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A Feminist Approach to Women Characters in Selected Irish Fiction

Feministický přístup k ženským postavám ve vybrané irské
beletrii

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Abstract

The aim of this diploma thesis will be an analysis of the representation of women in selected Irish fiction. Both male and female Irish authors whose main protagonist is a woman are examined. Also included in the mix are Protestant and Catholic authors. The traditional role of women in Irish society as depicted in these works of fiction (in both rural and metropolitan settings) will be scrutinized from a feminist perspective.

Anotace

Cílem této diplomové práce je rozbor prezentace žen ve vybrané irské beletrii. Analyzováni budou irští autoři a autorky, jejichž hlavní postavou v díle je žena. Do výběru budou také zahrnuty protestantští a katoličtí autoři. Zkoumána bude tradiční role žen v irské společnosti tak, jak je vylíčena v jednotlivých příbězích (a to jak na venkově, tak ve městě).

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1. Introduction

1.1 The hard situation of women in Ireland

The emancipation of women and their position in society was a great unknown until recently in Ireland. 94 % of the Irish population belong to the Catholic faith but the Church is not an only one reason which affects the situation of women in the country. (Frank 2006: 130)

The famine in Ireland in the 19th century lasted six years and the property had been divided to all children in the family though millions died and more emigrated. However, it did not stop the tradition of marriage at a young age with lots of children. Religion strengthened and sexuality was morally acceptable only for the conception of a child. Otherwise, it was a sin. Saint Mary as the innocent virgin dedicated to her son was the example of the best woman.

The Constitution of 1937 described woman as property of her husband. As a wife she should care for her family and household: sewing, cooking, washing, and raising children. The famine caused a decrease of the Irish population and the assets were inherited only by the eldest child male. (Galligan 1998: 26-48)

Traditionally, Irish families were large and marriage was a significant social and religious ceremony. A strict adherence to the rules of the Roman Catholic Church, which forbade family planning, along with a public policy which made the provision of contraceptives illegal, resulted in families having six or more children. (Galligan 1998: 26)

In the seventies came the beginning of the Ireland's economic growth after the death of de Valera. Some property rights for women as well as the possibility of partial education developed at this time. In 1971 women founded the first liberal group which demanded women's full rights as human beings and not only as a mother or a wife. One of the most influential organizations for women's rights is The National Council of Women of Ireland (NWCII).

In 1979 the government partly allowed the import of contraception to Ireland. All

types of contraceptives were banned before this time. Divorce had been illegal in Ireland until 1998. In 1986 a referendum to permit a divorce was presented. The Catholic Church was strictly against this proposal and the influence of the Church prevented the passage of the referendum. The conditions for separation had been really strict. For example only women who were proven to be an object of domestic violence were allowed to get divorced.

One of the most controversial topics in Catholic society to this day is abortion. The Church says humans do not have the right to terminate life. Irish make journeys to foreign countries because abortion is illegal in the Northern Ireland as well as in the Republic.

On the one hand the campaign against abortions and divorce were organized but on the other hand the laws concerned to the availability of contraception were gradually liberalized...in 1992 the voters voted for the right to travel abroad with the aim of abortion. (Moody 1996: 289)

The big step at women's emancipation came when Mary Robinson became the Irish president and six years after Mary McAleese has been elected as the next president of Ireland.

"The female voice" started to gain strength but the political parties continue to ignore this. The women are still in a much smaller representation than men at some high positions. For example more women are more teachers than professors and more are lawyers than judges (Moody 1996: 272-307) although this is a problem all over the world and not just in Ireland. Women in Ireland have a subordinate position psychologically and it is not up to government to change it, but the whole society has to change the view of position of women. Irish have a long way to the full emancipation but changes are happening and it is a good sign.

2. Elizabeth Bowen: “Summer Night”

2.1 Life of the Author

She was born in 1889 in Dublin to Anglo-Irish parents. She was the only child of a middle-class Protestant family. Her father was a lawyer in Dublin. He was very thoughtful, calm. Her mother was very sociable, cheerful. She was very immediate and carefree and Elizabeth had to take care of herself. She was raised up as a classic Anglo-Irish girl. They lived isolated in their manor houses and did not belong to English or Irish. They lived by their own rules and the nationalism was not so important. When she was five her father suffered mental breakdown. He spent many years in a treatment centre and the relationship between mother and daughter became close. When she was thirteen her mother died and it was the biggest shock for her.

She and her father moved to England and she started to visit girl's schools. Other girls had problems with "girlish" behaviour. In 1918 her father remarried and she started to spend summers with him in Ireland. In 1923 she married her good friend Cameron. When her father died she led the life of an exile because she was travelling from County Cork in Ireland to Oxford. She was acclaimed in England but she was very happy in Ireland. In 1930s she started to write political articles where she criticised the cultural and political situation. Her personal life was very colourful she had several affairs with men and sometimes even with women. After her husband death she had financial problems and she had to sell the County Cork. She died in 1973. (Hoogland 1994: 11-29)

She wrote many successful novels, for example in 1935 *The House in Paris* about motherhood or Bowen's best known work, *The Death of the Heart* (1938) and the next one about sexual differences called *The Heat of the Day* (1949) or the novel *A World of Love* about love and death. Her last novel was *Eva Trout* where she came back into her early stylistics methods. (Hoogland 1994: 11-27)

Bowen was born in Ireland in 1889. Her Protestant family came from the Anglo-

Irish gentry. They lived isolated in their manor houses and did not belong to English or Irish. Her father suffered from mental illnesses and Elizabeth reflected her painful childhood experiences in her fictional novels and stories.

2.2 Analysis of the Main Female Characters

There are four women described. Women are representing unhappy wives, innocent girls or strict religious older women.

2.2.1 Unhappy and Looking for Love Emma

The main character in the story is the Anglo – Irish woman Emma. Love has bitterly disappointed her. A marriage without sexual and emotional satisfaction forced her to engage in an extra-marital love affair. Women in Ireland were married without sufficient knowledge of her husband or even love. Women had to ensure their life. They needed suitable husband who could take care of her family and their future children. The age, temperament or history of his life was not important for her family.

Woman had to be pure and innocent. The marriage without love, understanding was full of unhappiness and unfaithfulness. Wives wanted to feel love and tenderness. Their affair did not take serious way but it was only way how to feel like a woman for them. Rich women used services of their servants and some of them tried to find true love.

Men and their mistresses were not unusual. Man in patriarchal society was able to do almost anything. Women were trapped in their marriages, they were humiliated, they were beating but they cannot go away. They were wholly dependent to their husband. Unmarried woman meant shame and the end of social prestige.

In the story her husband is called only a Major, man without name, without identity. Their alienation was caused by the war in which he had to serve for the British service. The desperate woman is seeking fulfilment in Robinson. Looking

for passion, love, romance and escape from the everyday stereotype, she puts her family life at risk. Emma wants to live for herself. She needs somebody to take care of her, someone who can listen to her and understand her. Nevertheless everything that she has risked is useless because she finds that Robinson is an insensitive man. As Emma puts it:

Yes, here I am. She added: The night was lovely, speaking more sadly than she knew [...] Her naivety as a lover. She could not have said, for instance, how much the authoritative male room put, at every moment when he did not touch her, a gulf between her and him. (Bowen 1999: 270)

She realizes only then that physical love-making did not fulfil her. The thoughts of home and family life are beginning to emerge in her mind.

Aunt Fran's so old, too old, it's not nice. And the Major keeps thinking about the war. And the children don't think I am good. I regret that. (Bowen 1999: 272)

Instead of an adequate response, the reaction comes in the form of cold male animal desires and lust. Robinson destroys her dream of fulfilment and the end of her life, in hopes of finding true love.

When he had headed her off the cytherean cerrain she thought for a minute he had broken her heart, and she knew now he had broken her fairytale. (Bowen 1999: 272)

2.2.2 Deaf and Innocent Queenie

The next woman in the story is Justin's deaf sister Queenie. Her deafness moves her somewhat away from the outside real world. She keeps to her own world in her silence with no rules and no moral principles. She feels like a princess in a castle.

He had to share with Queenie, as he shared the doll's house meals cooked on the oil stove behind her sitting-room screen, the solitary and almost fairylike world created by her deafness. (Bowen 1999: 248)

She is a woman in her middle age, but only with a young girl's experience. The

slight naivety may endanger her and destroyed her teen age mind. Her brother, Justin, tries to protect Queenie from disappointment.

Queenie is contrasted with Emma, a satisfied woman. Thanks to her deafness she does not become influenced by the social system or by World War I. Dreaming about the fantasy world means everything for her.

2.2.3 The Old-fashioned Aunt Fran

On other side of the society of Irish women, Aunt Fran, a strict and strongly religious woman, recognizes only morality and piety. This elderly woman suspects that Emma has gone to her lover and may spread some uncertainty to the life of Emma's daughter.

Never looking for love like Emma or dreaming about a handsome man like Queenie, Fran is portrayed as a distant spinster who tries to raise her two nieces to a life of strict obedience and the steadfast faith of God.

2.2.4 Energetic and Naive Vivie

The older daughter Vivie is a young girl full of energy and naivety resembling a small bird. The similar nature to her mother appears as a great problem for her aunt. This is upbringing trained the girl to a world of grey sadness. Vivie appears ready to defend herself and refuses to restrict her mind only to praying.

But Aunt Fran, as though the child were on fire, put into motion an extraordinary strength - she rolled, pressed, and pounded Vivie up [...] so like her mother's were left free to move wildly outsider the great sausage. (Bowen 1999: 276)

2.3 Conclusion

The story ends with Queenie's innocent fantasies of love. It seems like a happy ending for a short story full of so many different characters. It remains open if Queenie will be Robinson's next victim. Elizabeth Bowen called Robinson's residence Bluebeard Castle. The mythical Bluebeard was a man who murdered each of his wives. Robinson is in a metaphorical way like Bluebeard.

Bluebeard murdered his victims physically and Robinson killed Emma psychologically. Robinson destroyed Emma's ideal about romantic love because he wanted to spend only one night with her.

3. James Joyce: “Eveline”

3.1 Life of the author

James Joyce was born in 1882 in Dublin. His father tried all kind of professions and his mother was a pianist. His father liked an alcohol and they did not have enough money because of it. He studied at University College at Dublin. He wanted to start new life in Paris but his mum was ill and he came back to Ireland. He moved to various cities in continental Europe, including Zurich during the First World War. He is really famous novelist for his experimental use of language. The collection of 15 stories called *Dubliners* published in 1914 and the part of this collection is a short story “Eveline”. He came back to Paris after World War I. and one of his the most famous work *Ulysses* was published. He had big problems with his eyes and he was almost blind. Joyce died in 1941 in Swiss where he escaped from the war. (Bowker 2012: 1-32)

3.2 Analysis of the Main Female Character

A young girl with many dreams but also with many responsibilities is analyzed.

3.2.1 Family Bounded Eveline

Eveline remembers the old days. She and her brothers and her sister used to play out in the country near to their homes. A crippled little boy was always warned them when her father came for them with a cane. Everything is gone. Her mother died and the oldest brother Ernest too. Children, with whom she played, became adult and somebody of them moved. The fields were replaced by new houses.

This nineteen year old girl works in a store to earn money for the family. The domineering father appropriates the whole salary of her. Eveline’s brother Harry is still traveling around Ireland for his church decorating business. She remains with their despotic father alone and must take care of him. The siblings from the neighbourhood are another company. Eveline repeatedly recalls time when her mother was alive and her father was not so bad and did not drink so much.

Eventually Eveline meets a sailor named Frank. A young man falls in love with her and offers to Eveline a better life in Buenos Aires where he moved to. He impresses Eveline with the adventure stories from his travels and promises that he takes her to Buenos Ayres as his wife. An attention which she feels from him is unknown from her mother's death. The father finds out about the relationship between them and he is very angry. He does not agree with it and tells to Eveline that Frank will leave her just like other sailors. Frank and Eveline meet secretly after that and plane a departure to Buenos Aires.

Eveline is still sitting at the window and hears a song that her father played when her mother died. She keeps her a promise to her mother on her mother's deathbed. She promised to take care of her old father. The young woman realizes that this demand was unfair because everybody deserves to live and not just survive. Frank would help her to start a new life with marriage, children and a family of her own. An unhappy girl goes with Frank to the pier where boat departs but she cannot leave a Dublin with him. She is not able to break her promise to her mother and leave her father alone.

Eveline as a typical young girl from Ireland who has dreams and ideas about her life is disappointed by reality. Eveline, as well as many women in the 20th century in Ireland, has disrespect position in the Irish society. Eveline's life's mission is taking care of her father and her two little siblings. She will never have a chance to study or go abroad. Instead of showing gratitude, her father treats with her like with an inferior human being. He acknowledges only his two sons. "When they were growing up he had never gone for her, like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl." (Joyce 1983: 48)

She works in the store with other women. Since Eveline is single, women from the town do not respect her either. It was not unusual in Ireland that she surrenders her salary to her father. Everything belongs to man in the family. Eveline mainly lives from the money earned by her brother Harry. The vision for a better life has come with a sailor Frank. Frank is her chance for a new start. The

USA, where Buenos Aires is located, has a completely different mentality and she feels a chance to have a full life in the company of people who will respect her.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married – she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. (Joyce 1983: 47-48)

Eveline is influenced by Irish society regarding marriage and the duties a woman has towards her family. A dream of her is to get married and start again. Eveline is trapped in a vicious circle. She wishes to leave a country with Frank but on the other hand she is afraid of the gossiping Dubliners about her escape with a strange man. She knows that her father will not be self-sufficient without her help.

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 whenever there were people listening. (Joyce 1983: 49)

At the end Eveline's courage is pulled back and she has decided to stay with her father. Eveline is not partly ready to leave home. The beautiful memories about her childhood and about her mother force her to stay there. Another possible reason why she decided to stay in Ireland could be the unclear relationship with Frank. She never talked about her feeling towards him. He was only the ticket to a different life.

3.3 Conclusion

The story, which has been written in 1914, a few years before women gained the right to vote, solves the classic questions of the status of women in society in the rural areas.

The fiction describes the transition from the girl's innocence to premature woman's responsibility. The duties of girls and women were relentlessly and the oppression of women by men was noticeable.

Joyce describes a problematic relationship between the father and the daughter

and between the woman and the man. The father and society make it impossible for a girl to decide about her life with heart and open mind. Girl's courage, which subsides at the end, means a loss of her own identity because she stays with her father without any aspiration to achieve a better life. "She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition." (Joyce 1983: 51)

4. James Joyce: “The Boarding House”

4.1 Analysis of the Main Female Characters

Independent and strong mother and her young and easily influenced daughter are described.

