which means “to appear” or “to come into view” is used to express a sudden moment of significant insight. (McDonald 91). Also, the concept of epiphany has been used widely in different contexts such as religion, science, philosophy, and psychology.

The Christian thinkers believed that the term epiphany is a God revelatory moment, as well as this moment, indicates the presence of the lord in the most commonplace. James Joyce an Irish catholic novelist was the first who adopted the term of epiphany, in which it is a Christian doctrine; but he used it in a different meaning that related to a moment of realization that enlightens an ordinary person's thinking to the positive. James Joyce has developed the term of epiphany in his works such as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Stephen hero*, *Ulysses*, and lastly *Dubliners* (Sharif 33). Now, in modern literature the concept of epiphany is known by ‘Joycean Epiphany’, as well as it gained more admiration and interest from other writers and critics.

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The term epiphany also has been defined from many critics such as M.H Abrams, Morris Baja's book *Epiphany in the Modern Novel*, Wordsworth, Virginia Wolf, Joseph Conrad, Marcel Proust, William Faulkner, and Katherine Mansfield, among many others, in which they all agreed in the meaning of epiphany as a "Sudden Spiritual manifestation" or "A moment of awakening" that a person experience, and discover enlightenment truth in his life. The development of the term epiphany continued in its different usage from various disciplines such as literary criticism, humanistic education, narrative psychology, and clinical psychology; though, the core meaning of the concept remains the same. Besides, the two unique studies in epiphanic literature in which they contribute in developing the conceptual framework of epiphany through experiments that aims to describe and clarify human epiphanies.

The first study of Jarvis (1997) she defined epiphany as an unexpected positive change that contributes in the transformation of a person's profound believes about self and world (McDonald 91) in which she proposes ten hypotheses derived from developmental psychology and tested them on some participants in order to create a conceptual framework to the term epiphany. The second study related to Miller and C'de Baca (1993; 2001) in which they have created a new concept "quantum change" that means epiphany and tested on 55 participants depending on the qualitative and quantitative method (McDonald 30). According to Stephen stated that epiphany is a spiritual manifestation implies the appearance of the truth to light after going through certain life experience (Sharif 32).

1.2 Epiphany and spirituality:

The term epiphany has been defined as "A sudden spiritual manifestation", it is associated with an inner feeling or a spiritual state that a person suddenly experience. The adjective 'spiritual' is a metaphysical word related to something mysterious. It has been used to describe the term of epiphany, in which it creates confusion to the critics in understanding Joyce's concept of 'epiphany'.

The critics have misunderstood as well as they somehow refused to use the concept of epiphany, because they think that it is used by Joyce to express something related to religion or something religious, moral, or

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vague; while other critics had criticized the term of epiphany and its use in literature, because it has these religious characteristics in its core meaning. (P.Landow). According to Herbert Tucker said that: “Epiphany may have fallen under theoretical suspicion and into academic neglect because currently popular definitions violate the postulates of much advanced scholarship” (qtd.in P.Landow)

Thus, we can see that the term of spiritual cannot have a clear meaning, instead, it carried a lot of meanings about ambiguity and mystery; consequently, it explains the difficulty that the modern critics faced in considering Epiphany as an appropriate literary concept, because its origin is religious (a Christian doctrine) (P. Landow).

Although, the term of epiphany has been criticized for its religious origin by different modern critics. Sharon Kim in her book *Literary Epiphany in the Novel, 1850-1950: Constellations of the Soul* suggested that keeping the religious origin of the term epiphany will help in giving a clear understanding to the use of the modern epiphany in literature, in which it would be considered as an ironic mode of manifestation. Hence, this clarifies the reason for keeping the description of the modern epiphany as a sudden spiritual moment or manifestation; even though, it is not used in a religious context. (P.Landow) .

At last, the definition “As a sudden spiritual manifestation” of the literary concept of epiphany is used now in literary works and other fields to express a sudden moment of awareness that characters experience. Besides, the concept of Epiphany becomes considered as a significant form of characterization in the modern novel (Sharon).

1.3 Epiphany and Modernism:

In the old times, the concept of epiphany was regarded as a manifestation of divine origin in Christianity in which it is considered as a revelation that happened only to prophets. After, the concept became considered as a literary device, and it is defined in a less religious way in its use in fiction. Hence, the modernist concept of epiphany has been defined according to Baja as the moment of epiphany is an

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immediate experience that it is separated from revelation in which the individual who had that moment gets his answer easily (Olsson 6).

According to Baja claims that “in this century epiphanies have tended to be attached to certain recurrent attitudes towards meaning of experience, toward the nature of reality, and even toward the means of [...] enlightenment” (qtd. in Olsson 8). This shows that the concept of epiphany is mostly found in modernist fiction in which it is considered as a very significant and a new method of writing that focus on real experiences and enlightenment. Hence, this concept is mostly used by modernist authors such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Wolfe, and William Faulkner in which they all used it in their works in an unusual way. The modernist use of epiphany is divided into two trends, in which the first trend, the inward turn, which is typical for modernism, based on the theme of isolation and the fear of being an outsider. This notion has developed parallel with the modern method of the short story that has the characteristics of a sudden ending and non-clear plot (Olsson 9).

Baja had examined how the reader can be affected by the story and its meaning and how he can percept the story. Hence, this examination works also on how the epiphanic moment included in the story can affect the reader’s understanding of the moment and the story, and how it can affect his perception as well. According to Baja said that fiction really can affect the reader’s feelings when the reader can see, feel, hear, smell...and so forth similarly as the character in the story did. Then, the literary work can be regarded as a successful one.

Though expressing these senses in the narrative such as seeing, feeling, and hearing are just like expressing epiphanies in the story in which the reader can experience the moment as well.

1.4 The characteristics of Epiphany in literature:

The various nature of epiphanic literature has contributed in creating a set of core epiphanic characteristics that supply a comprehensive and wide-ranging review of epiphanic literature (McDonald 99).

1. Antecedent state :

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At this stage, the person goes through different unrelieved feelings such as stress, anxiety, loneliness, depression, anger, confusion, and inner turmoil in which it comes before experiencing the epiphanic moment that will enlighten his thinking and change his feelings to the positive (McDonald 99) .

By taking the example of McDonald participant 'Peter' who had period of anxiety and frustration before he had an epiphany in which Peter dreamt himself telling a good speech in his daughter's birthday. When he woke up he gets a sudden insightful moment that he should make a change and encourage himself to speak a beautiful speech in his daughter's birthday.

2. Suddenness:

The epiphanic moment does not have a specific time or period that a person should wait for it or work to reach it, rather it comes suddenly in which the human being starts see and understand things differently and positively. This type of positive sudden change would contrast with other types of positive changes and transformation that are usually happened gradually in nature (McDonald 99). For example: in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the two tribes were enemies Capulets and Montagues in which causes countless deaths of family members as well as other citizens of Verona. However, Romeo and Juliet loved each other and wanted to marry but this feud between the two families stands against their love. When the two Romeo and Juliet suicide, until that the feud is resolved between the two families .The deaths of their children make the families had an epiphany that this feud was not worth losing more lives (epiphany in literature).

3. Personal Transformation:

Epiphany is an experience varied according to a person's life and perspectives in which it makes a deep positive change and transformation in the self-identity (McDonald 99).

For example: in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the protagonist Scrooge in the story was a pessimistic and a harsh man with all other people. On Christmas Eve, ghosts show Scrooge how his bad attitudes hurt the people he loves. Consequently, the journey that Scrooge had with the ghosts made him had an epiphany, in which he realized that he would not live a life in this manner and changes his outlook.

4. Illumination/ Insight:

Epiphany is an enlightened moment of a person's awareness of a new thing or thought he previously had been blind to. In other words, "The person experienced a significant insight, which had the effect of illuminating elements of self-identity that had once remained in darkness" (McDonald 99). For example: in the story of 'The Story of an Hour' by Kate Chopin, the protagonist in the story had an epiphany that enlightens her life.

5. Meaning- making:

Epiphany is considered as a very significant experience in the individual's life, because it provides profound insights (McDonald99). For example: In Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451, the protagonist, Guy Montag was a firefighter, and he had an epiphany after he burned the books without questioning. In his epiphany, he realized that books are not the enemy and that led him to quest for knowledge (what is epiphany).

6. Enduring nature:

The fact that epiphany is a momentary experience, though the change and transformation it brings to the individual's personality are lasting. For example: in the story "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" the protagonist Stephen experience an epiphany in which he realized that he did not want to continue his life as a priest, instead he wanted to change his life to be a creative as an artist.

1.5 Function of Epiphany:

We can say that a literary work has an epiphanic moment, when the reader reaches a certain point in the story where a character (usually the protagonist) experiences insights, awareness, or realization that enlighten his understanding, in which events in the story start to be seen through the new character awareness (A.Baker).

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According to Baja, the concept of Epiphany has two kinds of functions. *The negative functions* in which are “Negative qualities are for example overemphasis, “choppiness” (22), and that it disturbs the course of the narrative” (Olsson 11). The second type is *the positive functions* of using epiphany in which they are “a structural device, which signals for example a climax or a recapture of the past” (Olsson11).

In general, the use of this concept in literary works is that the author intends from including epiphany in the story can be confined in the following objectives:

1. To make a transformation in the character self-identity.

In which we had an example of ‘the story of an hour’ that the protagonist Mrs.Mallard had an epiphany that led her to discover her freedom, self-identity, and her value in society.

2. Creating a turning point in the story events (plot) through the sudden new awareness.

As an example, Shakespeare in his famous play Hamlet in which the protagonist Hamlet was over-thinking of taking a revenge from his uncle who killed his father. When the hero was on the ship going back to England, at this moment Hamlet had an epiphany that made him recognize that his revenge is not a wisdom deed his going to do, and that he should go with the current instead. This epiphany was a turning point in the story, and it changes the main purpose of the hero in the story which is to take his revenge.

3. Also, this sudden insight could be used in the story in order to change the one character’s view towards other characters, events, or places.

As an example of this kind of epiphany function, in the short story *Miss Brill*, written by Katherine Manfield in which the protagonist Miss Brill had this flash of an epiphany when she was happy of being a part of the season in the Jardins Publique and she was looking at people around her in the park which gives her a very happy feeling towards the scene. But, a sudden insight comes up to her head which makes her recognizes that all those around her are only actors doing their roles, and even though she is standing in a crowd of people but still she feels alone . This epiphany that the protagonist had, changes her view towards other characters and the place where she was and even the event itself.

4. Epiphany could be also used to indicate the ending of the story.

For example, we can find this kind of function in the short story of *Eveline* by James Joyce in which the protagonist Eveline had an epiphany from past memory that led her to change her decision to escape with Frank, and this event in the story indicates to the end of the story in which the protagonist was paralyzed of taking any decision.