4.1.1 Manipulative Madame Mrs. Mooney

Mrs. Mooney was a butcher's daughter from Dublin. Her husband had been her father's employee. They opened the butchery on their own in Dublin. However, Mrs. Mooney's husband became an alcoholic after the death of his father-in-law and he physically attacked her. The woman realized she could not stay with him. They started to live separately.

As the beginning of a new era of her life she bought the boarding house. The money from the sale of butcher shop helped her. The boarding house became a place of residence for clerics, musician artist or tourists. Mrs. Mooney led the hotel morally very strictly and responsibly.

Her daughter Polly and son Jack lived in a house with her. The daughter Polly worked in the city in the office for a short time. Her drunken father wanted to visit her often but Mrs. Mooney banned it. Polly could not continue working. She had to stay at the hotel in the company of men and a cleaning lady.

A lot of men arrived to the hotel. Mrs. Mooney allowed Polly to get closer with one of them. And because Polly was a flirtations girl she had no problem with it. Mr. Doran was an elderly and experienced man. Mrs. Mooney watched their relationship in calm to see how the affair evolves. She was waiting for the best moment for her intervention.

Mrs. Mooney was all well thought out that they had sex together. She knew that her daughter's affair could be ended with the money from Mr. Doran but it was not her goal. She wanted a good husband for her daughter. Mr. Doran was a

respected man but also of a weak personality. He could not afford a bad reputation by the affair with young woman. He would be endangered in his social position and at work too.

Mr. Doran thought that Polly was a beautiful girl who did not have a very good background but was really beautiful. The story ended with Mr. Doran thinking about his options. A decision of him was not indicated but we know that the marriage is the only way out with Mrs. Mooney putting on extreme pressure.

Mrs. Mooney is a woman who has undergone a difficult marriage. Even as a young woman who married a butcher she has to become independent. She helped her husband in the butchery. After she had lost her father, her husband became violent alcoholic. She stayed with Polly without her useless husband's support. Her daughter and her son went with their mother. Mrs. Mooney had to protect them and ensure them. She has become hard and materialistic woman.

As a single mother was trying to bring her daughter into higher society in Ireland her manipulative behaviour is not fair. Manipulating a weak Mr. Doran, she waited for the right moment to intervene into a forbidden sexual relationship of her Catholic daughter. The unsuspecting man had no chance to get away from the affair. Mrs. Mooney knew that the innocence of her daughter was taken and that she had been seduced. This relationship was partly created by Mrs. Mooney who forbade her daughter to work in the office because of a drunken husband but it was not only one reason. She wanted to have a daughter under her supervision and the daughter started to work as a male companion in the hotel.

Mrs. Mooney had been called "Madame" satirically by her lodgers. It is a name for owner of the whorehouse. The prostitute in her whorehouse was her flirtations beautiful daughter and her mother brought her to this occupation. We can see there is no interest in daughter's reputation by Mrs. Mooney but in money. She knew about their affair from the first moment and she did not stop it. This relationship was entirely under the command of Mrs. Mooney. The relationship

was controlled by her.

Polly knew that she was being watched but still her mother's persistent silence could not be misunderstood. There had been no open complicity between mother and daughter, no open understanding but, though people in the house began to talk of the affair, still Mrs. Mooney did not intervene. (Joyce 1983: 458)

Everything depended only on the marriage with man who could provide for the welfare of Polly. The marriage seemed just like an arrangement. The moment, when she struck to the relationship, made her calm and sure about her decision to get her daughter married with Mr. Doran. Mr. Doran as a honest man was trapped in her intrigues.

Mrs. Mooney sent her maid, Mary, for Mr. Donovan as a demonstration of her power and superiority. It showed complete confidence in the expected response of the desperate man. She was enjoying this moment almost. The plan succeeded.

Some mothers would be content to patch up such affair for a sum of money, she had known cases of it. But she would not do so. For her only one reparation could make up for the loss of her daughter's honor: marriage. (Joyce 1983: 460)

4.1.2 Impresible Young Polly

Polly Mooney is the second most significant character in the story. A young girl influenced by her mother, she is told by her mother that she could not meet her father and had to leave her work in the office so she did it. Polly began work as a hostess of men. She flirted with them and made them happy and let them feel the pleasure of the presence of a young and attractive woman around them.

She got closer with Mr. Doran but she feared that her mother's pressure might destroy the relationship. It seemed like she is fragile, innocent woman and Mr. Doran also saw her as innocent when she came to his room with crying. At the end of the story, marriage with Mr. Doran shows that intrigue of her mother did not mean that Polly meant anything wrong and that she became a materialistic and calculated person too.

Polly sat for a little time on the side of the bed, crying. Then she dried her eyes and went over to the looking glass. She waited on patiently, almost cheerfully, without alarm, her memories gradually giving place to hopes and visions of the future. Her hopes and visions were so intricate. (Joyce 1983: 463)

4.2 Conclusion

This story refers to marriage and the life in Dublin. The original concept of marriage as a pledge of love instead becomes a game full of intrigue. Marriage seems more like a business here where the social norms are important and love and respect to each other seems irrelevant.

The story in which a mother reveals her true face and becomes only a business woman takes notes on the strength of social status. Just because of fear of criticism from society Mr. Doran has decided to get marry with a girl who is not really the best for him.

The story comes from the city Dublin and the Boarding House is set in the urban culture respective to this city. The mixture of many social classes interacts and interferes with each other. An adaptation to standards is the only way how to live correctly in *the Boarding House*, how to survive in Dublin and maybe how to live all over the world.

5. Mary Lavin: “Happiness”

5.1 Life of the Author

Mary Lavin was born in 1912 in East Walpole in Massachusetts, USA. Her parents were Irish immigrants. When she was 10 years old her mother took her back to Ireland. The family lived together for several years in Dublin. In 1926 her father went to County Meath where he was a manager and they lived separately.

She attended the University College Dublin and graduated with a degree in literature and pursued a doctorate in English too. She started with writing while at the university for many American periodicals, for example *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

In 1942 she married to old friend William Walsh but in 1954 her husband died. The novelist stayed with their three daughters and a lot of work on their farm in County Meath which was bequeathed to her by her father.

Before her second marriage in 1969 she published two novels. The masterpieces were her short stories. *The Tales from Bective Bridge* won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. In 1961 Mary Lavin received the Katherine Mansfield Prize. She was a President of the Irish Academy of Letters for two years. The short story collection *Happiness* was written in 1969. Mary Lavin died as a “Saoi” of Irish artist (affiliation for major artist) in 1966 in Dublin. (Clarity 1996: np)

5.2 Analysis of the Main Female Characters

The main character is good-tempered and loving mother.

5.2.1 Beloved and Devoted Mother Vera

The narrator, one of three sisters, living on a farm in County Meath, remembers her mother. The mother was very strong and an open personality. She grew up in a strictly Catholic family. Her mother and the grandmother of

girls behaved like the imperious and fretful old women who demanded, and received, much of her daughter's time. Vera was trying to avoid mistakes. She told the girls about her father who was a role model for her future life although she did not consider him lucky because of her mother.

The family lost their father due to an unexpected and short illness. Vera tried to be an optimistic example for their daughters but the period after her father's death had shown them what enormous pain their mother felt for losing a beloved man. They had worried about their mother's life while travelling throughout Europe with the aim of trying to think of other thoughts.

Vera, a widow and mother, still tried to put to the girl's heart to realize a feeling of happiness. She always defined this feeling with lot of ideas and situations. The girls did not understand why their mother asks about the happiness of people at their deathbed but happiness became really important on the way to death for Vera. Bea, one of the daughters, who accessed the mother's attitudes about happiness, became very sceptical. She even called happiness a kind of fraud.

At the time of mourning due to loss, a very close friend of the family came, father Hugh, from the local monastery. The priest, who was nice and sensible man, became a fixed point in the life of Vera. Daughters grew up and got married and she could stay alone on the farm without them but with him. During the girls' visits they suspected the love of the priest to their mother. He never admitted it and mother perhaps had not even realized this option.

On her deathbed, their mother began to panic that her life could not end on Earth if she still could not cope with the memory of the death of her husband. A comforting word from the priest does not help her but the assurance from the always hesitant daughter Bea about her end with the world which let her go and die in peace.

Vera is an autobiographical character of author herself. Just like Vera, Mary Lavin

had lost her husband and stayed alone with her three daughters on a farm in County Meath. However, in contrast to Vera, Mary Lavin married with her long-time friend who had been the local priest.

If the author is considered as a character Vera, her attitudes can be seen in the story like an effort to explain her feelings after her husband's death and subsequent alignment with the local priest. "Father Hugh, ever since our father died, had been the closest of anyone to us as a family, without being close to any one of us in particular – even to Mother." (Lavin 1999: 401)

Vera is still trying to explain the essence of happiness to her daughters. She tries to instil this feeling from the examples and definitions with the aim of teaching them how to find happiness in difficult situations in their lives:

Her theme was happiness: what it was, what it was not, where we might find it, where not, and how, if found, it must be guarded. Never must we confound it with pleasure, nor think sorrow its exact opposite. (Lavin 1999: 419)

But misunderstood by her daughters, about what happiness should really mean can be seen as a gulf between Mary Lavin and her family after the death of her husband. The daughter Bea was even considered happiness as fraud.

Vera took her daughter after the loss travelling throughout Europe. In this period her girls felt a great fear. Despite her eternal optimism after their father left, she lost her pleasure for life. Her daughters were even worried about her life and perhaps even more about her soul.

Locking our damp hands together, we started out again. "She wouldn't!" I whispered. "It wouldn't be a sin!" Secure in the deterring power of sin, we let out our breath. Then Bea's breath caught her again. "What if she went out so far she used up all her strength? She couldn't swim back! It wouldn't be a sin than!" (Lavin 1999: 408)

In this part the very strong power of religion can be seen. This stance includes Catholic families throughout Ireland.

In contrast to the strong religion is a memory of her dying husband. Spring flowers such as daffodils are a symbol of new life, effervescence. She felt in them a bigger breath of life than in prayers for the survival of her husband, as if she knew that even God will not help her in this situation. She tried to handle this difficult situation.

But when I came into the hall, that nun [...] Reached out and grabbed the flowers letting lots of them fall – I remember them getting stood on. “Where are you going with those foolish flowers, you foolish woman?” she said. “Don’t you know your husband is dying? Your prayers are all you can give him now.” (Lavin 1999: 410)

The relationship between father Hugh and Vera can also mean something religious. After the death of her husband, Vera spent a lot of time in the church and during these moments created a rapprochement with the priest. The connection between the priest and God caused the hope to be closer to her deceased husband.

Vera told her girls about their grandmother. She was a woman who was not the maternal type. She was for Vera a woman who was thinking primarily of herself and was wholly unable to appreciate anyone else.

5.3 Conclusion

If it is an autobiographical fiction, Lavin here describes the difficult relationship between mother and daughter and now as a mother herself, she is trying to do things differently and instruct her daughter’s to avoid the old mistakes.

Vera’s daughter Bea appeared sceptical of her mother's attitudes and narrative in the first part of the story. Gradually, her sensitivity and a kind of sixth sense could be understood as her mother's vision of happiness. Sisters called her an oraculum which suggests her great emotional range. Only a young woman understood a mother's fear on her deathbed. She understood her cries.

“They ought to be put in water anyway,” she said, and, leaning over the edge of the bed, she pointed to the floor. ...”Don’t let them nun take them, she’ll only put them on the altar. And God doesn’t want them! He made them for us – not for Himself!” (Lavin 1999: 418)

Bea realized the association between daffodils which her mother brought to their father before his death and their continuity with the present. The mother has associated daffodils with life and a nun in the hospital destroyed any thought of freedom and life. Bea was referring to the efforts of understanding essence of happiness, a link that every realization of the truth must pass through periods of doubt.

The narrator, as one of the Vera’s s daughters remained, anonymous, with no name or nickname. The description showed a love and respect to Vera but it was not clear if the narrator received the learning of her mother as Bea did. Contradiction and uncertainty was likely felt in the author's own attitudes and feelings.

6. Brian Moore: *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*

6.1 Life of the Author

Brian Moore (1921–1999) was born into a Catholic family in Belfast. His family was large and his father was a surgeon and lecturer, while his mother was a nurse. He wrote under various names.

Moore won a lot of prizes, for example he took over an Authors' Club of Great Britain Annual First Novel Award, The Beta Sigma Phi or The Annual Quebec Literary Prize in 1955. The novel of Judith Hearne was successful all over the world. For example the *Washington Star* headlined the Judith as a Discovery of the Year. At the start there were some problems with publishing but Moore was very sure of his work.

I make no apology for its being about an uninteresting woman. Miss Hearne is meant to bore and irritate the readers at times. Real people do. There's far too much of a vogue at the moment for books about one-eyed men, whores and other assorted weirdies - for phoney sensationalism - which I feel has little or nothing to do with life as it is lived by most of us. (Craig 2002: 130)

Moore was very influenced by his hard childhood at school, he had problems with authority and he remembered his problems with the headmaster. He thought that the school rejected his personality and everything different was punished by birching. (Sampson 1998: 111) However, corporal punishment, conformity and cowardice were and are complementary and continuing factors in the education of most Irish Catholics (Sampson 1998: 111)

During the Second World War he visited Belfast and it was bombed by Germans because of the big harbour and ships there. He worked near the Marseilles because he could speak French very well and he should find French collaborators to punish them. he served in the British intelligence. It was condemned by his father because he had an aversion against the British. He worked for the United Nations in Poland. He sent information to British Times and Irish Times about killing the

priests because of the communism. Murderers were not judged for it and he tried to share it into other countries. He was politically involved and it was the reason to kill him. In 1948 he emigrated to Canada. He started to work as a proofreader on a Montreal newspaper and became a journalist. When he lived in Montreal he started to suffer from depression. He was exhausted by his writing. He relaxed by drinking a Gin, just like Judith Hearne did. Brian Moore almost died in Canada during the swimming. A boat ran into him and he had a very serious head injury. He married a Canadian woman from Britain there. He was not happy in Canada. “[...] Moore is apparently detaching himself from his marriage and his life in Montreal, as he once again embraced a new beginning in another chosen place of exile.” (Sampson 1998: 110-124)

Moore had a very supportive mother. She wanted to know about every reaction to his novels. It was really hard to cope with his mother's death. He considered her as a very religious woman but before she died she told him that she did not believe into a life after death and there was no God or heaven for her. He had very problematic relationship with his father. He was not good enough for him because his older brothers were doctors, sisters were nuns and one of his brothers were Catholic priest. He criticised Catholic church and their strictness. It was a reason why his mother's admission was so surprising. He and his siblings were led to the faith of God from their childhood. (Sampson 1998: 117-120) “[...] the subliminal ties to family are more powerful than any later relationship, even marriage, because the emotions were formed on a level below the intellectual or conscious.” (Sampson 1998: 120) His mother gave him some advice about writing. She wanted him to delete sex about Bernie and the maid for example. (Craig 2002: 131)

Moore was very demanding regarding the question of success. “[...] the ten year test - that the book must remain in print for at least ten years.” (Sampson 1998: 113)

Moore considered himself a loner, a man who did not belong to any group or nation. One of the most stressful periods was the filming of the novel *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*. He had several problems with the producer in New York. Travelling was exhausting too. (Sampson 1998: 122-139)

Moore wrote novels which deal with the dilemma of an exiled Irishman. These men in *Answer from Limbo* or *Gentlemen's Quarterly* lost their loyalty to their wives or "Irishness". He moved to Malibu in 1966 and remained there for the rest of his life. He thought in UCLA, remarried to a French woman from Canada and he had one child there.

6.2 Analysis of the Main Female Characters

The book focused to the theme of the life of lonely people. Moore's novel is written in the first and third person, and therefore the author writes as a man about a woman.

There are seven women in the plot of *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*. They are different and they describe the typical surroundings in Ireland by their own perspective and the place of living.

6.2.1. The old and Unhappy Spinster Judith Hearne

A woman around 40 years old, Judith lives in Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland. The place in Belfast where she lives is the real one. Brian Moore took this view from his real life. Judith lived next door. It was his street and the church, which she attended, was the church where Moore's sister was a nun.

She lives in a boarding house in a small room. She earns money for her apartment lease from a regular annuity from her deceased aunt and from a couple of piano lessons given to small children. Judith had spent her entire youth in the care of her aunt. Her parents died when she was little and her aunt as the only relative took her under her wings. Her aunt sent Judith to the nunnery of the blessed Heart of Jesus. By emphasizing Christ's heart the fact of the true humanity of the Son of

God, Jesus Christ is underscored. Humanity is manifested not only by reason and volition, but humanity full of emotion as well. The pierced Heart of Jesus can also refer to a key element of the Catholic faith. This is Jesus's sacrifice on the cross. The object of veneration is not the heart in the physical sense but the mental.

Judith decided, after returning from the monastery, to learn typing. She found a job she enjoyed and filled her. Unfortunately, after a sudden stroke of her aunt she decided to leave everything and take care of her aunt. She took it as a tax for the care dedicated by her aunt. In spite of the deteriorating condition of her aunt and doctors' advice to send her aunt to the institute, she decided to take care of her at home. Her aunt's conditions left difficult memories in her and the end of the aunt's life was full of hallucinations, seizures and loss of the consciousness about the real world. Judith was not a woman who would wish to stand on the threshold of her fortieth year alone, without husband or children.

Nevertheless, whenever she met a young man in her youth he did not seem good enough to her aunt. Time passed and Judith remained alone. She did not have to deal with financial issues time up to this point in her lifetime. Her aunt never talked about money, and after her death, Judith found that the family was not doing well financially and she had to live modestly.

Her Aunt D'Arcy had never discussed money. A lady does not discuss her private affairs, she used to say. And the D'Arcys never had to look where their next penny was coming from. And then her aunt had said that Judy wouldn't worry, there would be plenty until the right man come along and even if he didn't. (Moore 1983: 32)

However the interest from her aunt was indeed very modest, and therefore Judith must count every pound to make ends meet. Also this saving money affects her appearance, and as she strives to minimize eating to not spend money, she becomes skinny. Her clothes are fashionably obsolete. However, thanks to her care and thrift, her clothes look decent and well preserved. In combination with the jewellery which she received from her aunt, one might think that she was a wealthy lady. As the men at her interest, Mr. Madden, noted.

She's a real lady, Miss Hearne, a fine woman. And smart too, she's interested what goes on in the world. She's not just like you and May and the other jerks in this house. She's got class. And dough. And what's more, she's the kind of woman if she likes you, there's nothing she wouldn't do for you. (Moore 1983: 101-102)

This mistaken belief brought her immense suffering. Judith lived in a small and cold room in the house whose owner was Mrs. Moira. Moira had some other tenants and her adult son who let himself to be supported by his mother under the guise of writing a great poem that would bring him fame and the eternity of his name. The most important tenant for Judith was an older man in his upper 50s, a brother of Mrs. Moira who came from America. Other tenants did not like Mr. Madden because he repeatedly praised the environments of America and Ireland seemed to him too small and backward. Judith was immediately impressed by this man and she tried to endear him through her interest in his storytelling.

Her inexperience and naivety brought only misery. Judith dreamed about a life with him, believing that Mr. Madden could fall in love with her. She, a lonely woman, could finally find love and understanding. However, thanks to her appearance, Madden saw in her only an opportunity for business. He thought that she was wealthy and could be his business partner.

The poor woman had no idea about something like that and enjoyed his interest in her. The man was a widower who had raised money from an accident in America where his leg was injured. Mr. Madden wanted to invest it in his own business. He came back to Belfast from his daughter's house in America because his presence was a nuisance for her. His daughter's behaviour was a huge blow for him. His daughter was the complete opposite of Judith who sacrificed her youth for her aunt, family, and had taken care of her until the last moment of her life. Nonetheless, for daughter was the presence of his father after his injury a burden and her husband had no sympathy for her father at all.

In Ireland, it was a matter of course that the family takes care of each other and children remained with their parents to help them in old age, thanks for their upbringing and care. The next notion is that an Irish woman can get married to an older man, for the most important idea is ensuring the family. Widowed or elderly man can get married with a younger girl if he is able to financially care of her and her family. Yet when the woman is older she is just a lonely spinster for the whole society. The Catholic Church was founded on strict rules of the importance of family. The Hearne family as very devout Catholics was brought up to respect their parents. Judith saw this poor man as being abandoned; she would like to take care of Mr. Madden, just she used to take care of his aunt, as a ruined soul who could find peace at her side as her husband. Judith knew only the monastery walls at her aunt's house for her entire life so some of her ideas seem immature and juvenile.

While Judith realizes her age, she seems unaware that her lack of beauty is her burden privilege. From an early age her aunt used to tell her that beauty was not given to her so much.

She watched the glass, a plain woman, changing all the delightful illusion of beauty. There was still time: for her ugliness was destined to bloom late, hidden first by the unformed gawkiness of youth, budding to plainness in young womanhood and now flowering to low maturity in her early forties, it still awaited the subtle garishness which only decay could bring to fruition: a garishness which, when arrived at, would preclude all efforts at the mirror game. (Moore 1983: 21)

Therefore the woman tried to endear around by her good manners and interest in new things. The man invited Judith for coffee, a walk and even they were together in the church for Mass.

Yet the fact which opened her eyes was a reason of her failure when she got drunk in her landlady's house. Mr Madden was not interested in her in any romantic sense. She was only a business partner for him.

Ran from me. When I ran after him. Humiliated myself for him. He rejected. He turned away. But my own fault, yes, I'm the only one blame, no I'm not, that horrid sister of his, telling him heaven knows what awful tale [...] Now, listen, Judy. You've got this all wrong. I took you out - sure. You had nobody else around. I liked you, I thought you were a fine woman. I thought you and I were interested in the same things. But I didn't make any passes, did I? I didn't give you any ideas. Let's get that straight? (Moore 1983: 134-137)

Judith started with drinking in difficult times, when she took care of her aunt. It was an escape from reality for her. She found herself in dreams and imagination. Alcohol gave her a feeling of security and warmth. No one would expect that this decent-looking lady would be an alcoholic.

A drink would put things right. Drink was not to help forget, but to help remember, to clarify and arrange untidy and unpleasant facts into a perfect pattern of reasonableness and beauty. Alcoholic, she did not drink to put aside the dangers and disappointments of the moment. She drank to be able to see these trials more philosophically, to examine them more fully, fortified by the stimulant of unreason. (Moore 1983: 107)

It often happens that when someone alone without anyone who is supportive, alcohol is the way-out of difficult situations, as if a bottle of whiskey was the only certainty in his empty and unsatisfied life. Drunkenness gave her the opportunity to escape the feeling of loneliness, pain and suffering. Although she struggled to keep his addiction at bay after the conflict with the landlady, she could not bear it and got drunk. Her first reaction to alcohol was a state of joy, she sang and was happy, but the escalating amount of alcohol brought her only depression and ultimate self-destruction.

In the article "The Question of Gendered Voice in Some Contemporary Irish Novels by Brian Moore and John McGahern", Siobhan Jacqueline Holland seeks to determine whether it is even possible that a man could adequately express the feelings of women as the heroine of his fiction. Holland does not highlight Moore as feminist author but as an author who seeks greater realism of the story through the use of first-person narratives.

Judith Hearne's feminine voice is enabled by Moore's citation of a range of discourses which construct the illusion of an abiding gendered identity for the protagonist but the novel enhances the illusion that her voice is 'real' by suggesting that it is Judith Heame herself, as the agent for her own voice, who mobilises these citations. An author's voice introduces her memories, fantasies and dream, the reader has a small view into her soul and her feelings. We can recognize her feelings beneath her strict communication (Holland 1997: 20) She cites the discourses of Hollywood movies, and of the romantic.

Moore has also focused on the conversation between Judith and James Madden. Even when a woman appears to be silent beside this man she is talkative. She tries to strike up a conversation. She does not want to lose contact with him. Her ingrained behaviour recedes into the background and desire for love and society comes to the foreground. (Holland 1997: 25)

She shut her Missal and offered up a special prayer to the Sacred Heart, asking Him if this could be the answer to all her novenas and good intentions: if thus man who knelt beside her might not be the one Sacred Heart had chosen Himself to help her in her moments of pain and suffering, to uphold her and help her uphold the right, to comfort her and act as a good influence in her struggle with her special weakness. (Moore 1983: 61)

The expression of the heroine is very cultivated. She uses French idioms and tries to be interested in society. She mentions her studies at the prestigious convent in Armagh. He looked sideways at Miss Hearne.

‘You been to college? You seem like an educated woman.’ ‘No, I'm afraid the sacred Heart convent in Armagh is as far as I went’, Miss Hearne said pridefully, because, after all, the Sacred Heart convent was the best in Ireland. (Moore 1983: 55)

The woman tries to find some interesting topic for conversation because everyday topics such as children, husband and housework are unavailable to her. French is also associated with Judith's romantic imagination of France where she wishes to spend her honeymoon with her new husband. Her imagination has changed after

her meeting with James Madden. He loves America so she would like to visit Niagara Falls with him. She is willing to change everything with this vision of getting married and becoming happy.

Judith occasionally fills her loneliness with "eyes" that look at her. The strict eyes of her aunt, which are more critical than comforting. The consolation in the difficult situation is brought by the buttons of her shoes. It cheers her up; she does not feel alone or lost. There are the eyes of Jesus which see everything and Judith cannot hide even her shrouded body and He knows all of her secrets.

She looked down at her long pointed shoes. It was always comforting to look at them when tears threatened. The little buttons on them, winking up at her likewise little friendly eyes. Little shoes eyes, always there. (Moore 1983: 78)

Women in Judith's age as well as other women in Ireland are socially judged not by herself alone but by her husband. A woman takes her husband's social status. "Head of the house. That's the teaching of the Church. What the man says goes. Now, in the States, women want it both ways. They do no work and they want to be boss as well." (Moore 1983: 27) It is extremely difficult for her not only to make a living in a society, but moreover to also fulfil herself in friendship and understanding.

Her only "friends" are family O'Neill. Friends are given in the quotation marks because even Judith realizes that the family does not perceive her as a respectable friend. Quite contrary, she is invited to them more out of compassion. They regret this lonely old lady. Judith often imagines being related to this family, loved and not being alone. Even though that she knows that O'Neill's children deride to her she visits them because it is her only distraction and the only time to soak up the feelings of home. "Shaun O'Neill lifted his head from a book and glanced at the ornate, painted clock on the mantelpiece. 'Five minutes' he said. 'Or maybe ten. Let's say ten minutes at most before the advent of the Great Bore.'" (Moore 1983: 70)

General women's issues are not good for her; she has neither family nor husband so Judith is interested in anything that surrounds her. She is opened to information about the world, trying to be interesting, to feel the attention of the surrounding at least for a while. Therefore, she is lying to Mrs. O'Neill about the refusal of Madden's proposal of marriage. At least for a while Judith wanted to feel what it is like to be in control at the situation and to gain the admiration of her hostess.

The faith had an immense influence on the population and it reflected the behaviour and in the hierarchy in the society. Catholicism is the stringent faith for which is important the morality and one's devotion to God. One of the certain obligations was to attend Sunday Mass. All over the world people believed to God but society in Ireland was very strict about it. The local priest was very disconcerted that the inhabitants of the country had lost faith and the highest reverence for God. He criticized the youth, who disregard God in the strictest sense. Northern Ireland was still a part of the United Kingdom with the dominant Protestant religion and the Republic of Ireland which is separated from Britain and the main religion is Catholicism.

I mean the disrespect to the Holy tabernacle and the Blessed Body of Our lord here in it. I mean coming late for Holy Mass. I mean inattention, young boys giggling with young girls, I mean running out at the Last Gospel before the Mass is over [...] I mean the shocking attitude of people in this parish that won't give half an hour to God of a Sunday morning but that can give the whole week to the devil without the slightest discomfort. (Moore 1983: 62)

Sunday was such a feast for all the people who visited one another after the Mass, wearing and showing their best clothes. Judith was accompanied by faith throughout her life and as a good Christian she behaved well in society. Nonetheless, her manners proved not entirely true after a conflict with her landlady. Judith is now an alcoholic and alcohol is the only chance to escape from her moments of anxiety. Her alcoholism began at the time when she took care of her sick aunt and the psychological burden was no longer bearable. Alcohol transfers her into another world - happiness comes first, so that the feeling of

loneliness is gone. However, with larger amount of alcohol, she becomes uncontrollable and does not remember what she was doing.

Religion was begging God's pardon on a morning like this one when the drink had made your mouth dry and the thing that happened last night with the serving girl was painful to think about. (Moore 1983: 62)

The preparation for drinking indicates Judith is not a novice in this addiction. Judith changes into sleeping clothes, knowing, that she would not be able to do it later. But she is doing it just not to be seen by the Most Holy Heart, Jesus, as if she felt ashamed for her body and demeanour. She rather completely turns the picture of her aunt around not to be plagued by reproachful eyes. After this she felt alone, so that the only thing she has is her belief.