1.6 Types of Epiphany :

The Powerful moment of epiphany raises the individual awareness and allows him to gain positive thinking after a period of anxiety, confusion and stress as well as it opens the mind to more clearer and helpful things that would provide the human being with happiness, and relief. In analyzing the moment of epiphany, literary critics said that the analysis of this spiritual manifestation changes according to the object of the study, whether the focus on epiphany is as someone really experiences that moment (a lived event) or epiphany as an experience that is written by someone (a text). In addition to, the third type of epiphany is related to the reader's epiphany towards a text (critical reading). Also, Baja Morris in his book *Epiphany in the Modern Novel* mentioned another type of epiphany entitled the retrospective epiphany

A. Epiphany as an experience (a lived event): The epiphany is considered as a vivid experience or a lived event, when the focus of the literary analysis is on an epiphany of a character that experienced it at a certain point in the story (Sharon151).

For example, we focus on the character Scout in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The character Scout while she was going back to home one evening she had an epiphany in which she realized the importance of what her father was teaching her about equality and kindness, regardless of the color of the person's skin is.

B. Epiphany as a textual record of that experience (a text): In this type of epiphany the analysis focus will be on a written text talk about someone's own epiphany experience, or a writer who wrote about an epiphany as an experience of someone (Sharon151). For example: the Irish writer James Joyce wrote about an

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epiphany experience in his short story 'the dead' in which he wrote about the hero Gabriel who experience an epiphanic moment after he attended a birthday party in which in this party he felt his life is tedious, then in his way back to the home he realized that his going to die anyway, and that made him changes his view towards life.

C. Reading Epiphany (a critical reading): reading epiphany related to a new epiphany that the reader himself experienced while reading a text, in which he sees something in or through that text that is considered as a critical moment. Thus, this moment of realization helps in enlightening other parts of the work that the writer did not talk about, in which leads the reader to create his own critical view about that text differs from all other critical views (Sharon152).

Thomas De Quincey provided an example of this type in which he discussed the Book V of Wordsworth's The Prelude. "In his Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets (1862), De Quincey remembers a night in the hills near Grasmere when Wordsworth, gazing at a star, explained the psychological process he wished to portray while writing this passage But De Quincey then speaks of his own private epiphany: "This very expression, 'far', by which space and its infinities are attributed to the human heart, and to its capacities of re-echoing the sublimities of nature, has always struck me as with a flash of sublime revelation" "(Sharon 152). This epiphany that Quincey had is a revelation that he experienced through his reading of Wordsworth work in which it enlightened other sides in The Prelude that not mentioned by Wordsworth in his explanation in the hills, and Quincey epiphany is considered as a new critical view of Wordsworth The Prelude.

D. The retrospective epiphany:

According to Baja the retrospective epiphany is "An epiphany that emerges from a memory" (qtd. in Olsson 10). Baja's view of this type is that the significant sense of the person's memory appeared after its occurrence not when it happened, that means once he remembered that memory it contributes in awakening a new and sudden sense of consciousness or feelings (Olsson 10).

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As an example, we had the epiphanic moment of the protagonist Eveline in the short story of 'Eveline' by James Joyce in which the epiphanic moment emerged from a past memory that Eveline remembered her mother's words to take care of her family.

Conclusion:

American literature went through many periods, but the focus in this chapter was mainly on the period of Realism and Naturalism (1870- 1910) because they were the main literary movements in the late nineteenth century, and it was led by famous writers such as Kate Chopin, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells. Ireland on the other hand saw a cultural revival known as the Irish literary renaissance in the early 20th century. It helped in developing the Irish language and culture, and was led by notable writers such as James Joyce and Douglas Hyde. We also attempted to cover all the aspects of the literary concept epiphany, its definition, various characteristics, its types, functions, as well as its importance in modern fiction.

**Chapter Three: A feminist reading of the use of
epiphany in 'Eveline' and 'The Story of an Hour'**

1. Introduction

Both James Joyce and Kate Chopin have used the concept of epiphany in their stories 'Eveline' and 'The Story of an Hour'. This theme is not the only shared thing between these works, but also their feminist-related themes and backgrounds as freedom and self-identity. In this chapter, we are going to conduct a feminist reading of epiphany in 'Eveline' and 'The Story of an Hour'. Also, we will include an analysis of the themes of self-identity and freedom of the protagonists Eveline and Mrs. Louise Mallard and how they are related to epiphany. Finally, there will be a discussion about the futile epiphany in both stories, and a conclusion in which the findings will be introduced.

2. Feminist representation of Epiphany in:

2.1 Kate Chopin's 'The Story of an Hour'

Kate Chopin represented a recognized voice of women's rights and issues in the 19th century. She didn't consider herself a feminist writer, but her works are the best example of her feminist views. "In his introduction to *The Complete Works of Kate Chopin* (1969), Seyersted asserts that the "reason why editors turned down a number of her stories was very likely that her women became more passionate and emancipated". He maintains in his *Kate Chopin: A Critical Biography* (1969) that "The Story of an Hour" is "an extreme example of the theme of self-assertion" (qtd. in *Conjured-Up* 297).

In this story, the protagonist Mrs. Mallard realized how her marriage stole her freedom and deprived her of her own personality. Her epiphany occurred when she abandoned herself in her room after the news of her husband's death, where a new strange feeling came to her "There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky." (Chopin 02). She appreciated that new feeling and start viewing the positive side of her new life "She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!." (Chopin2). This moment of epiphany made her aware of the oppression of her husband and environment.

In the story Chopin said "There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women

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believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature” (Chopin 2). These lines reveal not only the new realization of Mrs. Mallard, but also the fact that she was feeling herself an imprisoned woman under the control of others and living for them only. This suggests the social beliefs of the patriarchy that women are inferior to men, and how they were expected to sacrifice their rights and live to serve their husbands or families.

Her status as “wife” is established again in the story and in her life, when her husband came back home alive. She felt that his return is the return of her restricted life, which was a fatal moment for her (Kate Chopin’s 2-3). The masculine discourse that dominates the story is clearly stated when the doctors came to declare the cause of her death: “When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.” This means that men dictate the conditions of Louise’s life and her death too (Kate Chopin’s 2-3). In a work published in 1992, Emily Toth said that “although Louise's death is an occasion for deep irony directed at patriarchal blindness about woman's thoughts, Louise dies in the world of her family where she has always sacrificed for others” (qtd. in *Conjured-Up* 297).

2.2 In James Joyce’s ‘Eveline’

Through the story of ‘Eveline’, Joyce had illustrated some of the internal and external struggles of Irish women at the beginning of the 20th century. He gave this story a feminist perspective through the character Eveline and the patriarchal society she was living in. Many people categorized this work as a feminist work, because of the feminist issues and themes it tackles like oppression, family, marriage, and soliloquy. Eveline was raised in an environment of oppression by her family and society, where it was unknown for women at that time to have an independent life out of family or to make their own decisions and choices. She had to choose between staying in Dublin and accepting oppression or leaving with Frank to explore a new adventurous life of hope and freedom away from Ireland.

The obstacles she faced in her life prevented her from chasing her dreams and ambitions. She had to choose between her father and Frank because that what the social masculine rules dictate (Feminism Criticism). This work is an example of the way patriarchy operates in society, by promoting the male view and considering women inferior to men and under their control. The social beliefs and the death of Eveline’s mother gave her a

Chapter Three: A feminist reading of the use of Epiphany in ‘Eveline’ and ‘The Story of an Hour’

perception of female weakness and made her believe that she is powerless and inferior. This lack of power and self-confidence made her always in need of the existence of a male figure in her life either God or a man like Frank to save her from her paralyzed life. Her decisions were greatly affected by her surrounding environment. That persuaded her that she should be driven by others’ needs, not by her own dreams and ambitions. (Women and society).

Eveline’s father mistreated her because she was a girl. In “The Critical Analysis of James Joyce’s Eveline” T.B. helps us to understand that “in that time period, females were still viewed as less than the worth of men, unable to vote or hold positions of power, thus Eveline’s father wasn’t proud of her as he was of his sons” (qtd. in *Eveline: a Strong feminist heart*). She was mistreated by society too. She worked at a store where she was always judged negatively because of her single status “what would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an edge on her, especially when there were people listening” (Joyce 35).

At the end of the story, Eveline had a moment of awareness before leaving with Frank “A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand: ‘Come!’ All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her.”(Joyce 42).This moment of epiphany changed her views about Frank, marriage, and herself too. She entered in a state of paralysis and felt herself a powerless girl who should belong only to her home in Dublin as an obedient daughter and sister, and that what patriarchy in her society made her believe in.(*Eveline: a Strong feminist heart*).

3.Freedom and Self-identity of the protagonist:

3.1. Mrs. Mallard in Chopin’s ‘The Story of an Hour’

In ‘The Story of an Hour’, Mrs. Mallard was not satisfied with her life “She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength.” (Chopin 1). This was mainly because of her status as a married woman, where women’s freedom was very limited at that time. They were not even allowed to ask for divorce, and their main role was only to take care of their houses. These conditions led her to be unstable mentally and psychologically. The death of her husband and the confusion she had brought her a

Chapter Three: A feminist reading of the use of Epiphany in ‘Eveline’ and ‘The Story of an Hour’

moment of realization about the oppression she was living in, and the new life of freedom that is waiting for her. She appreciated that feeling, and her sadness suddenly turns out to happiness and excitement for the coming days “The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright.” (Chopin 2).

Mrs. Mallard was not in need only for freedom, but also for self-assertion. At the beginning of the story, Chopin mentioned the first names of each character, except Louise who was named “Mrs. Mallard”. Her name was not revealed until after the moment of epiphany when she felt herself free. Being Mrs. Mallard was a burden for her, but now she is Louise because without her husband she is an independent new character. Epiphany occurred when she isolated herself in her room, but when she went outside and discovered that her husband is alive, she lost that feeling of freedom. This suggests that even society in general was against women’s independence and freedom (Freedom in The story).

Usually when a character died, the atmosphere becomes gloomy and mournful, but not in this story. Mrs. Mallard’s epiphany gives the story a mood of hope and happiness that didn’t last long, and changed again in the end of the story (Freedom in the Story). Epiphany made Mrs. Mallard realizing that freedom is what she needs and what makes life worth living. It set her free, and brought her back her own identity that has been lost in an oppressive marriage.