O Sacred heart, please, I need Your strength, Your Help. Why should life be so hard for me, why am I alone, why did I yield to the temptation of drink, why, why has it all happened like this? O Sacred heart, lighten my cross, You know it was hard, aunt dying after all those years caring for her and You, only You, know the things I wanted, the home, children to raise up to honour and reverence You. O Sweet Jesus, You have shared my suffering. You know, that I love You, please Dear Lord, give me a sign, give me strength. (Moore 1983: 122)

The connection between Judith and Jesus who had to fast for forty days in the desert can be compared with Judith who cannot sufficiently eat due to lack of money. (Holland 1997: 28) Like Jesus, who had to undergo such a test, it is likewise undertaken by Judith. Nevertheless, the break-even situation comes when Judith feels that neither Jesus nor the priest hears her problems and that she is alone. "She had seen His face. A weary face, His cheek resting in the palm of His hand, His eyes shut. He's not listening, her mind cried. Not listening! (Moore 1983: 172)"

Solving the question of loss of faith caused by the desperation of a lonely woman constitutes one of the most important motives of this novel. Faith was the only certainty that she had around herself and now she does not even believe that

something could help her. The sin in the form of the idea that God does not exist has already met her several times.

‘God!’ Miss Hearne said bitterly. ‘What does He care? Is there a God at all, I’ve been asking myself, because if there is, why does He never answer our prayer? Why does He allow all these things to happen? Why?’ (Moore 1983: 201)

Then she always asked God for forgiveness because her mind was obscured by alcohol.

She knelt beside the bed and made an act of contrition. ‘O, my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest my sins above every other evil because they displease Thee my God Who are so deserving of all my love - and I firmly purpose - by the help of Thy Holy grace - never more to offend Thee - and to amend my life.’ (Moore 1983: 118)

Desperation drives her to desperate acts. She tries to visit a local priest Father Quigley who does not want to listen to her problems and sends her away. She desperately plunges on the statue of Jesus Christ, on the small door, that separated her from Him, as if the door symbolized the entrance and certainty of faith. Her faith is gone, and instead loneliness, alcoholism, and her mental exhaustion are the reasons why she ceases to believe. “‘I hate You’, she said, her voice loud and shrill in the silence of the church.” (Moore 1983: 209)

At that moment Judith falls unconscious and wakes up in a treatment centre where she met her old friend Edie who had brought her to drinking years ago. Judith had always considered Edie as a poor girl and now she herself is located in the same treatment centre where she ended up. Judith is alone without God, without anybody who could understand her.

If you did not believe, then how many things would seem different. Everything: lives, hopes, devotions, thoughts. If you do not believe, you are alone. But I was of Ireland, among my people, a member of my faith, then no people. (Moore 1983: 221)

Judith was trying to fit into society for her whole life, trying to find her place. She wanted a husband and a family. Yet there was only solitude for her. Her loneliness is even greater and the loss of privacy comes, because people who take care of her are not doing it out of love but for the money. The only thing she can think about is the way how to understand to God again. “ ‘And You. Were You ever? Is this picture the only You? It is here and You are gone. It is You. No matter what You aren't still is part of me.’” (Moore 1983: 223)

6.2.2 Mrs. Henry Rice, Gossiping Boarding House Owner

The owner of the Boarding House, Mrs. Henry Rice, a proud, greedy woman spoils her adult son. She tries to prove to all tenants that she is the richer and therefore better. The conversation between the female characters, Mrs. Rice and Judith is the focus of Holland's study. The owner of the house is much more relaxed during the conversation. The author points out that independence of Mrs. Rice, unlike Judith with her financial difficulties, lets her to feel like a leader, almost like a man so that she can afford to speak openly. (Holland 1997: 23-24) The features that she identifies emerge, not as the signs of an essential gendered linguistic core, but as the contingent effects of women's marginalisation within patriarchal power relations.

The conversation between Judith Hearne and Mrs. Henry Rice demonstrates that conversations between women are not solely structured by gender. The women are participating in an economic exchange which Mrs. Henry Rice controls as landlady and as a result their conversation is structured hierarchically. (Holland 1997: 24)

Mrs. Rice disagrees with Judith's romantic interest in her brother and she also gossips about Judith's drinking problems. She becomes one of the excuses for Judith's drinking lapse again. Despite her self-confidence the true master of the house is her son. She is exploited by him. Similar to Judith's aims with Mr. Madden Mrs. Rice is happy to take care of Bernie, it lets her think to be needed and it is the way to avoid the loneliness after her second husband is dead. She is limited in the question of cosmopolitan thoughts and like typical Irish woman.

She prefers certainty, family and social morality. In fact, she is really interested in gossiping and getting personal information about her tenants.

6.2.3 The Satisfied Irish Wife Mrs. O'Neill

This woman represents the classic Irish woman, happily looking after her family in the affluent suburb of Belfast. Mrs. O'Neill is a housewife with a successful husband, children and an orderly life which Judith longs to have for herself. She envies Mrs. O'Neill's motherhood, marriage internally and would like to be in her place.

Moira O'Neill at the end of the story helped Judy. Her family paid for her treatment in a sanatorium and attends to her needs. She a perfect woman of strict morality and it is her obligation to take care of the weak woman. It is what God says. Moira is glad to have the feeling that the poor Judith could not survive without her assistance. Mrs. O'Neill is gaining a sense of uniqueness and sense that everything she does is the best. She believes everybody could take an example from her behaviour. When Judith came to visit her she is desperate and drunk. The perfect mother and wife poured a full glass of alcohol just like she wanted to get Judith into the darkest bottom, where Judith could not survive without her help. After this she could help her bounce back and she would appear like a loving Samaritan.

6.2.4 Prim and Prejudicial Teacher Miss Friel

She represents for the Irish society a very conservative woman and strict teacher, a spinster fully committed to her work. She lives alone just like Judith, but unlike our heroine she looks satisfied with her life and does not want to change it. During the whole plot the teacher's attitude is negative and obstinate. She condemns Mr. Madden for his modern views. She considers Mr. Madden and Judith Hearne as alcoholics who should not share the same Boarding house with her and that they should move out.

6.2.5 The Maid Mary

This young innocent girl was sent by her poor family from a rural community to do service in the house. This situation was not uncommon for some poor Irish. Poor families sent their daughters to the house of affluent people to make money and to clean and do laundry and cook. It was not a very rare situation when naive girl was seduced by her boss. She has to be his silent mistress, and these story of these young girls always ended in the same way and unfortunately it could not be happy end. When the unfaithfulness is discovered, the girl is sent back home. She is disgraced while the man is forgiven. In severe cases the girl is sent home pregnant and has to care of her bastard child by herself because her family has rejected her.

Mary got into a similar situation with a son of Mrs. Rice, named Bernie. This lazy, but very clever man seduced the maid. The naive girl maybe falls in love with him, but for Bernie it was only a diversion. Two lovers were caught by Mr. Madden and the girl is forced to acquiesce to this old man under the threat of disclosure of romances between her and Bernie.

Mr. Madden's face bled red with anger. 'What do you mean, want something? What the hell do you think this is a whorehouse? A kid of her age, I should.' His fingers tore the blanket away from her body. Master of the room, he smacked, open-handed, leaving red marks on her tights. 'Dirty little hoor!' (Moore 1983: 51-52)

Mr. Madden then rapes Mary. Unfortunately, the truth comes to the surface and the girl has to leave her place of employment but Bernie as well as Mr. Madden are allowed to carry on any consequences.

Mary is described as a young pretty girl and whose name even symbolizes her innocence. She submits to Mr. Madden as a dependent to his sister, the landlady, for without education she can hardly find any other work.

6.2.6 Aunt D'Arcy Who Raised Judith

Judith's aunt raised her in the strictest Catholic faith. A woman, who after the death of Judith's parents, raised her niece, did not consider Judith as very pretty as

or talented. Repeating these notions left in Judith deep memories. ““And then, speaking of the great beauties, you'll never have a quarter the looks of your poor mother. No, you take after the Hearn's, more's pity. And they were nothing to write home about. Plain.”” (Moore 1983: 108)

She did not allow of the men to get closer to her niece nor allow her to be happy with anybody else, so that she would not be left alone in her old age.

She looked away from her aunt's accusing stare, remembering that her aunt was hard to please, and a little selfish too, if the truth were known. You wanted me all to yourself, she told the picture. You never let me meet anyone and you tried to put everyone off me. And it's all your fault that I am where I am today, being insulted by some fat old landlady and living in furnished rooms (Moore 1983: 96)

Her aunt was scared of the vision of loneliness and she did not want to let her niece go away. The moment when Judith became an adult and wanted to be independent, her aunt became ill. Judy sacrificed her best years for caring of her health. The hard end and death of her aunt left her alone, mentally oppressed and with a tendency to an alcohol. She pictures alcohol just as a cure for her suffering.

6.3 Conclusion

The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne is a truthful novel dealing with the hidden dreams and passions of a middle-aged woman who has never had any luck and did not meet anyone who would like to spend his life together with her. Under the pressure of circumstances she is adrift in the nightmare of alcohol and loss of faith. At the end of the tunnel there is no light visible.

Moore considers *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne* as a melodramatic story. The woman is unhappy about her losing of faith, she is desperate because she is alone, she has no husband. It is full of misunderstanding. Mr. Madden thinks that she is rich, Judith is dreaming about the wedding with Mr Madden on the other hand and both are wrong. (Sampson 1998: 109)

I feel that Judith Hearne I had written about somebody losing faith and it then occurred to me to ask what was the education, the religious education and the background, which maybe destroyed that woman's life - she was a "Sacred Heart" girl. And so I became interested in the schoolmaster character and in how much that kind of education makes cowards of us all - because we have to live in the community; we can't just walk away from it. That, I think, was the real background to the end of Judith Hearne [...] (Sampson 1998: 107)

It is a tragic and pathetic description of a life Irish spinster. A woman lives in a small room in a Boarding house and never gives up her chances to be married and part of any family. She meets a man who has returned from America. He wants to settle in Ireland again and dreams about establishing his own small hotel. He hopes that the spinster can help him to start his business. When he finds out that an old spinster has no money, he loses his interest in her and Judith is again just on her own. This disappointment has huge consequences for her and she starts drinking again and doubting her faith in God. Her life ends tragically.

The novel shows the strict and traditional culture of Irish society. Women live in a patriarchal society and everything depends on her family background. Their place is at home, with children, with her husband. Judith, just like any other woman, hopes to meet men, has a family, children. Judith would be happy to stay with Mr. Madden, although he is not young or rich but then she is rejected even by him so Judith is destroyed.

In the film which Judith and Madden watch together, the English Queen appears so that politics briefly appears in the novel:

The house is applauding. Miss Hearne and Mr. Madden sat with their hands with their laps. No handclaps for her, a foreign queen. Let them give back the Six Counties and then we'll clap. Irish people, a disgrace, applauding like that. But Protestants what can you expect, Scots protestants, black-hearted all. (Moore 1983: 86)

We can see the rootedness of the Irish in their history and Catholic Church. Therefore, it is no wonder that Judith feels cheated by God because she was a good Catholic and there is no promised happy life, man and family. She goes through the sadness, humiliation and pain. Her faith is tested and questioned many

times. All her life she went to church, she acted according to the Bible; she sacrificed part of her life tending his emotional aunt and still is not happy. She could not find understanding and peace in God so she tried to find peace in alcohol. Alcohol not only destroys only her body but even her soul and her psyche. Maybe it is not the worst end we could imagine for Judith. She was not far away from committing suicide and in the sanatorium she is alive at least with the people who also have problems and pains too.

7. Edna O'Brien: *The Country Girls*

7.1 Life of the Author

The Country Girls is a first novel by the Irish writer Edna O'Brien. Edna O'Brien was born in 1930 in a small town Tuamgraney in Ireland. The town was full of pubs but no libraries were there. Her father was a drunk and her mother admired America and emigrated there for a while. Her family were strict Catholics and the faith was very important. Family owned land but nobody took care of it and the family suffered. Edna was the youngest child and she was adventurous. She was not afraid to show her emotions. She had an affair with a local reeve. She attended Covent school where she had a relationship with a nun but it could be deemed effort to gain proximity of women who reminded her mother care. She worked as a pharmacist's assistant in Dublin and fell in love with an older man. Her family was against it and it was the reason to rush into marriage with a man she barely knew. She was 23. Her husband was also a writer and their relationship was not happy. They moved to London and gave birth to two sons. In 1962 she decided to leave her husband. This novel was published in 1960.

In an audio interview by Don Swaim she talked about her childhood, about her strictly religious mother and drunken father. "My mother was very hard on me. I grew up full of fear both from the church and from the hell." (Swaim 1992: np)

Edna O'Brien has written about fifteen novels, poetry and short stories too. Ireland was not ready for her honest confession of the lives of women not only in villages but also in the city. Some of her novels were banned and labelled as obscene and scandalous. *The Country Girls* has been published as the first book of trilogy called *The Country Girl*. The next two novels about Cathleen and Baba have been called *The Lonely Girls* and *Girls in Their Married Bliss*. The novels described women moving from teenagers into adulthood. There were big problems with their publishing. The books were very popular but not in Ireland due the criticism of religious education and because of sexuality. (Schiff 2013: 14)

7.2 Analysis of the Main Female Characters

A clash of old and young is described by five female characters.

7.2.1 The Rebellious Caithleen and Baba

The novel is written from the perspective of a fourteen year old girl named Caithleen who lives in a small village in Ireland. She lives with her mother, father and a helper Hicky on a small farm. Her father is a drunkard and her mother has to bear all the suffering. She starts study at Boarding schools and before leaving, she falls in love with an older man. The plot is concerned with growing up and about the search for an identity. Getting through the first romantic experiences is not easy every time. Cait and Baba are becoming independent young girls in Ireland. These two girls move into a city. They study, work and recognize that the adult world is not easy. Mr. Gentleman is not the man for Cait and their lives are not always the same as they had wanted. There are 4 women in the story in addition the nuns at Convent school.

The two main protagonists, named Caithleen and Baba, are products of rural Ireland. Caithleen is very smart and gets a scholarship. She goes to school with her friend Baba. The girls from better-off families and their fathers were able to pay for the school. Confident Baba has the lead position in the friendship between two girls. Unfortunately, the celebrations of success with Cait's mother do not come. It is blown away by sad news about her tragic death, her mom drowned.