3.2 Eveline in Joyce’s ‘Eveline’

The imagery at the beginning of the story gives a tone of oppression and depression, "Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odor of dusty cretonne" (Joyce 34). Eveline was living in a society that imposed lot of restrictions on women, and considered them as second-class citizens. She had very limited freedom and was fully committed to her social duties. She wanted to leave Dublin to save herself from the violence of her abusive father, and to free herself from the society mistreatment. Her father restricted even her social relationships and was against her relationship with a man named Frank, because he knew that Frank will take her away from him. As a result of all these bad conditions, Eveline decided to escape with Frank, because she thought she will get a better life and more freedom.

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In this work, Joyce had also focused on women’s struggle to achieve self-assertion and independence from the others’ control. Eveline’s character was always influenced and linked to her father, brothers, and later to Frank. This means that she was always dependent on someone else, and cannot take her decisions by herself. She was also a timid and antisocial girl who barely leaves home except for work. Her social relationships were limited, and she had no chance for socializing that may allow her to discover and develop herself as an individual of the society. In fact, even her relationship with her parents was based on fear instead of love and care. A study of identity development shows that most people think that the “network of social relationships retains the sense of identity” (qtd. in Identity Crisis).

Eveline’s relationship with her father, her memories, and the promise she made to her dying mother prevented the development of her character. She wanted to free herself from these things, but the feeling of guilt towards her family prevented her “Her mother has circumscribed Eveline's own life-choices by getting her into the traditional role of a carer by asking her to 'keep the home together for as long as she could’” at the point of death (qtd. in Identity Crisis). The moment of epiphany that Eveline had experienced changed her view towards life and urged her to escape from Dublin. It allowed her to see her paralyzed state and how much she needs freedom and self-assertion to be happy and satisfied about herself.

4. Futile Epiphany:

4.1 In Kate Chopin’s ‘The Story of an Hour’

The protagonist Mrs. Mallard can be considered as an example of the American married women’s issues in the late 19th century. She was unhappy in her marriage with Mr. Brently who imposed many restrictions on her, and she was confused even about her feelings towards him “and yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not.” (Chopin 2). These circumstances made her in need of a moment of epiphany to understand the reality of her situation and what she wants in life. When she got the news of her husband’s death at first, she felt deeply upset and showed a different reaction “She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone.”(Chopin 1).

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Mrs. Mallard isolated herself in her room, where she sat in her armchair watching the natural scene outside the open window. During that time, she experienced a moment of awareness, and a new feeling of freedom visited her “There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name.” (Chopin 2). She felt happy for her new life as an independent woman. She realized that the death of her husband set her free from his control and oppression.

Mrs. Mallard found herself ready for the new life as a free widow, and stand up of her armchair to face the world out of her room, “She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.”(Chopin 3) .When she left her room, she faced the unexpected truth that her husband is still alive. His view at home again brought her a deep shock and disappointment for losing the recently discovered freedom, which led her to death.

The doctors believed that she died of joy “When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.” (Chopin 3),but her monologue and Kate’s description of the events make the readers believe that she died of the shock for losing her new free life, and all the opportunities that were waiting for her as a widow. Unfortunately, Mrs. Mallard’s epiphany was futile, and her joy didn’t last long but turns into a strong and fatal disappointment. The only freedom she got at the end was the eternal freedom of death.

4.2 In James Joyce’s ‘Eveline’

Epiphany can be considered as a kind of solution to paralysis, which allows the characters to see the reality of their situation. This moment of awareness does not necessarily lead to a solution or change, but it can leave the characters imprisoned in a state of paralysis. In this case, epiphany is known as a futile (useless) epiphany. Joyce was known for this type of disappointing and negative epiphanies. The protagonist Eveline had an insisted need to escape from Dublin, and strong hope for a better future with Frank. She was confused whether to leave the city or to continue her miserable life there “She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food” (Joyce

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35), but her promise to her dead mother to take care of the house and the family was a heavy responsibility on her shoulders and gave her a feeling of guilt.

Eveline got a chance to escape with her boyfriend Frank to Argentina. She wanted a better life as a respected woman in society "People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been." (Joyce 36). She experienced two moments of awareness. Before leaving she had a flashback of her past memories with her family and the promise she gave to her mother "She knew the air Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could" (Joyce 38). These memories brought her a moment of awareness and made her decide to leave. Later, when the moment of leaving came and she was about to board the ship, Eveline felt paralyzed and failed to move on "A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand: 'Come!' All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her" (Joyce 39). This moment of epiphany made her realize that she belongs to no other place but her home in Dublin, and that eloping with Frank will not necessarily change her life for the best.

Her family, her responsibilities, and the social and religious norms are some of the things that prevented her from moving forward in her life. Her fear of the unknown and the possible coming difficulties was stronger than her desire for freedom. Eveline realized that marriage will not necessarily change her life and lead to happiness because her role would be the same, a wife and eventually a mother. Also, if she would run away with Frank, society would always be judging her negatively, and if she would ever come back home, her father's violence would most likely be worse than before and her life would be tougher (Eveline: a Strong Feminist Heart). She did not pray to God to guide her to what is best for her, but "She prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty." (Joyce 39). Eveline failed to overcome her fears and to break the social norms of Dublin. Thus, her epiphany was completely futile and left her imprisoned in paralysis "passive, like a helpless animal" (Joyce 40).