Tom O'Brien, Caithleen. He's drowned. In his boat, and, and. She would rather be truck dumb than tell me, but I knew it by her face. And Mama? I asked. She nodded her poor head and put her arms around me. (O'Brien 1964: 49)

Cait is crushed and before the start of school remains at Baba's home. It introduces us to the situation in the Brennan family. Mother Martha is very superficial in contrast to the modesty of Cait's mother. The Maid Molly is punished and humiliated in contrast to the helper Hickey who was treating very kind as well as the hard working and calm man Mr. Brennan. Cait's father tries to

change and stop drinking but the relationship between the daughter and father is already destroyed. He is forced to sell the farm due to debts. Hickey, the day labourer and girl's child love, leaves the village. "He'll have to go, I'm afraid. There's no more work for him. It was impossible. Hickey had been with us twenty years; he was there before I was born." (O'Brien 1964: 55)

In this rough time Cait is experiencing new sensations. The married man nicknamed Mr. Gentleman has charmed her. The description of his handsome looks is full of childlike innocence. Cait gets closer with him during shopping day. He invites her to the restaurant and the young girl is infatuation by him, wine, food and sitting in a beautiful restaurant. The feelings between them are platonic.

Arriving at the Catholic school is hard for Cait. The cold and curt attitude the strict of nuns makes days at school sad and lonely. Cait falls more and more under the influence of Baba. Baba does not abound with the intelligence and humbleness as much as Cait and she decide to leave school. Baba inspires Cait to find a better life in the city. Baba writes inflammatory words about nuns so the priests and the girls are expelled. The book was banner because of the openness of the feelings and sexual experience and other a little bit vulgar allusions to that time.

Once upon a time there was a cock and a fox and a pussy cat and they lived on an island far away [...] It wasn't a long story and though I didn't understand it fully I knew that it was dirty and double-meaning and that he was a dirty, horrible, stupid man (O'Brien 1964: 164).

After returning home, Cait hopes to see Mr. Gentleman but instead he is with his wife abroad. The Baba's helps girls with the living in Dublin and girls are leaving the village again. Baba is studying and Cait works as a shop assistant. Party, men, alcohol and cigarettes have become for Baba a daily routine while Cait still pines for Mr. Gentleman. In one common party, when Babe convinces shy Caitheleen to be in company of two elderly men, Mr. Gentleman appears. Cait is happy and their love can come true. In this happy time, the bad news comes from Baba. She has got tuberculosis and she has to stay in hospital for six months. Mr. Gentleman invites Cait on the trip to Vienna but in the end the only thing that awaits the

loving girl is a telegram with the following message: "Everything gone wrong. Threats from your father. My wife has another nervous breakdown. Regret enforced silence. Must not see you". (O'Brien 1964: 187). Their love has no future.

Two characters that most influenced the two main heroines of the novel are their mothers. The mothers change the rest of the life of the main character, not only genetically but in their way of upbringing and their nature affects their children for the rest of their lives. They become the most important element in a child's life and teen individuality. Edna O'Brien considers the role of mother as a human being too and not only as a teacher of standards in a patriarchal state where the woman give up their unhappiness for the good of the family. A mother has to transmit the attitudes to daughters, for example obedience, diligence, importance of family.

Cait loves her mom for her kindness and the feeling of safety she engenders. She represents home, love, happy and a carefree childhood. This is the period of the happiest time of her life. Cait's mother abounds with the typical characteristics of women in Ireland. She tolerates the drunken excesses of her husband and selfless poverty because she gives all her money to her husband. She renounced her unhappiness at the basis of her upbringing. She was raised to obey and respect the men. No dreams or vision of a better life for her. Kate grows up with an abusive and alcoholic father and she knows that the choice of her husband is the most important thing in her future life with man. "She would have liked me to be a nun, it was better than marrying. Anything was, she thought."(O'Brien 1964: 15) It shows how her mother wants a better life for her daughter and how awful Cait's parent's marriage was.

The mother of Baba has quite different traits than the mother of Cait. The mother of Baba wants to call herself Martha. It refers to a certain disinterest to her family and her impersonality. She is a woman of the upper class, trying to hide her

misery through social events, expensive furniture, flirting with men and the pursuit of admiration in the small village society.

Comparing the lives of both mothers, they are alike in that no happiness is possible with the life that Irish society attributes to women. Baba's mother has a good husband but her dreams were different from the life in the village and staying at home. "Were you famous Mammy? Baba asked, knowing the answer well. Actually I was too tall." I could have married a hundred men, a hundred men cried at my wedding." (O'Brien 1964: 38)

Her misfortunes are also reflected in her behaviour to the maid Molly who undergoes her beatings and humiliation. Martha dissembles and is superficial and selfish. Her family has to look great in front of other people from the village. The warmth of the mother's womb is strange for her.

Mama and Martha serve as examples of Irish womanhood and their daughters try to end up happier than their mothers. Mothers did not strictly teach them the norms of motherhood and marriage. Kate and Baba were influenced by them and become wives and mothers too. The weaknesses of their mothers chase them during their lives. Irish society enforces their inability to love independently living. Just as with their mothers, their lives were determined by their choices of partners.

Cait, 14 years old, fragile and intelligent is not yet a woman but no longer a child. Her best friend Baba is quite the opposite of her. Friendship of these very different characters cannot be easy. Baba oppresses and humiliates Cait whenever she can and she never forgets to embarrass her: "my nose is getting wilder. Will it go back again to normal?" I asked. 'Your nose, she said, is always wide. You've nose like a bloody petrol-pump.'" (O'Brien 1964: 26) Edna O'Brien said that Baba was a girl she wanted to be. (Schiff 2013: 14)

Cait behaves like the little girl in the way of loving a man. Hickey is more her friend and support rather than love. Hickey could be a good husband and father, especially when compared to Cait's father's rudeness. It could be the reason why the girl has found the affections to him. Her mother slept with her in a bed and Cait knew that if the father came home he could be violent and maybe because of sex. It was just a necessary evil for a wife and mother.

I fell asleep. Poor Mama, she was always a worrier. I suppose she lay there thinking of him, waiting for the sound of his feet coming through the wet grass, and for the noise of the gate gasp-waiting, and coughing. (O'Brien 1964: 8)

The opposite of her father and Hickey was Mr. Gentleman who seemed absolutely charmed by Cait. His description is affectionate and loving, but in fact, we do not know anything about Mr. Gentlemen. The novel does not tell us who he is, what is his character like, what kind of person he is. What does he feel and how does he behave? Cait does not mention at first the fact that he is a married man. Cait describes the external side. This love was damned before it began. The strict Irish Catholic society would hardly understand the relationship between young girl and a married older man.

Cait is under the influence of Baba just as her mother was obedient to her father. Baba punishes all her weaknesses. Baba even blackmails her when Cait confides in her intense feelings for Mr. Gentleman. Baba's superficiality is destined by her mother. Baba and Cait, however, have two things in common they are best friends and they have the similar Catholic faith. Both girls get involved with married man and their chances of a full-fledged satisfied relationship is scant. Both girls are the deterrent examples of good Irish woman.

The relationship between Cait and Mr. Gentlemen is very long and only platonic. Cait fell in love with an older, successful man. And Mr. Gentlemen fell in love with young and innocent Cait. Sometimes it is characterized as a relationship between a daughter and her father:

“Are you my father?” I asked wishfully, because it was nice playing make-believe with Mr. Getleman. “Yes, I’m your father,” he said as he kisses the length of my arm, and he promised that when I went to Dublin later on he would be a very attentive father. (O’Brien 1964: 110)

Both of them were looking for more than love or family background, and peace of mind. She felt free and independent with Mr. Gentleman. Cait was always kind and submissive and he woke up her femininity: “You are a bad girl, he said. I like being a bad girl, I replied, wide-eyed.” (O’Brien 1964: 174)

For the whole life Baba was independent and she could do anything she wanted. She wanted fun, happiness and the love too. Yet she was not happy just like Cait because neither of them found peace nor love. Even the illness did not change her.

7.2.2 Strict and Bitter Nuns at the Convent School

The other female characters in the book include nuns at convent school. Nuns hold women with a typical Irish values and standards. Their aim is to serve God and to educate girls to this aim. Nuns are imagined like as rather old and rude. The younger nun Lela seems like a fresh air in this world of coldness and unfriendliness. She represents a new chance for a better relationship between God and the worldly surroundings.

7.2.3 The Poor Young Maid Molly

Maid Molly is a poor girl who has to work in the Brennans’ household. She represents the figure of servant girls who come from poor families. Their job forces them to endure snubbing from bosses. “Martha often beat Molly, and locked her on a bedroom whenever Molly asked to go to a dance in the town hall.” (O’Brien 1964: 37)

7.2.4 Independent and Open Minded Joanna

Joanna is a German who rents rooms in Dublin. She is an energetic woman with an open mind. Life in another country with different habits gives her some distance from the strict Irish rules.

7.3 Conclusion

The *Country Girl* and the trilogy was written from the point of a view of the girls seeing the worlds through the eyes of authority, parents, church. (Swaim 1992: np)

The novel is very readable and understandable. Cait describes her feelings with no difficulties. It is a sincere confession with realistic samples of village life. In this novel the transformation from a girl to a woman as well as the differences of mentality in the village and the city are depicted and how several lives are influenced by social norms and rules. The book has been condemned for a long time in Ireland for the honesty and the boldness of the author and the attack on the Catholic nuns and priests. Edna O'Brien wrote about what she knew. She grew up in a patriarchal country as well as Cait. Books are often considered autobiographical. Edna O'Brien also lived in a small town, she attended Covent school and she was expelled several times. She worked in Dublin and she had a relationship with an older man. The feelings of Cait were similar to hers when she was young.

In interview with Edna O'Brien she talks about her writing:

So in a sense *The Country Girls*, which I wrote in those first few weeks after my arrival, was my experience of Ireland and my farewell to it.[....] The novel is autobiographical insofar as I was born and bred in the west of Ireland, educated at a convent, and was full of romantic yearnings, coupled with a sense of outrage. But any book that is any good must be, to some extent, autobiographical, because one cannot and should not fabricate emotions. (Gupy 1984: np)

The Country Girls was very daring for its time and it took a long time for appreciation of the novel in Ireland. The book became a reflection of Irish society for many professionals who dealt with the problem of the position of woman in Ireland (Peter 2000: 45)

Edna O'Brien, in an audio interview, mentioned that the copies of her book were burnt in her home town by the parish priest. (Swaim 1992: np)

For example Christine Peter in *Changing Ireland* describes a typology of Irish women's exilic fiction. The Country Girls Trilogy is classified as a group called "Bildung" women novels like O'Brien's novel *Pagan Place*. Peter deals with examples of subordination of women in the patriarchal society. As O'Brien's heroines leave the village and go to the bigger town in hope to find a better life. (Peter 2000: 45-47) The disappointment is what awaits for them there. The perception about the situation of women in Ireland is cited below.

When the reader is a woman and the protagonist is a girl, and the whole different set of expectations for women are so different, ideas of success are so curtailed. A husband? A home? Motherhood? So the woman reader reads with pleasure and fear as she watches the protagonist navigate multiple levels of danger and hope. (Peter 2000: 50)

Lorna Sage's *Women in the House of Fiction*, she specifically describes the influence of James Joyce on a writer. She describes altered perceptions of Caitheleen herself in *The Country Girls* and in *The Girl with the Green Eyes*. Cait sees herself as a tall and ungainly, later just like a fat girl. The contrast to this is the description of her loves. (Sage 1992: 83-89) Men are mysterious and interesting. The heroine never finds inner balance and peace and always will be unhappy and confused as her mother. "She'll leave, of course, but she'll never acquire his respect for abstract "fact". Instead, games, life-like her mother's will be spent in yearning and passionate muddle." (Sage 1992: 85)

Rudiger Imhof designates Edna O'Brien the foul rag -and -bone shop of the heart. Her books are full of passion, love and pain, growing up and escape at the same time. Most of her heroines meet love as an innocent human being. Yet love is beautiful only for the first time. It always brings a cruelty of life and the social obstacles. Norms and rules about women behave are very strict. Edna O'Brien deals in her works with the problem of education, upbringing, childhood and motherhood. The returning to her childhood helps show the cruel reality and the impossibility of defence against one's fate. (Imhof 2002: 71-101)

Edna O'Brien points to the game of illusion and reality. The writer is sometimes considered as an unoriginal because of her characters. All her books follow the same line: Catholic girl goes in a bigger city with aim to find the happiness and love but she meets only problems in patriarchal society, misunderstanding of society. In *The Country Girls* it is especially disappointing to see Baba as the carefree girl who became snob, cruel and cynical woman. In contrast, O'Brien likens love to the love of God. Edna O'Brien as a feminist always wanted the equal rights and respect of men, not only in her novels but in real life too.

8. Edna O'Brien: "The Creature"

8.1 Analysis of the Main Female Characters

8.1.1 Abandonment and Unnamed Old Woman

A teacher who has come to a small town in Ireland for a temporary job is the narrator of this short story. Every day she meets an old woman and the teacher does not understand why people from a village call the woman "The Creature". Her curiosity and attempts to make contact with the woman bring her into "The Creature's" old house. One visit turns into a regular dialogue about the difficult issues in the old woman's life.

The Creature's destiny was not very gentle from the beginning of her short marriage:

Her husband had been killed two years after their marriage, shot in back of a lorry, in an incident that was later described by the British Forces as regrettable. (O'Brien 1981: 520)

The widow had two children, one daughter in Canada and a son who lives a few miles away. The son has not visited her for 17 years. The farm where she had lived was successful but the animals started to become sick and die. Despite all the misery, she saved the money to make it possible to send her son to school to the city. Her farm started to be prosperous. When her mother died and her daughter moved to another country, her occasional despair about being alone was substituted by trying to keep the farm prospering.

Eventually her son returned home with his fiancé. The joy of a newly acquired family, the joy of future grandchildren diminishes through the fact that the woman whom the son brought was very stingy and contentious. Money was the main topic of their fights. A few months later the presence of "The Creature" was undesirable. The son, with a slight duress, forced her to sign a contract in which the mother confers everything to them. "[...] she was

packing her few belongings and walking away from the house where she had lived for fifty-eight of her sixty years.” (O’Brien 1981: 523)

After many dialogues the teacher decides to go to the farm, meets the son and arranges for him to visit his mother. The man looks depressed and tired. In visiting his mother, the son reveals only his alienation. At the end he agreed with the teacher’s offer.

The Creature was really happy to see him but the son behaved distantly.

[...] when she put her hand up to his grey hairs he backed away from her as if she’d given him an electric shock.” “When she asked, “ Will I see you?” he had said “Perhaps,” and she told me that if there was one word in the English vocabulary that scalded her, it was the word “perhaps.” (O’Brien 1981: 526)

The narrator finally realizes that she has actually removed the last little hope that the old woman had clung to. After the visit of her son, she has realized that he does not care for her and will never come back.