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the concept of epiphany in the two short stories shows some similarities between the two. Both stories represent feminist works that reveal some issues of American and Irish women at that time. The moment of epiphany is the main theme that relates these two works. After comparison, we found that epiphany can be considered as a feminist-related theme that served the same role as feminism in these works, or a tool that helps feminism and the feminist writers Joyce and Chopin to make the protagonists aware of their oppressive lives and environment. The oppression that Eveline and Mrs. Mallard were facing made them searching for a solution, and the moment of epiphany came to help them and open their eyes to the way patriarchy is depriving their rights and identities. Without it, they would not be able to realize or think of changing anything.

We also found that Eveline and Mrs. Mallard share almost the same problems as being victims of their male-dominated societies, and the same ambitions for freedom and creating independent personalities. Both of them had experienced a moment of epiphany, but unfortunately their epiphanies were completely futile and did not lead them to any solution or positive change in their lives. It kept Eveline imprisoned in her paralysis and led Mrs. Mallard to death.

**Chapter four: The Formal Aspects of the use
of epiphany in 'Eveline' and 'The Story of an
Hour'**

Introduction:

The way of using the literary concept of epiphany in literary works could differ from one writer to another. In this chapter, we are going to focus on how and why each writer James Joyce and Kate Chopin used or constructed the moment of epiphany in their short stories, and what are the literary techniques such as symbolism are used as signs to indicate what the epiphany is going to be about. Moreover, in this chapter, the focus of the study will be on what type of epiphany is used by each writer in both short stories. The two writers James Joyce and Kate Chopin used different types of epiphany in their works in which Joyce has used the retrospective epiphany which is based on old memories, whereas Kate Chopin used the criterion of insignificant which is based on a trivial incident that triggers the epiphany to occur .

1.1 Joyce’s use of epiphany in ‘Eveline’:

It is known from critics in analyzing James Joyce epiphanies in different works such as *Ulysses* and *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, that Joyce’s epiphanies are derived from daily life experiences of ordinary people, in which the epiphany sounds ordinary and not at all revelatory for the readers .Also, Joyce is more realistic in writing his epiphanies in which their meaning mostly about normal things .And his main aim of using epiphany is that the epiphanic moment that a character experience will make the reader experience a new and unusual aspect of life.

According to Olsson study of Joyce’s view of epiphany said that Joyce main focus is on the context that builds the epiphany, then comes how the character needs to fit the context in order to reach to the moment of epiphany (Olsson 20). Moreover, the key of the story is in the understanding of its epiphany.

By shedding the light on one of Joyce’s epiphanies in which it is the epiphanic moment of the protagonist Eveline in his short story ‘Eveline’ from the collection of *Dubliners*. Joyce in his writing to this epiphany he used some symbols, word, phrases, and hints that make the reader grasp what the epiphany is going to be about in the story, and then how Eveline experience this epiphanic moment.

The epiphanic moment that emerges when Eveline remembers her promise to her mother takes place in the middle of the end of the short story. In the short story, Joyce foreshadows the epiphany that Eveline experience

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before embarking on the boat. "She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life about her"(Joyce 38).

"Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing. She knew the air Strange that it should come that very night *to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could.* She remembered the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy". (Joyce 41).

In this point in the short story, James Joyce has foreshadowed to the reader what the epiphany is going to be about in the story in which Joyce gives hints of Eveline's belonging to her home and that exactly what Eveline realized when she remembered her promise to her dead mother.

Also, Joyce repeats some words to indicate the significant points in the story. We have the example of the use of the word 'perhaps' in which Joyce has used this word of uncertainty, in order to emphasis the hesitation and confusion of Eveline's decision to elope with frank. "*Perhaps* she would never see again those familiar things"(Joyce 38). Joyce emphasis the uncertainty of the protagonist thought to leave her house, and that she may not escape with frank, instead she will choose what is familiar to her.

In addition to that Joyce has used religious symbolism as signs that indicate to the epiphany of the short story such as the print of Margaret Mary Alacoque, the sea, Italian music and a yellowing photograph of a priest, all of this symbols indicate to a religious meaning as well as they direct the reader to the epiphany that Eveline has experienced once she remembered her mother's words. The first symbol was the *print of Margaret Mary Alacoque* as a prominent symbol that Joyce has used, in which it is related to Irish Catholic symbol that represents domestic security and piety, and this represents Eveline's doubts of leaving her home and felt her belonging to her city and not somewhere else .

The second important symbol that Joyce has used to indicate to the epiphany in the story is the yellow photograph of the priest who is the friend of Eveline's father. In this symbol, Joyce attempts to emphasize the instability in Eveline's home as well as the conflicting spirituality of Eveline. The interesting idea of the use of this symbol is that it highlights a very important detail in the story in which this priest has emigrated to Melbourne and that could be explained as that the problems in domestic piety will follow Eveline in any

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another place she would go. The third and the last symbol that used as a sign is that Joyce has used the music in different places in the story, in which it represents “the motion of the soul toward life or the call of life to the soul” (Earl G. Ingersoll) and this can explain the music in the story in different places like the Italian music that reminds Eveline of her promise to her mother, the songs of Frank, the ring of the boat bell “clanged upon her heart” (Joyce 42), and so forth.

To conclude, James Joyce depends on the religious context in writing the epiphany in his short story of Eveline in which the protagonist Eveline was seeking new spirituality in her life, and her epiphany could be considered as a moment of divine clarity.

1.2 Eveline’s retrospective epiphany:

James Joyce in his short story ‘Eveline’ uses the type of the retrospective epiphany according to the critic Baja in his book *Epiphany in the Modern Novel*. The protagonist Eveline had an epiphany before she was about to escape with her lover Frank in which she realized that her leaving to a new place (Buenos Ayres) with Frank and let her abusive father alone, it is not a correct decision she took because her real belonging is not somewhere else. Instead, she must stay in Dublin and look after her father and her family, even though she was treated violently from her father.