The most important woman in the story is the old woman, the abandoned mother, who is unnamed by the narrator. People call her “The Creature” because she has never told her story to people from the village and because she is unattractive looking and unwanted. The villagers see only the woman who is alone and in Irish society it is not a fault of man. It can be inferred from the place where she lives. The small town in Ireland where the people are very religious, the people are thinking about being cursed by God. It is how they are able to understand why the woman had to go through so much pain. The old woman does not think that she is cursed. God is the only fixed point in her misery.

The woman is not a bad person in any respect. She is stoic, she does not talk about her pain and feelings until the teacher asks about her destiny of life. People from the village are small-minded and they are affected by prejudices.

Her neighbours never asked the old woman about her life.

Life had treated her rotten yet she never complained but always had a ready smile, so that her face with its round rosy cheeks was more like something you could eat or lick. (O'Brien 1999: 519)

The only one thing which stays by her was her religion. The loneliness of her is less painful when she remembers God and thought that she was a grateful woman.

However, the final disappointment in the form of a rejection of her middle aged son has destroyed her last hope just as the teacher had been trying to help her. The world and God had no mercy.

8.1.2 A Teacher without Prejudice

A teacher is the next woman in the story. She seems like a modern woman without prejudices. She tries to help the old woman but the end is not happy. "I had come away to forget, and there was released in me, too, a gigantic useless sorrow." (O'Brien 1981: 526)

8.2 Conclusion

The depiction by O'Brien of country life is certainly not idyllic, for without hesitation she hides nothing of the misery that the woman has known. In this way she provides a thorough witness to the gradual decline of that world. The feelings of woman lack dignity but in their spirit of sacrifice, only bitterness and disappointments is waiting for them.

O'Brien's memory from Ireland has a tendency to represent the social reality by focusing on its small triumphs and sorrows of everyday woman. It shows a sample of the typical couple in Ireland where Edna O'Brien grew up. No love, but only working on the farm and childbearing were the tasks of woman.

9. William Trevor: *Felicia's Journey*

9.1 Life of the Author

William Trevor was born in 1928 at Mitchelstone. He was in provincial Ireland when he was child. His family was Protestant and his position in Catholic Ireland was not easy. He mentioned that it was the reason why he started to be a good writer because he was really alone there as a Protestant. He studied prestigious Trinity College in Dublin. He immigrated to the Great Britain and he started to work as a copy writer. He has written many novels, for example *The Children of Dynmouth* (1976), *Fools of Fortune* (1983) or *The Silence in the Garden* (1988). His frequent topic was the difference between Protestant and Catholic church in Ireland. He was awarded by many prizes, for example the Hawthornden Prize or Yorkshire Post Book of the Year. (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003: 1-2)

9.2. Analysis of the Main Female Characters

Five different women and five different feelings, attitudes and fates are described.

9.2.1 Naive and Innocent Felicia

Felicia is the heroine of the story. She comes from a small town in Ireland and, under the pressure of circumstances, has decided to leave her native Ireland and go to unknown England to find her beloved.

Trevor's typical heroines are young girls from Ireland or England, who are trapped in the Protestant or Catholic religion. The heroines try to escape, for example, through mindless love, just like Felicia. The heroine is the classic figure in a patriarchal family where the man is the head and the women have to follow his opinions and obey his orders. Felicia's family strictly adheres to the rules of Catholicism. (Del Río-Álvarez 2007: 2-4)

Even her name, Felicia, says something about this young girl and her roots. Her father named the baby girl after the woman who was murdered in 1916 on the barricades. She died in the battle of the Easter Rising at the end of the First World

War. The rebellion was for Irish independence and the separation of power from the British Empire. (Fitzgerald-Hoyt, 2003: 164)

The father calls his daughter other names too. He calls her "*hoer*", which is slang for dubious girl, prostitute. "He called her a hoer, looking at her over the smoke from the frying pan, not raising his voice. He said he was glad her mother wasn't alive. No better than a dirty hoer, he furiously repeated." (Trevor 1996: 59-60) He labels her thus after finding out about her affair with Johnny Lysaght. This is because of her possible pregnancy.

In the beginning of the novel, Felicia is described as a girl who lacks her own personality. She is unable to make her own decisions as an adult, confident woman. Felicia is characterised as a typical Irish woman with a cross worn around her neck and a Celtic-patterned handbag. Mr. Hilditch always refers to her as an Irish girl.

They have Chawke's name on them, and a Celtic pattern round the edge. At the bureau de change she has been given English notes for her Irish ones. (Trevor 1994:1), She stands there awkwardly, her mouth depressed at the corners, her eyes worried. Escaping from the headscarf, wisps of fair hair blow about her face; a tiny cross, on a cheap silver-coloured chain, is just visible beneath her coat. (Trevor 1996: 12)

Just as in Ireland, she is influenced by the other people she meets along the way. Obedience is deeply rooted in her behaviour and Mr. Hilditch is the next man to control her personality and manipulate this young girl. Trevor explodes the English imperialist and Irish nationalist myths that hobble Joseph Ambrose Hilditch, English stalker of vulnerable young women, and Felicia, his latest, and only Irish victim. (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003: 6)

Felicia seems to be the perfect object of his needs and desires. Her behaviour, passivity and acceptance of future events, without any resistance or effort to change, show her immaturity. Her perception of reality is a reflection of her young, inexperienced and romantic soul. Merely the fact that she has decided to

leave home for a boy she barely knows, has a lack of information about and about England, reflects her inexperience. Even the information about his job is incorrect.

There is no Johnny Lysaght working in a lawnmower factory. The realisation of her father's correct opinion about Johnny's escape to England is really difficult for her. The man has joined the British Army — the Army which fought against the brave men in the War of Independence. Felicia is living under a delusion and her naivety is also apparent when she meets Mr. Hilditch. She believes his pretentious charm. Readers recognise his insincerity from the outset and when he steals her money, this is a huge warning sign about him.

The situations of both characters are often indefinite and mystical. Del Río-Álvaro even likens Felicia to Red Riding Hood, the innocent girl who does not recognise the evil hidden behind pretence and kind words. Just like Little Red Riding Hood, she is lured into a house believing in the sense of safety and love, but mortal danger awaits her. The madman, like the wolf in the fairy tale, tries to overpower the girl. (Del Río-Álvaro 2007: 6)

Felicia and Mr. Hilditch are both freed from the myth of control and restriction. They choose different ways of being free. Mr. Hilditch commits suicide, while Felicia's freedom is more mental. She reaches a certain point of spiritual enlightenment.

Felicia and Mr. Hilditch share some similar features, for example, their perception of the world. Felicia, like Mr. Hilditch, wants to reject reality. It is not possible that John has lied and does not love her. On the other hand, Mr. Hilditch, due to a lack of love, creates his own society, his own world.

All the atrocities take place in the house in Duke of Wellington Street. The street's name is not accidental. The Duke of Wellington served in the British Army and was elected as a Member of the Irish Parliament. Later he was a Commander in the British Army. (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003: 163)

Mr. Hilditch has wanted to be a soldier all his life, but due to his physical condition, it is not possible. “But they wouldn’t take him when the moment came because of his eyesight and his feet.” (Trevor 1996: 20)

This situation appears to be a contrast to Johnny who is young and strong and is now a member of the British Army. It could be another reason why Felicia is so interesting to Mr. Hilditch. He can prove to himself that, even without being a soldier, he has power over her. He does not need appreciation from others. He is the rescuer of an innocent girl. Another thing connected with the Duke of Wellington are some souvenirs which bring to mind the battles of the Duke of Wellington. The Duke travelled all over the world. He went to exotic India and Spain. The man wants to empathise with the brave soldier and warrior.

Felicia's father has worshipped Felicia's grandmother since her husband left her alone, and went to join Ireland's struggle for independence in 1916. He died in the fighting, leaving her alone and pregnant. Felicia's father admires devoted faith to the dream of independence. Therefore, it is absolutely nonsensical that his daughter has fallen in love with a man who has decided to fight on the side of the enemy. Her father lives in a time many years ago when Ireland was combative and hopeful for prospects of a better future. The present is not as shiny as he anticipated, so he remains stuck in the past.

The novel also describes a bad situation regarding the family hierarchy. As the only woman in the family, Felicia has to take care of her grandmother. The girl is forced to take only a part-time job so as to have time for the housework. The labour market situation is not very favourable. Although the book was published in 1994, when the economy of Ireland was on the upswing, we can only surmise that the story of Felicia takes place a few years earlier. There was a high emigration rate of Irish citizens as a result of the deteriorating economy in the 1950s and the same phenomenon appeared at the beginning of the 1990s. After 1995, the Irish economy improved by direct investments, which started its growth.

The economy from 1995 to 2000 is referred to as the Celtic Tiger as a reflection of its resurrection. This information shows that the book rather describes life in Ireland in the early '90s when economic growth still lay ahead. (Del Río-Álváro 2007: 2)

Felicia's loss of her mother is difficult. She is haunted by a lack of maternal love and understanding. She misses the feminine element in her life. Her father and three brothers do not speak to her about intimate life and adolescence. Johnny Lysaght is the first man to kiss her, due to her strict Catholic upbringing.

Johnny has no precautions taken against pregnancy. Her sexuality has been kept in check, and when she devotes from the code she has been Taught, she is guilt-ridden, fearful of the shame of games pregnancy will bring on the family and imagining the jeers of games more worldly-wise friends. (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003: 165)

Felicia searches for answers in the past, in the memories of her mother. When she falls pregnant and desperately needs the advice of her mother, her warm arms, and feminine understanding, she remembers her mother. Her mother also appears in the issue of abortion, which Felicia undergoes. Trying to find the solace of her mother, Felicia spins in a vicious circle of guilt, loneliness and naivety. She still feels ashamed for, contrary to her faith, she falls pregnant and then runs off with money stolen from her grandmother. Her last feeling of guilt is the abortion. This sin follows her for the rest of her life.

Abortion is a highly debated topic in Ireland. Ireland, as a very strict Catholic country, has a ban on divorce, contraception, abortion, pornography. There is strict censorship of books. The Church controls the government, schools and hospitals. Abortion in Ireland is prohibited, only in a life-threatening situation of the mother is it legal to perform an abortion. Women often travel from Ireland to England to have abortions. There are grave uncertainties about the abortion laws. Doctors have no precise rules regarding it, so it is very dangerous and risky for them to allow an abortion.

Mr. Hilditch tells Felicia that Johnny would not be happy about her pregnancy and her family would reject her, so abortion is the best way of solving the problem. He shows his dominance over the girl. He is delighted to accompany Felicia to the clinic. It is a great feeling for him to be seen with a young girl in public. A middle-aged man with an imperfect build, he is flattered that anybody would think that he is her boyfriend. He feels like a man who is so great as to be interesting to this beautiful young girl.

Felicia, unlike other girls, escapes from his control after she realises that she is not the first girl to be caught by Mr. Hilditch's charms. He tries to find her; she is somebody who has disrupted his stable territory. As a man, he expresses it as a military territory, now impaired due to her. She, an Irish girl, has invaded his territory.

Felicia's coming to England is reminiscent of Danté's *Inferno*. This is the place that Danté Alighieri describes in his famous *Divine Comedy*. The place that becomes increasingly evil. Evil is not just apparent in the imagination of Mr. Hilditch but is also shown in the dirty streets and industrial centres. "The industrial estate is an endless repetition of nondescript commercial building, each with a forecourt for parking." (Trevor 1996: 14)

In the passages where Felicia's father refers to the glory of Irish independence, his vision of life is outdated and he does not realise that Irish freedom should provide the choice of life for women. An interesting quotation from the novel describes Felicia's position.

Further just as in the early years of independence Irish women were stunned to discover that they have been betrayed by their male compatriots, denied a place at the political table in the new nation, Felicia's father nationalist that assumes a life of family caretaking and part-time menial work is adequate for the his daughter. (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003: 157)

Interesting quotation from a book describes Felicia's position. "Felicia suffers a double oppression on account of gender and nationality games. In Ireland she is a patriarchal victim of nationalism, in England she is oppressed by the embodiment of and malignant residual colonist." (Trevor 1996: 73)

Felicia does not run away from Ireland, only as a geographical location but she escapes from the laws, rules, and expectations of the country. (Harts 2012: 412-420) A place where Felicia was growing up is described as a place with strongly linked family history and with a certain predictability of the future for the only girl in the family. Felicia's home is also set into a small village in Ireland. The growing economy did not hit a small town and the harsh conditions to make a living affects all residents.

Felicia moves from familiar surroundings into the unknown world in England. She was used to the small town where everyone knew everyone but now she relocates to an anonymous industrial town. Suspense leads to empathy with the lost heroine. (Harts 2012: 426)

On the other hand, at the end of the story the unknown places, unknown journeys are not regarded as something evil. Felicia has chosen the way of never-ending wandering in the role of homeless, whereby her journey has led her to mental freedom. There are no boundaries and the world is only a tool for living and not a place that should determine her options. It is just up to her.

There is nothing fixed about certainly the heroine's physical, psychic, or spiritual state at the novel's end. Although she remains in England, Felicia is metaphysically beyond "home" and "nation" beyond rigid Notions of territoriality, especially as embodied in inherited nationalist and imperialist Discourses. (Harts 2012: 438)

Harts also writes about the significance of the statue of the Virgin Mary (Harts 2012: 424), Felicia turns to her in difficult moments and asks her for help and forgiveness. Virgin Mary as a symbol of purity is contrasted with the feeling of being doomed in England. Felicia feels ashamed and guilty, as she had acted in

breach of the sexual and moral norms of her native country. Not only her sexual experience without marriage in Ireland and her escape to another state, but there is shame also regarding her fall into desperation when she gravitated toward an abortion, which is a cardinal sin.

At the end of the story, Felicia gives away everything that reminds her of Ireland on her pathway from naivety to liberation. The Celtic patterned bag, and the cross from her neck as a proof of her faith are both sold. It detaches her from everything that has constrained her in the past. The only thing she remembers is the abortion, the sin she regrets. She is ready to accept the present and is ready for the future.

Felicia chooses the way of the homeless. It could be optimistic because she is set free from rules and materialistic things but, on the other hand, homeless people are described by her as very repulsive creatures. She does not return to Ireland, where her grandmother has died and her father needs her. Her life becomes a never-ending journey from one place to another. She detaches herself from all conventions and her life is free.

9.2.2 Old-fashioned Grandmother

The senile woman repeats the same thing over and over again. She has memories of Felicia's father who was previously just like her. His opinions sound like the senseless ramblings of an old woman. Felicia sees her as a person who obeys strict Catholic rules and it evokes feelings of guilt in her. Grandmother appears in the girl's dream. Her mother and the blind Virgin Mary are there too. Her Mother understands her. The blind Virgin Mary is there because Felicia is asking for her forgiveness.

The old woman's son is still stuck in the past. He sits in his old room, reading old notes about the struggles for the independence of Ireland. Grandmother is an old woman. She has a right to be senile, old-fashioned and strict, but her son should be more flexible and try to understand his only daughter. It is a reflection of his failure. None of his dreams of Ireland have come true and this keeps him detached

from reality. He admires the old woman because she is a widow due to the struggle for Irish freedom and that is the only thing that interests him.

9.2.3 Fanatical Mrs. Calligary

A black woman, member of an evangelical sect, she goes from house to house, spreading the Gospel. Protestantism is one of the main directions of Christianity. Protestants perceive each situation as unique and decisions should be made by their own conscience. Protestants do not set strict rules of behaviour, while Catholic morality is based on ethical standards. The standards stipulate what behaviour is unacceptable and considered as a sin. The Evangelicals do not dictate rules on marriage and the use of contraception.

Mrs. Calligary, just like Felicia and Mr. Hilditch, is detached from the real world and perceives it as a distorted reality through her faith and the mission to save lost souls. Unfortunately, she almost fails due to her poor judgement of Felicia. She considers her to be a thief who lied about the loss of money and even warns Mr. Hilditch of this. Her intuition tells her that there is something wrong after the visit. She wants to know what happened to the young naive Irish girl. According to the question of dark and light, Mrs. Calligary is the light side of the world. She symbolises good and tries to rescue the innocent Felicia.

9.2.4 Abandoned and Unhappy Mother, Mrs. Lysaght

John's mother appears in retrospective flashbacks in the story. The devastated girl tries to find out some information about Johnny and goes to his mother. The woman is not pleased by her visit. She knows that Felicia and Johnny had an affair and wants to make the girl feel uncomfortable about it. She hints at dissatisfaction with her son's choice. Felicia gives her a letter for Johnny, but she realises that the letter will not be sent. "Johnny was being stolen from his mother, in the same way as a woman had stolen her husband: that was how his mother saw it." (Trevor 1994: 48) The woman looks back on her life. She was abandoned by her husband and the anger still simmers in her. She was left alone with her son because of a younger woman. Maybe Felicia reminds her of her lost youth and her

husband's mistress. Maybe she just does not want life in a small town in old-fashioned Ireland for her son. She is rude and offers no help to Felicia. The woman's mind is filled with the past and her husband. She does not listen to Felicia and does not care about her unborn grandchild.

He was off, and what's there to listen to in that? "You'll get money regular," he said. That's all could think to say. Four years married, two miscarriages before Johnny, and then your husband's off. Trevor 1996: 47)

9.2.5 Mr. Hilditch's Mother

The monstrosity of Mr. Hilditch may be the result of his mother's influence. Mr. Hilditch lacked a male element in his life and was fixated on his uncle. He admired him because of his past as a soldier. The uncle visited him only because of his mother and this is one of the reasons why he hates women.

All women are considered equally evil and corrupt. His mother did not love him as a mother should love her son. She was perverted and attracted physically to her son. She abused him and destroyed his chances of having a normal life. He decides to forget all about his mother. Women start to be the only the way of proving his own strength. Felicia evokes a change in him. He starts to remember his past, his mother, his uncle. The story is about the son of a psychotic mother who caused misery to her son and several girls whom he murdered and buried in the garden called "Memory Lane".

The author does not relate what precisely happened to the girls. It is mentioned that the psychopath took photos of the young girls who were his victims. He called this set of photos "The Memory Lane".

9.3. Conclusion

William Trevor is the author of many works on Anglo-Irish relationships and the differences between these two countries. According to Trevor, Ireland is a place of rural simplicity. A country where people merely survive and are trapped in solitude. Ireland is the country where people live in frustration, suffering. It does

not matter whether it is in the first half of the 20th century or in the 1990s. His descriptive concept is therefore timeless. Ireland is narrated as something outdated, a stationary country with a lack of job opportunities and without open-minded inhabitants. The author captures Ireland not as a country to be somehow condemned; he describes it only from the cold viewpoint of an observer. Trevor evokes sympathy in the reader for the heroine; he describes her fragility and vulnerability. "He uses a description of human situations, in which characters move towards a revelation or epiphany which is moral, spiritual or social." (MacKenna 1999: 134)

Re-Imagining Ireland contains sections dealing with the analysis of his works and circumstances that affect his writing. Trevor writes very emphatically about women who are the objects of injustice and live in societies where men have the final word. Women are hampered by family expectations, religion and finances. "Despite the poignancy of these symbols women's constrained lives, Trevor does not suggest Irish women alone suffer from limited opportunities." (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003: 33) His works contains criticism of De Valera's opinions which give too much weight to the Irish family and do not examine the hard life of women within the family.

The women in Trevor's works can be likened to Deirdre. Deirdre was a heroine of Irish mythology and is sometimes called "Deirdre of the Sorrows". She was a woman who died for love. The social structure of male domination, unrequited love and misunderstanding forced her to commit suicide by jumping from a rock. . (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003: 154)

The author criticises the limited awareness among women about life outside of Irish rules. Ireland censored books and reports so women in Ireland thought that their situation and conditions were the same as everywhere else and there was no option of living their own lives.

Trevor is considered as an Irish writer, even though he spent most of his life in England. The story takes place in England, but returns to Ireland in the retrospective narration. Felicia's past experiences in Ireland are combined with her present time in England. His anthology, *Re-Imagining Ireland*, also focuses on the question of dark and light. Hilditch is connected with the dark. He always appears in the shade or even in darkness. Johnny Lysaght appears in the light, as symbolic of love and hope for Felicia. Light represents good. Mrs. Calligary tries to help people, so she always appears in the light. When Felicia is imprisoned in Mr. Hilditch's house, it is always dark. There is no hope of escape, but then the light is turned on there is a chance for her to escape.

The story describes the strength of the nationalism of Felicia's father and the condemnation of his daughter because of her relationship with Johnny Lysaght. He is a new British Army recruit, who betrays Ireland and decides to join the enemy of Ireland. Felicia's family is obsessed by Catholic nationalism and by the ideas of Éamon de Valera on Irish freedom. Éamon de Valera was one of the major figures of Irish politics in the 20th century. He was Commander of the fighters in the War of Independence and a member of the opposition during the Civil War between 1922 and 1923. As a politician, after disagreement with the thoughts of the Sinn Fein party, he founded the political party called Fianna Fáil. Sinn Fein is the organisation which supported the Irish Republican Army in the War of Independence. He also became President of the Republic of Ireland. Felicia's father constantly returns to the thoughts of De Valera and his ideas for the future of Ireland.

The Ireland which we have dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as the basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit; a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths, the laughter of comely maidens; whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of old age. It would, in a word, be the home of a people living the life that God desires men should live. (Trevor 1996:26-27)

Trevor's description of the environment where Felicia finds herself is gloomy, both in Ireland and England. He mentions cracked walls, homelessness, prostitution and disease. English society is anonymous, isolated, dehumanised, contrary to Ireland which is described as being like a small town where everyone knows everything and no one can keep a secret.

The narration about people who have problems in accepting reality, starts with Felicia, whose pathway to real life is the hardest and her transformation the longest. Then there are Mr. Hilditch, who cannot cope with the awareness of reality and commits suicide, and Felicia's father who still lives in the imagination of a better Ireland many years past. Finally, there is Johnny's mother who cannot deal with having been left by her husband.

Liam Harts associates the physical relocation of the heroine from Ireland to England but it is not just the transfer across the water. It is a journey of psychological development, a development of the morality and thinking of a young girl.

The obesity of the psychotic Mr. Hilditch, the murderer, tries, through his cooking and overeating to forget his childhood memories of his mother and uncle. Uncle, the only male element in his life betrayed his trust by faking his military successes. (Harts 2012: 430)The purpose of it was an effort to seduce his mother. The real monster was his mother because she thoroughly abused her son.

Morbidly obese, it is inferred that Hilditch overeats as a coping strategy to repress memories of incest, reflexively cramming food into his ever ravenous maw in a hopeless attempt to sate the emotional malnourishment of childhood and the stigmatizing fear, shame, and helplessness that went with it. Food alone, however, cannot still the chaos within. The tumultuous swirl of shame and rage engendered by his sexual victimization is directed towards the women he befriends, whom he "consumes" in order to repair his terminally damaged sense of masculinity. (Harts 2012: 430)

This novel has been praised for its high standard of linguistics and the description of a mentally disturbed man who, like a hunter, chases an innocent girl. The novel

contains much ambiguity, uncertainty and changing situations. The narrative meanders along different paths, genres, themes and environments, like the description of a journey. “His real literary departure in Felicia's journey is not much that employs elements of sensational literature but in how they are manipulated into sustained allegory of Anglo-Irish relations.” (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003:160)

The novel has an interesting link to music. Mr. Hilditch possesses a specific musical taste which is always connected with the present situation. It is typical of Trevor to approximate the feelings and character of the principal male protagonist. For example, romantic songs are used rather ironically to indicate the unhappy, frustrated man, who is not able to come to terms with harsh reality. (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003:169)

The novel inspired a film with the same title. The film is very successful and is considered one of the best thrillers based on Anglo-Irish relations. Trevor participated in this and collaborated with the director. The director decided to portray his own view of Felicia in the film. For example, the Irish environment is not so suburban and gloomy and economically impoverished. (Fitzgerald-Hoyt 2003:172)

10. William Trevor: “The Ballroom of Romance”

10.1 Analysis of the Main Female Characters

Woman from rural Ireland with ill father is analysed.

10.1.1 Unmarried and Childless Woman Bridie

The main character is Bridie, a 36-year-old spinster, who sacrifices her life to care for her sick father in very loneliness place in the hills. Each week she goes into town to shop where she meets a woman from the city and inside she jealous of their family lives. On the other hand, Bridie realizes that the women are envious about her life. They have imaginations about independent and no obligation which come with the role of a wife.

'You're lucky to be peaceful in the hills,' they said to Bridie, 'instead of stuck in a hole like this'. They had a tired look, most of them, from pregnancies and they pursue to organize and control their large families. (Trevor 1999: 497)

It narratives the life of a country Irish woman, Bridie, who is almost cut off from the world by the small farm in the Irish countryside lives there with her one-legged father. After the death of Bridie's mother, she helped him with everything. The farm is located a few kilometres from the city and the only connection with civilization for Bridie has become a long journey on a bicycle. Bridie is almost trapped on the farm. Her father, old and ill, is not able to take care of him and Bridie, his only relative, is required to remain with him. She is forced to give up her own life and earns money and stays with him.

Bridie's only one joy is the dance hall proclaimed as The Ballroom of Romance. This is the only time when Bridie gets beautifully dressed up and go between other people from the hill farms and villages. The dance hall has been visiting by her for many years, since her childhood. The Ballroom of Romance is only place where she is not like a work-worn elderly woman from the farm but the same like every other woman with a beautiful dresses and dreams. Talking with one other woman about her daily problems of marriage and about children lets her realize

that her life has become empty. The dancing dispels her thoughts about her handicapped father and the never-ending work.

Bridie remembers in those evenings for her young. She was in love with a boy named Patrick Grady. He should have been her future husband and they should have been together and lived happily in a town. However, the boy already had another girl, whom he married and lived somewhere else.

After many years when Bridie was still single she has started dreaming about the bachelor musician Dano Ryan. Everybody knows about her affection for him but people also knew about his active relationship with Griffin's widow. Mrs. Griffin takes care of her mentally handicapped son and Dano Ryan helps her. Bridie felt to be very close with this bachelor. He was another man with whom she could imagine her future life.

Old unmarried men have come to the hall every week strengthened by alcohol and the knowledge that single women are interested in them. Bridie dance with lot of those men. For example, Bowser Egan - a typical bachelor, who according to other women, as well as other have married a whiskey and comfort. Bridie is aware, that this is her last evening in The Ballroom of Romance. She found it humiliating in her age to go with single men dancing. Finally Bridie leaves the hall with Bowser and realizes that he is the only one with whom she has a chance to spend the rest of her life after her father's death.

Every Saturday she attended a dance hall where rural singles, people like her, visited. Cut off from civilization, locked in their farms, caught in a small village who, like she, just wanted a bit of fun and a little company after a week of never-ending work and loneliness.

People came on bicycles or in old motorcars, country people like Bridie from remote hill farms and villages. People who did not often see other people met there, girls and boys, men and women. (Trevor 1999: 499)

The dancing and closeness of people still gave to Bridie a feel that she does not have to stand in the world completely on her own. That feeling when other people go there to meet somebody who stays with them for the rest of their life too. A young boy asked her to dance and told her about working for his uncle for fourteen hours a day. This life does not make a sense for him. Bridie, like a woman, who honours the principles she could not leave her father and start a life somewhere else. Tradition in Irish society banned it. It seems like a conflict between young and older generation. The new ones seem to be rioting against the old habits.

But the spinster met superficiality and judging. She realized that when she overheard a conversation among young girls.

Madge Dowding was the only one who was older than Bridie. She was thirty-nine, although often she said she was younger. The girls sniggered about that, saying that Madge Dowding should accept her condition - her age and her squint and her poor complexion- and not make herself ridiculous going out after men. (Trevor 1999: 501)

The woman remained alone because she had no other option. If an elderly man was a bachelor it was just about his own motivation and maybe because of the comfort. Nobody considered them embarrassing and old. People understand and take for granted their lifestyle. These are men who preferred to baffle woman's head, flirting every week and then again return to their comfortable and quiet lives under the care of them. All women were happy when those men came to dance with her. Every single woman, if she cannot have love, desires at least a decent man.

In the story the very strong economic distress of the people is known and many of them are trying to escape from it. For example, Dano Ryan, Bridie's love decided, instead of staying with the woman he loved, to choose a wealth and comfort with the widow. He gained her faith in him by taking care of her handicapped son and the Bridie's suitor Bowser Egan too. He talked about their future life after his mother's death when he inherited her money and property.

She would wait now and in time Bowser Egan would seek her out because his mother would have died. Her father would probably have died also by then. She would marry Bowser Egan because it would be lonesome being by herself in the farmhouse. (Trevor 1999: 518)

The reason for her acting is not property. It is a rational motive of the middle-aged woman who does not want to live alone in her old age in the farm. It is better to get a wealthy decent man like Bowser Egan if she cannot live with love.

10.2 Conclusion

The women in Ireland had a clear position in society expected from them: service for men, parenting, keeping heart warm homes. The women were brought up to get married, have babies and taking care of their husbands. Building careers or studying in the 1950's of the 20th century in Ireland was completely impossible.