According to Baja retrospective epiphany is an epiphany that emerged from old memories and becomes significant when the person remember the memory, and not when the moment of the incident happened. Thus, this type of epiphany that Eveline had experienced after she remembered her mother’s words before she died “She trembled as she heard again her mother’s voice saying constantly with foolish insistence: ‘Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!’” (Joyce 41) called a retrospective epiphany.

This memory does not have any significant meaning in Eveline’s life before she had an epiphanic moment. When Eveline became confused about her leaving with Frank and seeking her dream, or staying with her harsh father and take care of him; here, she remembered her mother’s words in which this moment turn to a very significant event in the story. For more clarification, the event of the death of Eveline’s mother was meaningless at the moment it has happened; but at the time she remembered her mother’s words, this old

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memory becomes a very significant one in which led to the emergence of an epiphany that contributes in changing Eveline’s life as well as her decision to escape with Frank.

2.1 Chopin’s use of epiphany in ‘The Story of an Hour’:

Kate Chopin also is realistic in her use of this spiritual manifestation, and that can be seen in her short story ‘The Story of an Hour’. In the story, she derives the moment of epiphany from an ordinary female (the protagonist Mrs. Mallard) and a banal incident of the death of Mrs. Mallard’s husband that triggered this moment to happen. In the middle of the story, Chopin locates the epiphanic moment that Louise has experienced.

Through analyzing the short story, like Joyce; Kate Chopin foreshadows to the reader about the moment of epiphany, and that through describing some actions in the short story that led the reader to think or to guess what the epiphany is going to be about.

“There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her”(Chopin 2).

In this quote, Chopin gives hints about the epiphany to the reader in a shape of something vague is approaching Mrs. Mallard, but still, she did not recognize what was it.

Besides, Chopin repeats some words several times in the story, in which they are related to the meaning of epiphany. In the story, we have many repetitions of the words that Chopin used in order to highlight the significant points in the story. We have the first example of repetition when she repeated the word “open” throughout the story, in which the word open used to emphasize the freedom that comes to Mrs. Mallard, a new life without the existence of her husband. The second example of repetition is the word “free”, in the story, Louise has repeated this word of ‘free’ several times, in which it indicates to the protagonist extreme happiness of her new realization of freedom in her life(structure and style).

Chopin makes other repetition of phrases, in which she repeated in the following sentence “She breathed a quick prayer that *life might be long*. It was only yesterday that she had thought with a shudder *that life might be long*.”(Chopin 3). The repeated phrase indicates the great change that happens in Louise’s life in which she was thinking with fear of a long life, and now she became praying for it (structure and style).

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Kate Chopin uses some symbols in constructing the spiritual moment in the story as well, in which these symbols make the reader grasp the notion of the epiphany in the story. The first symbol is ‘the open window’, in which it is a very significant symbol that symbolized the freedom of Mrs. Mallard. The open window represents “Louise realization of her freedom and independence and the probability that she can lead a life of her own when she sat front of this open window in her room” (W. symbol analysis).

Another symbol that Chopin has used is ‘The armchair’ in which it symbolizes comfort and relief from her restricted life and oppression that surrounded all her life and that the armchair represents the freedom from social restrictions. In addition to that, Chopin uses nature as a symbol in which it is ‘the spring day symbol’. “The protagonist experienced the sights and sounds of the “new spring life” that helps her to get in touch with her own desire to burst forth into a new kind of life” (SOH .symbol). By using nature as a symbol, Chopin assures the importance of the protagonist new life just like everything important in nature such as birds, trees, blue sky patches...and so forth. Thus, all these symbols are used as signs of freedom and this is exactly what the protagonist recognized once her thoughts become clearer and joy full her heart. Moreover, similar to Joyce, the climax of the story was the explosion of the moment of epiphany where everything became clear for the character and to the reader as well.

To conclude, Kate Chopin in her use of the epiphany was almost similar to the way Joyce has used this literary device, in which she was realistic in describing the events of the story and the moment was more ordinary then revelatory.

2.2 Mrs. Mallard’s epiphany (the criterion of Incongruity):

Kate Chopin uses the concept of epiphany in the short story of ‘The Story of an Hour’, based on the notion of the term of ‘the criterion of Incongruity’ as a type of epiphany that the protagonist in the story experienced. The *Criterion of Incongruity* is defined according to Langbaum that “the epiphany is irrelevant to the object or incident that triggers it” (qtd. in Olsson6). In addition, according to Baja the term of *Criterion of Insignificance* is defined as “... how a trivial incident can produce an epiphany. Moreover, these trivial incidents can create a revelation, which to others than the one who had the epiphany; can seem insignificant” (Olsson6).

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Thus, the quote of Langbaum carried the meaning of the epiphany that it is irrelevant to the incident that triggers the spiritual moment to happen. Through analyzing the short story of ‘The Story of an Hour’, Kate Chopin bases on an irrelevant incident that led the protagonist Louis Mallard to experience her epiphany. In ‘The Story of an Hour’ Chopin uses an irony that has triggered Mrs. Mallard epiphany in which she associated the event of Mr. Mallard’s death to the epiphany of his wife, in which she felt that she becomes a free woman and happiness full her heart .