Bridie's father realized how much his daughter was held back by the fact that she was trapped between the hills on the farm but he knew that without her he would die. Understood still was that the old man's only relative should be obliged to take care of her sick father even if it means never being able to establish her own family. It was a habit of them and their traditional society. The farm where they are working is a family heritage and it would never be sold. The families in Ireland have valued very highly their assets and the thought of selling to or loss meant almost the same as the death of someone in the family.

11. Conclusive Comparison

All six authors describe the life of women in Ireland, depicting their life and engaging the reader to think about their situations. This part of the diploma thesis deals with the comparing and contrasting the stories which were analyzed thematically.

11.1 Romantic Love in Ireland

A woman as a representative of the fairer sex desires to fill her life with love. Ireland was not a country that would allow women to have the luxury like the search for love and understanding. A woman in a strongly patriarchal society had a clearly defined place as a wife and mother and her feelings were not always taken into consideration. The women did not have too many chances in choosing their future husbands. A women's family did not choose husbands according to their feelings but rather it was about his status, facilities wealth and the ability to protect her and her family. In the examples I analyzed in my thesis there was not a single woman who was happy with her love life. There always appeared something, which did not allow a passionate and true love.

The first short story called "Summer Night" by Elizabeth Bowen described the main character Emma as a woman who had lost all meaning of her life. Her husband's lack of interest compelled her to look for love somewhere else. Her attempt to find romance ended unsuccessfully. Emma was a desperate woman who, after years of marriage and the surface of happy family life, discovered that her life was empty and unsatisfied. She looked for a wild and passionate love to make her heart beat like a storm. Her desire blinded all reasonable judgment and when she sobered up she realized that her dream lover was not honest and the man she fell madly and quickly in love with was only a seducer. He was compared with a wife murder Bluebeard from old stories because he did not kill his victims physically but he killed their hopes and love.

Elizabeth Bowen's family came from Anglo-Irish aristocracy. Marriage in this society at this time was made often because of intellect rather than love and so the women used to seek pleasure elsewhere. Their efforts often ended unhappily in the hands of calculating young bachelors and with non-understanding neighbours ever watchful.

Another married woman appeared in the analyzed texts: Vera from the short story "The Happiness" by Mary Lavin points out the trouble when the society frowned upon her close relationship with the local priest. This woman, unlike Emma, was not unhappy, her family life was happy, satisfied but now as a widow she would be happy to share her life with somebody else. Her love was merely platonic. Their love was fulfilled through the words, shared moments and spiritual connection. Her connection with the priest was not as desperate and unhappy as Emma's attempt to find love but rather gave a sense of peace and unity between two people who were happy in the company of each another despite the lack of sexual life and being misunderstood by society.

Vera's widow as well as Mrs. Money in "Boarding House" by James Joyce and the unnamed woman in "Creature" by Edna O'Brien illustrate how their desires for love receded into the background and they dealt with social expectations and consequences due to the loss of their husbands. Both are on their own ways tragic figures.

The next story is almost naturalistically described the middle-class Dublin life in the early 20th century. In "Eveline" by James Joyce, a young girl is trapped in the deep-rooted traditions of Irish society, who began to yearn for love but her love was not fulfilled too. She wanted to find love which could take her away from her father, from stereotype female role of Ireland. She was not unbridled like other girls in her age. She was not in love like a crazy teenage she wanted to run away from her father and small city.

The Country Girls by Edna O'Brien described the young and naive imagination of love. Cait and Baba were young and unrestrained girls. The two girls came from different backgrounds, but Cait and Eveline shared the loss of their mother. Due to her intelligence Cait had an opportunity to get into the Covent school but she was expelled so she moved to city. Her romantic notions were associated with older and more experienced man who was married. For men, it was nothing unusual to have a mistress but Cait and her naive and innocent soul was totally devoted to him. Mr. Gentleman was the complete opposite of her rude and drunken father and she blindly hoped that the man who had a wife and his own life could consider her as a rightful partner. She gave him her body and did not think about his reality. On the other hand her friend Baba as a wild and unrestrained young girl did not have serious ideas about romance and true love. She wanted to gain experience to get to know the man and tentative joy.

Felicia, the main protagonist of *Felicia's Journey* by William Trevor, was similar to Cait, Baba and Eveline: a young girl who longed for true love. She seemed to have already found her love. Johnny was handsome man but she was become pregnant. She was alone she lived only with her father, brothers and her senile grandma. She needed to feel somebody who liked her. Johnny was the first boy to notice her. Like Cait, she spent only few beautiful moments with her love and then she was abandoned and left alone. Cait received a farewell letter but Felicia did not know anything. She still naively hoped that Johnny loved her. Like other Irish girls, her love was not fulfilled. She had to go through a painful abortion and mistreatment of her family because as a single mother she would be a disgrace to her father. This is a typical example of a woman in Ireland of the 1950s, where a woman had to be first a wife and after that a mother. Reverse order means shame and condemnation. Her destiny seems to be the saddest and at all the fiction for me. She was alone in a foreign country without money or any help of friends.

Judith is the main character of the book *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne* by Brian Moore and like Bridie in "Ballroom of Romance" still unmarried woman

who hoped to find her true love. Their characters would rather be described in the theme I have called expectations of single women.

Each romantic love is not only focussing on the love of women but also men are the part of the relationship and with the exception of Eveline the male counterpart to the woman in love is portrayed negatively. Men are generally described as pragmatic and unsympathetic handlers who do not care of women's feelings.

11.2 Mothers / Daughters

The role of the mother is in Ireland as elsewhere in the world one of the most important roles of women. It is not just important role from the perspective of a woman who is a mother but also with regard to the role of daughters. Mothers have a huge and indelible influence to their daughters and their way of upbringing, transmission attitudes and future decisions. Mothers shape the future lives of their daughters. In Ireland, women were regarded mainly as mothers and their roles in the household and the upbringing of children.

Bowen's Emma was a loving mother. She was not strict with her daughters. The social prerequisites were not so important as a caress and a kind word for her daughters. Their peace and happiness in society were threatened by her romance. Infatuation was not fulfilled by true love so her daughters were spared from the grief and shame that their mother fell madly in love and run away. She thereby tried to convey a sense of freedom and importance to her daughters.

Vera exhibited the same way of behaviour to her daughter. The whole story by Edna O'Brien was, as the name "The Happiness" indicates about the mother who was trying to answer the question what happiness is to her daughter. She tried to give them the attitude of respecting their femininity. It describes the relationship of mother and daughters who were left behind after the death of their father and husband. Her daughters were already grown up. They had their own lives but they maintained cordial relations with her mother. They visited her and they even wished her the happiness with the priest so that their mother is not alone.

It seems like a logical outfall. The mother gave to their daughters the best they could and they have warm hearted relationship with each other. This logic disappeared in the story by Edna O'Brien. The unnamed mother of a son, a good heart woman was destroyed by him. She was exiled by ironically by her daughter-in-law from her own farm and they made her a homeless. He ignored that she gave him life and love and just spurned her horribly. She was a good mother she was dedicated to die alone and unhappily. It highlights the power of men and maybe their insularity because he was influenced by his wife, and he seemed to have in unhappy marriage nevertheless.

Other characters in the analyzed stories are women who have lost their mother include Eveline, Bridie, Cait Felicia and Judith who lived most of their lives without their mothers. Eveline and Bridie had a similar fate because their mothers, after they demanded, wanted to prove their daughters loyalty to the family through the taking care of their sick fathers. It seems like their mothers do not realized that they banned their daughters' "normal life" as we know of it today. Cait's mother was very nice, but did not last a life according to the entire drunken husband and decided to end his life, even though she knew that Cait thereby loses his mother and support. Cait bear this loss very hard.

Eveline had a chance to sever her ties to the family but her promise to her mother was stronger than beginning a love of her own and she therefore refused a migrating Irishman named Frank. Bridie, as an elderly woman, had no similar choice. By the time she got some power to go away to find her love, she was old to get married in Ireland.

Felicia and Judith almost did not remember their mothers, and their absence left deep wounds in them. Felicia had strict grandmother as well as Judith's aunt and they could not replace a bond between mothers and daughters. They did not remember their love to them. Grandmother and Aunt were impersonal and strange and women had no chance to have more closeness relationship with them.

Families are in the first place in Ireland and there was nothing unusual that young women sacrificed their lives for their parents. They lost personal life, the chances to have family, love.

In the short story by James Joyce, "The Boarding House", a house owner Mrs. Mooney, a mother of a teenage girl Polly, was different too. It described the strength of this woman to be independent. Mrs. Mooney was financially independent of her drunken estranged husband and was able to manipulate to her daughter. Her way of leadership was somewhat odd. Vera and Emma tried to give their daughters a normal childhood, good manners but it was caused by their surroundings. They were rich and their husbands were not seducers. Mrs. Mooney's husband was violent and she decided to be independent. She gave her daughter into the arms of visitors. She found a rich husband for Polly and even allowed her daughter's behaviour to be presumptuous and obscene. Polly flirted with them and it was not important that her behaviour reminded them of a prostitute. Her mother supported it. It was not a typical attitude that mothers gave to their daughters in Irish society - to be obedient and kind wife. She wanted her to learn how to manipulative man and how to avoid their domination of women.

11.3 Domestic Duties of the Mother / Daughter

The typical figure of Irish family is the working father and mother as a housewife who takes care of their children and her husband's comfort to fulfil his wishes. The same obligations are passed to the daughter, who has to initially assist their mothers at home or they are sent to work at the wealthy homeowners in the city to help their families financially and become wives who serve their husbands too.

There is strong pressure for the daughters of Irish mothers to take up the role of their lost mothers and take care of their family in the analyzed stories. James Joyce's "Eveline" heroine was bounded by her mother's wish to stay and take care of her father. The duties of her mother were transferred to her with no questions and even any possibility to start a new life and leave her father. Judith had to take

care of her aunt until her death because she took care of her when Judith's parents died. Judith had to pay her aunt mercy back. Judith lost her youth and the ability to have a family and children. The same fate was prepared for Trevor's heroine Bridie in "Balroom of Romance" who had to take care of her father and could not leave him. She became older and her duties at home at her father never end. Felicia, just like Judith and Bridie was the only woman in the family who could be able to clean the house, cook and other duties typical for women. Nobody asked her or other women if this was the way they wanted to choose. They had no choice. Felicia was in a similar position. She lived in a small town in Ireland and she served her father and grandmother. Felicia rebelled and decided to leave everything there. She tried to find her happiness. She seemed to be brave and sometimes even crazy to go against convention.

11.4 Expectations of Single Women

Some of the characters in the stories are merely young teenage girls than women and their love life is sometimes poorer than the mature ones. Women generally have similar imaginations of men. They should be loving, kind, tender and honest. They should be good husbands and fathers at a specific time.

Both figures by William Trevor are women who do not have a fixed spouse, partner and children's father. Felicia as a young girl from Ireland who lost her mother, and like the other girls has not too much knowledge about the love, intimacy. She expected to find her lover happy to see her pregnant. The theme of sexuality in Irish society was a huge taboo and girls were often duped by men. Women were lured by the nice words and then they were remained pregnant and abandoned. They hoped in family life, happiness and motherhood. Trevor's next heroine is also abandoned and unlike Felicia she did not leave her home and go looking for love. Bridie was waiting for a prince who could take her away. She wanted to have family, husband, she envied to women who were complaining about their husbands. She wished to have the same problems like other women in the town. She, just like other characters, desired for a normal life.

A similar fate was experienced by Brian's Moore Judith, the loneliness and unhappiness led her to sink to the bottom. Alcohol destroyed her and her unhappiness stolen her faith in God. As a woman she wanted to have children, somebody who could devote herself. Like other women, she greatly reduced her claim for a perfect man. Their dreams became from ideal men to normal, ordinary, older men.

Young girls in *The Country Girls* had naive expectations just like normal young girls. They did not think about finding husbands for the first time. They wanted to learn something about love, sex. They tried to understand duties of women, as well as the male perspective to women. Their love disappointments were not so sad and tragic compared to others under analysis. They were young and they still had a chance to have happy and satisfied family life.

It is an interesting contradiction: the single women in the stories are unhappy because they are alone they have no husband, family but on the other hand the married women are not happy too. They would be happier to be alone without violent, drunken husbands or ungrateful children.

Every female character in this analysis may have something in common with another character or a real person but each story is different. Every woman is going through her grief differently, as well as women in the real world and each of us has their own dreams and wishes about love, family and life.

Irish company hampered women in these directions because as a patriarchal society was focused to the happiness of men. Women were born, brought up in order to bear children, take care of the household and especially be good wives of their husbands. And what about men, were they the right husbands, partners and fathers?

12. Czech Summary

Tato diplomová práce se zaměřuje na literární soubor devíti děl pocházejících od irských autorů. Každý z autorů se snažil přiblížit osudy žen v irské společnosti v první polovině 20. století. Hlavním tématem všech vybraných povídek jsou situace, ve kterých je popsáno postavení ženy ve společnosti svázané tradicemi. Jejich nelehká role je zřejmá z mnoha aspektů, které se zobrazují v historických i kulturních skutečnostech, jež ovlivňují Irsko po celou dobu historie země.

Před samotným čtením a rozbořem jednotlivých povídek jsem se pomocí odborných publikací obeznámila s historií Irska samotného. Blíže jsem se zaměřila na roli ženy ve společnosti, na vztah mezi mužem a ženou a na práva žen. Na základě prostudovaného materiálu byl vytvořen úvod k diplomové práci. Úvod se na pozadí odborné literatury snaží osvětlit proces vnímání ženského pohlaví ve společnosti v historickém kontextu. Popisuje zvyšující se snahu o emancipaci a větší uznání jejich pohlaví v mužském světě. Poukazuje na těžkosti, na největší a nejdiskutovanější problémy, které musí žena v irské společnosti každodenně řešit.

Diplomová práce je dále rozdělena do kapitol podle jednotlivých děl. Každá kapitola obsahuje stručné seznámení s autorem. Životopis spisovatele je v tomto rozboru důležitý z důvodu časté autobiografičnosti povídek a také různého pohledu na ženu, jedná-li se o autora mužského či ženského pohlaví, katolíka či protestanta. Hlavní náplní diplomové práce je analýza ženské hrdinky v těchto fikcích. Neanalyzuje pouze vztah ke společnosti, který je popsán v úvodu práce, ale i vnitřní pocity hrdinek. Aby se rozbor stal více autentickým, byl doplněn citacemi.

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v úvodu, se prolíná každým analyzovaným dílem od autorů pocházejících z Irska.

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