To more illustration, the first scene that the story started with was that Louise learnt her husband’s death from her sister Josephine and Richard her husband’s friend. Mrs. Mallard first reaction was logical and natural in which she wept and felt extremely sad about losing her husband, but then when she went to her room alone suddenly she realized that she became a free woman and her heart was full of joy, “‘Free! Body and soul free!’ she kept whispering” (Chopin 2). Hence, it is clear that there is a contradictory between the sad incident of the death of Mrs. Mallard’s husband, and her insightful moment of being a free woman. “She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.”(Chopin 2).

This epiphany is irrelevant to the incident that triggered it to happen as well as this realization sounds significant only for Mrs. Mallard, whereas it is insignificant for other characters in the story.

Conclusion:

As a conclusion, Both James Joyce and Kate Chopin have similar usage of the moment of epiphany because they both were realistic in writing about the moment in which they both depended in their stories on ordinary people Mrs. Mallard a young married women, and Eveline a young girl of 19 years old. Also, they depended on banal events that make the protagonists experience the moment suddenly, which are Mrs. Mallard husband’s death and Eveline’s promise to her dead mother to keep taking care of her family. Thus, both writers James Joyce and Kate Chopin make the moments sound normal and not revelatory to the reader.

In addition, through analysis, we found that Joyce and Chopin in their writing of the moment of epiphany have used some symbols, words, phrases and hints in both stories in order to indicate to the epiphanies in the story to the reader. Joyce was religious in his use of symbolism in which he has used religious symbols such as

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‘a yellowing photograph of a priest’ and others, whereas Chopin has used non-religious symbolism such as ‘the open window’

Also, the analysis shows that epiphanies take different places in the stories in which Joyce located it in the middle of the end of the story, while Chopin has located epiphany in the middle of the story.

Finally, in the story of Eveline Joyce has depended on religious context as well as being realistic in his writing of epiphany. In the other hand, Chopin in The Story of an Hour did not use religious context in her writing of epiphany, but she was realistic as well.

In the story, Joyce has shown that Eveline’s epiphany shows her belonging to her home; however, Chopin shows that Louise’s epiphany was about being free from her home and her husband.

Concerning the types of epiphany, we found that the writers James Joyce and Kate Chopin were different because each writer has used a different type of epiphany, in which James Joyce has used the retrospective epiphany, an epiphany that happened when a person remembered an important old memory. Eveline in the story had experienced that kind of epiphany, in which she had an epiphany when she remembered her mother’s last words before she died. However, Kate Chopin has used the criterion of incongruity, an epiphany that triggered by an irrelevant event. Louise Mallard had experienced this kind of epiphany in which she had an epiphany after she learnt about her husband’s death. She became a free happy woman and this has no relation with the news of the death.

General conclusion

General conclusion

In this dissertation, we conducted a comparative study of the concept of epiphany in “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin and “Eveline” by James Joyce. Because of the necessity of analyzing and comparing different literatures in the world, the comparative study in literature becomes such a useful and needed study approach amongst student, teachers, and researchers nowadays.

The first chapter introduced some historical backgrounds about American society in the late 19th century and Irish society in the beginning of the 20th century. We found that the two societies went through important historical events such as the American civil war in the United States, the British colonization in Ireland, and many other conditions. These events changed the two societies dramatically and influenced all the domains. At the end of the chapter, we included personal backgrounds of the two short stories’ writers James Joyce and Kate Chopin.

The previous mentioned historical events did not influence only the American and Irish societies, but also their literary production. Chapter two is composed of two parts. In the first part we presented literary backgrounds about American literature and short story in the late 19th century, as well as Irish literature and short story in the early 20th century. In the second part, we included various definitions of the literary concept of epiphany from the point of view of many writers and critics. For instance, James Joyce defined epiphany as the moment when the “soul of the commonest object... seems to us radiant, and maybe manifested through any chance, word, or gesture.” This suggests that Epiphany is a strong rhetorical device that can be used by writers to reveal a character’s growth (Examples of Epiphany).

Chapter three tackled a feminist reading of the use of epiphany in the two stories, and how Joyce and Chopin used their works to express their feminist views and to show their readers the real situation and struggles of Irish and American women at that period of time. Even though the protagonists of these stories had different social status, but they share almost the same ambitions and issues. Both of them were facing the restrictions of

General conclusion

their stricted families and patriarchal societies, and were seeking freedom, self-assertion, and a meaningful existence in their societies.

Epiphany usually comes as a solution to save the characters from their state of confusion and paralysis, but it doesn't always end in a positive way. Unfortunately, this was the case in "Eveline" and "The Story of an Hour". We found that the protagonists' Epiphanies were about to save them from their miserable lives, but their paralysis, moral state, and surrounding society were stronger than their futile epiphanies. In the very last moments they lost their last chances to have a new life as they please.

In the last chapter we analyzed the form in which epiphany appeared in the stories, and how it was used by the authors. We found that both Joyce and Chopin were realistic in their narration of the stories' events and the protagonists' epiphanies, in a way that makes the readers considering it as normal moments instead of revelatory ones. Both writers used symbolism and repetition of some word and expressions in order to indicate when and what the moment of epiphany is about.

Another finding to be mentioned is the type of epiphany used in each story. In "Eveline", the protagonist had a retrospective epiphany that is triggered by a past memory, while in "The Story of an Hour"; Chopin used an epiphany of the criterion of Incongruity.

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